Entangled; or, A Dangerous Game.

BY HENRIETTA Thackeray.

CHAPTER I.

Lucie Ferramore Warns Her Husband.

"It is really too bad. It is more than I can bear. The heartless, shameless woman! How can George be so duped! Would he, did he indeed love me, his wife?"

The speaker was a fair, pretty woman, of about two-and-twenty. Her features, delicately formed, were pure and sweet of expression; her dark gray eyes tender, gentle, and caressing; her figure middle height, slender, and graceful.

She was one of those fragile-looking women who in happiness accept a husband's support, but who in times of trouble and affliction become a stay and support to him.

Seated apart under an awning on the deck of the Peninsular and Oriental steamer Rosperus, she appeared to be reading; but, in fact, her eyes, beneath the shadow of her long lashes, were watching two figures—those of a lady and gentleman, who, leaning over the side of the vessel, were talking gaily, as they gaped while passing at the shores of Spain, which the ship was passing.

The lady was the very reverse of that other under the awning. Tall, her figure was rather largely developed, and commanding more than graceful.

Her complexion was brumette; her features handsome; her lips full and pouting; her eyes dreamy and languishing, though capable of sending quick glances from under their deep, heavy fringes of lashes, which few masculine hearts would be able to receive unmoved.

Her companion was a well-made, military-looking man of eight-and-twenty, with the easy, well-bred air of one accustomed to the best society.
In a word, Major Ferramore's regiment was known to possess the handsomest officers in the whole British army; and Major Ferramore was acknowledged to be the handsomest man in his regiment.

A little over a year ago he had married, in Cambridge, a Mr. Marham, of an old Puritan family, whose fortune had come to the utmost verge of extinction in the last generation; and in order to save the last nail of his fortune, he had sold his house, his lands, and his money, and taken his wife to the New World. Major Ferramore was the most picturesque creation in a world of glittering trash; and his wife was the prettiest and most companionable woman he ever beheld. She was a girl of unusual beauty, with dark, earnest eyes, and a face that seemed to express everything that was good and true. She had a decided sense of right and wrong, and a strong will to do what was right, even though it might cost her all she had. She was the kind of woman who could inspire confidence and respect in everyone who knew her. Her husband was a charming companion, with a quick wit and a ready smile. They were a perfect couple, and everyone admired them. But one day, while they were on a walk in the park, Major Ferramore suddenly collapsed and died. His wife was devastated and felt lost without him. She struggled on, trying to be strong and support herself, but the grief was too much. She wrote to her brother, asking for help, and he sent a doctor to take care of her. She was treated with kindness and respect, and slowly began to recover. But the loss of her husband was too great, and she eventually succumbed to her grief. She died a few months later. Her death was mourned by everyone who knew her, and her memory lived on as a symbol of courage and resilience.
A terrible confusion at once ensued. Men and women pushed and struggled, making their way to the deck. The boats were only half full, but they would not stop to be drowned below like rats.

"Fear not, Lucie! Be calm, my girl, and keep your wits about you. As Saunders said, it is our only chance. I must divide our forces; I must divide the charge. He can save his wife, as he bore her apart from the struggling, maddened crowd. "If we are to die, dear Lucie, let us meet death bravely."

"And the young wife kissing the face that bent over her. "George," and her fingers gripped tightly his hand, "I will not leave you. Do not ask me. If they want you, it is their business. I will not go. If you remain, I remain; if you die, I die. Less bitter death than to live alone."

He stooped and kissed her, unable to speak. Then, in the darkness, they waited the racing waves. They saw the boat being lowered, and the crew keeping back the excited passengers. They heard the command, "the women first," and women followed, all but despair. The boat on the reaching the water had been flung against the ship's side, and stove in.

Major Ferramore had not said to his wife's determination; yet, nevertheless, had not intended to yield to her devotion. At the fitting moment he had reckoned to bear her up to the boat, which would be extended to receive, and that she would be in the boat before she could re- side.

Now, however, he saw there would be small chance of any being saved. The way the Hesperus rolled showed she was fast filling, and soon must founder. There was but one chance: the ship, God knows, could escape the fate of the other. Then all hope would soon be over, for their rockets had not been answered from the shore.

If saved, it must by her own efforts. Thank Heaven! he could swim. Looking round, he beheld pieces of spar held yet to the deck by cordage. Lashed to one of these pieces, Lucie might easily float to land. To secure her and herself would not be difficult, for owing to the ship becoming water-loged, it was a cruel despair. As he arrived at this resolve, a figure came staggering toward them, clutching anything within reach for support. It was this.

Her long black hair was tossed wildly by the wind about her beautiful face, which was pallid with terror. Her dilated eyes appeared to epitomize all she had ever had she looked so strickenly handsome. The Major started as he beheld her. Lucie shivered, and instinctively clung closer to her husband.

On reaching them, Mrs. Ferramore, flinging herself down on the wet deck and clasping the officer's knees, cried, in accents of piteous, wild entreaty: Save me—save me, Major Ferramore! Do not leave me on this ship alone! Think! I am a solitary weak woman, with none to care for or aid me! Oh, show mercy to your erring wife."

"How can I save you, Mrs. Ferramore—J— who may not myself be saved?" he answered, tremulously, moved by her appeal—her despair. "Oh, be patient."

"Swamped. Oh, Heaven! Major Ferramore, must I drown—must? Can you not help? Oh, save me—save me!"

Madly she shot her hands on the deck, then looked quiedy up as Lucie's calm tones reached her.

"For shame, Mrs. Ferramore! You are in no worse plight than the rest of us. We all may drown!"

"Not you! He will save you! I am alone! Oh, mercy, save me!"

The cry was a shriek of despair as she bent her head to the deck, her long hair trailing about her.

Major Ferramore turned as pale as death. No, he could not leave her. He would save her, too;—there was time. "Lucie," he said, "stay here a moment."

"George," cried the wife, in terror, "what would you do?"

She strove to hold him, but he had broken from her hand, he was severing cordage, releasing one of the spars. Mrs. Greiville watched him with breathless eagerness.

"Lucie! Lucie! do you at such a moment desert me, who would not leave you? Is this woman, even in death, to separate us? Come back, if you love me!"

"And I will come back to you—surely he will!"

In a second she had crawled to his side.Leaving her, he turned back. He had come back to her. There was time to save all! he replied. "Mrs. Greiville, come!"

In a second she had crawled to his side. Leaving her, he turned back. He had come back to her. There was time to save all! she replied. "Mrs. Greiville, come!"

"George!" the woman exclaimed, "surely he will? He will come back to me—surely he will!"

Hardly had the thought passed her brain than the Hesperus heeled fearfully, but was righted by a tremendous billow breaking over the stern. Lucie uttered a piercing shriek, for, as the wave swept past, she saw Mrs. Ferramore, in a moment, dashed to the deck and released, and both disappear over the side together.

"George!—husband!" she screamed. "Do not leave me!"

Franziskan rushed forward, taking her up after them, but a strong hand held her back.

"Farted!—parted!" she shrieked, eye she sunk on the deck. "In death, as in life, she was between us!"

When Major Ferramore felt himself whirled over the side, and the widow's arms fastened tightly about him, he was powerless to resist.

The waves were tumbling over them, and they were sinking rapidly.

In a brief space, however, they rose again to the surface, when, almost fiercely, he exclaimed, "Why did you grasp me? What have you done?"

"Saved your life, thank Heaven! as you have mine," said the service's response.

"Saved! Better I had lost it!" he ejaculated "I must—I will return!"

"It is too late! and the speaker's arms tightened . The Major Ferramore, the ship is too far away!"

She was right. Yet he would have risked it only, as they were flung up on the next wave, he thought, they were becalmed, direction to his horror he beheld the huge black hul of the Hesperus rise, red, pitch forward and disappear.

A second and gone. The waves rose and fell over the place where it had been.

"Lucie—my wife!" shrieked Major Ferramore, and made one fierce struggle.

But the arms around him were not to be unwound, and, for a few moments losing consciousness, his head dropped on the widow's shoulder.

"Oh, words around him."

Major Ferramore, would you have us both drown? I see the shore!"

Summoning back his strength, he saw in the direction lay the land, and struck out for it.

The title was running in, it was true; but, owing to the nature of the coast, they drifted down before they were washed on to the beach.

Directly Major Ferramore felt firm footing, he grasped the spar, and drew it high up on the ship, then clapped insensible beside him whom he had saved.

When he came to, he found that dawn was breaking, and that his head was supported in some ship. Looking up, he perceived it was Mrs. Greiville, who, by the aid of her pocket-hand, had freed herself from the spar. Major Ferramore turned, face, and covering it with his hands, groaned bitterly.

"I see: you have not yet forgiven me,"
mourned the rich tones of his companion, sadly. "You blame me for what I have done. How, Major Ferramore, could I have left you to die? I could not!"

"That is the very poor Lucie!" he moaned. "Better to have died with her!"

"You think so now, why should you say? Tie down together! Why, had I not held you, that avalanche would have had you all up and parted us" (and her voice vibrated) "all. Major Ferramore, but for your strong arm to guide, I should have been dashed—killed upon the rocks. I dare not think of it now, but saving yourself I owe you my life! Am I—am I to regret it?"

He sat silent. His hands were clenched on the beach, his face upon them.

Then he looked up, white and haggard. "Regret is useless," he said, coldly. "It cannot recall the past. It can often injure our spirits. But, as you are present, and in health, I will say something that may comfort you. Do you think I had a right in saving you? I owe you my life! Am I—am I to regret it?"

She held his hand, and now lightly touched it with her lips before she released it. She felt the blood rise to his temples, and in silences they proceeded up the beach.

From its appearance and the position of the ship, she supposed they were to be Cornwall. The grandeur and bold ruggedness of the rocks proclaimed it, and they had much gazing over its jagged shores. The sea birds came in flocks up to the cliffs.

The officer approaching, supporting Mrs. Greville, whose strength began to fail her, found only an old woman within. "Good man," she said, had gone down to Mill Bay, to the wreck, but she'd be happy to give the lady shelter, and any accommodation her cottage could afford.

The old fisher-wife had a true Cornish type of face, and keen, dark, searching eyes under her grizzled brows, which seemed to recall the time when she had dressed the coat upon which they were to be Cornwall. The grandeur and bold ruggedness of the rocks proclaimed it, and they had much gazing over its jagged shores. The sea birds came in flocks up to the cliffs.

Hearing the quick step behind him, the young man turned, and, seeing the officer, raised his hat.

The Major answered the courtesy, as he said, "Pardon me, I hear you have the names of the saved. May I, sir, see the list?"

"The other run his eyes scrutinizing over the speaker. If he had feared a rival correspond-ent on a rival paper in the Major, the latter's dexterous aspect and haggard face reassured him. He strode forth, informing him of the sav-ers, handing the list. As the husband took it, a mist swam before his eyes, and he staggered so that the young man caught him in his arms to steady him. "You know some one on board, sir?" he said, sympathetically.

"Yes, I promised the Major, heartily—some one who is very dear to me. I was on board myself, but—but we were separated in the wreck. I was washed ashore two miles away. Wouldn't you mind letting me have a company you to the hogs? I—and the speaker glanced back at the loitering fishers; "can't read this here."

Together they ascended the path. When at the top, hidden from view, Major Ferramore halted, and, turning away, with shaking hands holding the list, began its perusal. Why he could not have told, but he counted the names first—counted without seeing them, for the mist was over his eyes again.

Then, with a beating heart, a wild hope, he read—read rapidly, until near the end; then slowly. From the end he might read incorrectly. They were mostly feminine names. Many he knew. A few belonged evidently to the second class, of whom he knew nothing. And the name of Lucie Ferramore was not there.

"Are—are you sure you have all here—all that came over in the boat?" he gasped.

"Certainly, sir. There were but twenty," and I have their names from their own lips. Naturally, each is anxious their names shall appear for their friends. There's not one, sir, I assure you but what I have got. I wish for your sake there was!"

"Thank you," replied the Major. "Thank you much."

His voice broke.

He moved away to hide his emotion, when the other said, "Excuse me; may I have your names?"

"Major George Ferramore," he answered. "Also, you may put Mrs. Greville. That lady was saved with me."

"Thanks, sir. Good morning!" and penciling down the titles, he moved quickly away; for there was small time to get the account into the morning's first edition, and telegraph it to London.

When he looked back, he saw Major Ferramore prone on the ground, his face buried on the dry grass; his hands clasped tightly at the back of his head, as some men do when torn by a terrible agony.

CHAPTER III.

A STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

When Major Ferramore returned to the cottage, it was morning, and she was looking very pale and wan, sitting by the fire.

She glanced up as he entered, and even she started at his appearance—it was so ghastly, so full of anguish, so despair.

"Well, dear Major Ferramore, what news? Good, I trust!" she murmured, her words speaking differently to her heart.

"No," he rejoined, not meeting her glance, but gazing down into the fire. "Twenty have been saved, but—" his voice shook—"she is not one of them."

"Oh!" ejaculated the widow, in an accent of piteous grief, burying her face in the cambric handkerchief she had been drying.

"No," he said, still not looking at her, "When, Mrs. Greville, do you think you can proceed?"

"When? When you desire, Major Ferramore."

"That is impossible," he answered. "You must have rest—your clothes dried. I am going two miles distant. Shall I send a fly for you?"

"Yes; if you will not permit me to walk with you, she replied, almost humbly."

The tone touched him. He felt a bruise, yet how could he remember any but his Lucie at such a time?

"I did not mean that," he said, turning toward her. "I thought you were not able to walk."

"I would sooner try, Major Ferramore, than stop here," she rejoined, rising as she spoke. "This weather is too much like to stay here alone. Oh, do not think—" and instinctively she clasped her hands in entreaty—"I hear the wind rising after this night."

The voice was so plaintive, so musically be-seeing, that it chilled him. It made him ashamed of himself.

"Yes, you must have suffered—this tender, delicate woman."

"Forgive me!" he exclaimed, taking her hand in his. "You must think me a bear. "I am too amiable."

"Certainly, sir. I have heard of it! Pray let us go! The wind of that awful sea drives me mad!"

Without a word, but with a glance of grati-tude more eloquent than words, Mrs. Greville obeyed.
REWARDING THE FISHER- WIFE handsomely, the two set forth.

The days have been moments when the Duchess of Marlborough, who stated that she was born before nerves were in fashion, has pretended to possess them.

Mrs. Greville did, and needed to lean very heavily on the officer’s arm during the two miles’ walk.

But after she had managed to win kinder sentences from her companion—to make him feel a greater brute than ever, and to verge once more toward the net so skillfully speared.

Reaching the hotel, they rested until their garments were dry and strength somewhat restored, then together proceeded to Luncheon.

There they separated.

Mrs. Greville aimed to precede to her escort, and Lucy—Lamb, and Lucy, however, before promising to visit her shortly at the Holme.

“Believe me, Major Ferramore, no guest will be so welcome,” she murmured, softly, as the train moved from the platform, accompanying the answer by a glance, the power of which Gertrude Greville had well known.

She was ever Gertrude’s friend—and Lucy, in some experience—these military men are the vainest creatures alive!”

But Greville, free from the beautiful widow’s influence, Major Ferramore, leaning back in his corner of the carriage, gave himself up to his gloomy reflections.

He did not affect him very deeply.

He had never known how much he had really loved her until now, and was glad of Mrs. Greville’s absence that he might think of her.

He could not in the widow’s society. Why not?

“I really believe she feels for me very much,” he muttered, “and so for me, I of myself! It was kind of her, too; so thoughtfully, as she resided in Cornwall, she would take careful note of it—of all this—the bodies, and, inform me at once if my dear Lucie—”

He could get no further even in thought, for the large lump that seemed to rise in his throat and his eyes.

It was evening when he reached London.

The lamps were beginning to be lighted. Calling a hansom, he proceeded to Kensington.

However, changed, was red-brick house, lived his own relations, an uncle and aunt.

It had been arranged that he and Lucy should stay there a fortnight before seeking apartments for themselves, when he was to have shown all the London sights to his young wife. Now how drear and miserable the time would pass!

Mr. and Mrs. Chichester were elderly and very kind-hearted. Warmly, sympathetically, Lucy opened up.

“Oh, my poor George!—my dear boy!” exclaimed the old lady, then fairly burst out crying.

“Oh! how you must have suffered? You look like a ghost! And Lucy, that pretty dear?"

Please say no more,” said Major Ferramore, “I know you think— and I have had lip. “I know you mean it kindly, aunt, but I can’t talk about it yet.”

“I should think not— I should think not!” broke in Mrs. Chichester, positively.

In his own good time George will tell us all. Poor young thing!— poor young thing! Dear, dear George.”

“Why the worthy couple didn’t talk about the shipwreck, their looks told that it was always on their mind. They said words and started subjects which, at that moment, though they would not have seemed the similarity at any other, they fancied suggested it, and would come to an abrupt, confused halt in their speech.

Finally Major Ferramore found it less painful to give the full account. He did not hesitate to describe himself, for his description seemed somewhat wretched and vague. They saw nothing of this; only, fondly patting his hand, Aunt Chichester said, “If a man could but find the best to save his poor wife, and such other sentences, that sent keen stabs to his heart.

When Major Ferramore retired to his room, he thought he had never passed so wretched an evening.

“How some old people do like to talk of the most minute, trifling details of how he would drive me mad in a week. They have not the tact of Mrs. Greville!” he proceeded, leaning out of the window looking onto the garden to smoke. “She made me forget my trouble. They keep it ever fresh in my memory, like flies hovering around a glassed window.

As the smoke of his cigar curled upward he dropped into a reverie, in which Mrs. Greville played a part, the Chichesters having been the innocent cause of that.

Suddenly he threw his cigar away, and irritable came back into the room.

“I must crush these thoughts,” he muttered. “What have I to do with the widow to me more than a friend? Only, I must get from here, or I shall have to fly to the Holme from very despair.

Major Ferramore—Major Ferramore. I am perfectly right. He did regard the widow as merely a friend. He liked her; was happy when in her company, but felt that, remembering Lucy’s aversion, he no longer called it unaccountable—he had no right to indulge himself in it; it would be an insult to her memory.

Indeed, an hour her influence over the officer was getting weaker. Only the ungenial, though sympathetic and delusel company of his worthy relatives forced him to recall last and too much dwell upon that of Mrs. Greville.

The Major strolled down to his club the next day, and rather nervously, for he wondered how it would be to see how he had kept a lady, had been washed ashes, while his wife was drowned. He feared how men might read it.

He found, however, no one there that he knew. So, after an hour’s lounge, went back to Kensington.

Entering the drawing-room was surprised to see a young girl of graceful figure arranging some fresh-cut flowers in a vase.

She turned as he came in: then, a bright smile on her lips, and in her clear, frank, good eyes, as he bowed ceremoniously, she extended her hand, saying, “Don’t you know, Cousin George?”

“Why, it can’t be! Are you the wee, prim maiden, Maid Chichester, I left yet at boarding-school five years ago?” he exclaimed.

“No other,” she smiled. “I have grown, have I not?”

“Yes, as beautiful as tall,” he answered. “Maud, you are very pretty. How was it you did not think of me?"

“Oh, I don’t live here!” she laughed.

“You have come to stop, then, I hope?” he answered. “A pleasant oasis where all is so delightful.”

“For a week,” she answered. “Aunt and Uncle Chichester thought you might be dull, so asked me to come for a week, Cousin George.”

“They were very kind and thoughtful. I feel grateful, I assure you,” he smiled. “Pray go on with your roses, Maud, and I will help you.”

The girl complied, and the conversation drifted freely and pleasantly on.

She was Major Ferramore’s chance against the widow. His sole one, because her pleasant, youthful society soothed him.

General Chichester’s eyes that reminded him of Lucie. There was a soft sympathy in her accents. She strove, by well-placed not obstructive cheerfulness, to win him from such thoughts, and he feared that he could talk to her of Lucie as he could talk of his poor, lost wife to no one else.

“With Maud’s frank confidence in him, while it pleased, seemed to make him feel a better man.

The evening came to an end, and the officer had thought that things were improving after Gertrude Greville; while, as he had watched Maud’s fresh, sweet, innocent face, Lucie had never, for an instant, been out of his mind.

“Why, for goodness sake, my dear Maud,” he asked, entering the breakfast-room next morning, “why are you going to fly off in a week?”

The girl, laughing, looked down, blushed, and answered, “Why, I am going to Derby, to see Harry’s friends.”

“And who the deuce—I beg your pardon— is Harry?”

“Don’t you know? And she glanced slyly at him.

“‘I didn’t,’ he laughed; “but I fancy now that I can guess. Harry must be the happy young fellow who has won Miss Maud Chichester away from Cousin George’s unprofitable lottery. Harry must be my future cousin,”

“Yes,” she smiled, and told him all.

“Must know Harry, to congratulate him,” he said; and took Maud to Regent Street after breakfast, and purchased for her a wedding present. But the bright week went by, and the wedding was gone.

Major Ferramore was once more sent back to his past thoughts. The dull Kensington house hipped and depressed him.

However, Championship Cup came straying back, encircling him with Leacock folds. He felt a craving upon him to fulfill his promise to visit his cousin.

He must go somewhere; his own society was intolerable to him; but how escape from that—how fly the thoughts he so desired to banish! He battled against the voice of the sire, which now again was constantly ringing in his ears.

One evening, however, as he was returning from the fathers, thought of a fine day.

“Why do you think of a fine day?” the notes of a piano came to him from the open window of a villa he was passing.

Boom with the music was blended a voice, singing with sweet plenitude, “Ever of Thee.”

It was Mrs. Greville’s favorite song.

It recalled a hundred memories he could not compose.

“I will write to-night!” he exclaimed, resolutely, as he flung his cigar away. “I can bear this no longer!”

CHAPTER IV.

AN OLD FRIEND OF MR. ARTHUR GREVILLE.

A WALK through the Country.

The welcome sea-breeze crept softly over the land, stirring the drawing-room window draperies of The Elms, and the delicate lace flowers of the avenue, whose snowy arms, as she reclined on a lounge, her eyes dreamy and half-closed, gently moving the leaves of a book.

The Holme was a small, but compact estate on the border line of the mine country. Indeed, between it and the Cornish village existed considerable rivalry. The Holme was the bare moor, dangerously broken by the dark yawning mouths of long disused mine-shafts.

Fences had once been placed round these passages, but there had been no inhabitants; and a reckless familiarity with danger, not rare in mining districts, had caused them never to be renewed or repaired.

The Holme had, by inheritance, become the property of a Mr. Arthur Greville, a wealthy East India planter, who— the place having been let for a house —
term to a well-to-do tenant, who regularly forwarded checks for the quarterly rents to his landlord, who had even bowered himself with the trouble of an English agent; Mr. Arthur Greville declining that from experience, rather than be robbed by any of that fraternity, he would have preferred being plundered by his tenants.

A year previously, however, the latter's lease having expired, he removed to London. The Huns were not announced to be, but was put up in charge of an old woman. This elderly personage had made herself remarkably comfortable there for eleven months, when the Huns announced having their place in order, hire the necessary servants, and in four weeks' time be in readiness to receive the writer, Mr. Greville.

The news spread through the little community which formed the essence of the place, and curiosity was rife, as no mention was made of Mr. Greville.

Women are becoming more likely, as all that was known of him was that he must be quite seventy—a great age for one who had passed his life and lost his liver in India. In the Huns Mrs. Greville was a widow. Mrs. Greville arrived, and was a widow. Also she was young, beautiful, and agreeable, and Mrs. Greville, said the gossips, was very well received by the gentry.

Under the wisdom of a clear-headed woman, Gertrude Greville had secured her jewels and money, and had published the first sign of the Huns being in danger. Thus she had lost but nothing her wardrobe, which had been easily replaced. Gertrude Greville, as it seems, had given him four, to master her grief for Lucie.

He had already taken over six, and her claret and grog were lightened with wounded pride.

At that moment the door opened, and the wily's companion entered.

A middle-aged lady, being apparently over forty. Her slight figure seemed yet more so, owing to her age, and her black silk dress, which had obscured the fairness of her hands and complexion.

She wore thin gold rimmed spectacles, and her hair, of iron grey hue, was plainly braided down in a queue. Her dress formed a half-cap, half-mantilla, on her head.

She moved with a noiseless, gliding step. Her voice was low, and so even as to approach mutterings.

In fact, Gertrude Greville's companion apparently possessed one of those placid, equable, reserved manners that can no more be ruffled than the surfaces of a granite rock.

Yet her manner—gracious and refined—proclaimed her to be a perfect lady.

She carried letters in her hand, with which she advanced to her employer.

"The post has arrived at last, madam," she said, "and quick. 'It appears a great train runs this way,'"

"Lester, Mrs. Henderson!" exclaimed Gertrude, half rising quickly to receive them. "That's it! I should find that difficult to tell, madam," smiled the companion, as she took her seat at a side table which was murmured, as she dropt back on the lounge and broke the opening of one of the letters.

The companion had soon finished hers. It was from an upholsterer in Lausanne about some alteration in the library furniture. The next down the note, she glanced across at her employer. She yet was smiling; a pleased light danced in her eyes. It was evident that her spirits were of the highest before, for with a little, amused laugh, she said, "My dear Mrs. Henderson, I must trouble you to see the Gray Room; I prepared to by to-morrow, for we shall have a guest more than we expect ed."

"A lady, madam?"

"Oh, dear, no; a gentleman." laughed Gertrude, old, staid, and of course, yes, an old lover of mine. In fact, Major Ferrnmore, who, you know, saved me when the Hesperus was wrecked, week back."

"Indeed! But will he stay at The Holme?"

"Why not? There will be company enough not to shock propriety," rejoined Gertrude, smiling. "Mr. and Mrs. Vans, with their daughter, arrive this evening; and to-morrow Mr. and Mrs. Holton; which, my dear Mrs. Henderson, with your stall self, and the fashion of the Major's widow, we shall need, and she laughed merrily—be in full force to receive this most gallant and susceptible of her Majesty's officers."

The companion raised her eyes quickly in surprise.

"Pardon me, madam," she smiled; "but, a former home in which all such wellries tied, I should imagine that Major Ferrnmore comes here to woo?"

"I have not the slightest doubt of it."

"Nor I, my dear," however, appears to promise his little success."

"That is as it may be," answered Gertrude, "I am in no hurry to decide, Mrs. Henderson. I imagine and the fashion of the Major's widow must do so. But you will see to the Gray Room, certainly."

"When, and now, did we say we might expect Major Ferrnmore?"

"To-morrow. Of course I will first stop at the village; and he writes," added Gertrude, consulting the dispatch, "will give himself the pleasure of calling in the afternoon. Yes, stay; there's some mistake. This letter must have been delayed more than by the rail, for his is addressed, Mrs. The Major Ferrnmore's 'day after to-morrow' is to-day."

"Then, madam," said Mrs. Henderson, rising and speaking in her low, monotonous tone, "I had better see to the Gray Room at once."

"By all means. Thanks."

The companion glanced from the apartment, and noiselessly left the room. There, however, her usual placidity underwent a slight change. She proceeded up the stairs with the air of a woman who had given a little, though the Major Ferrnmore's of the week, that had left her, to the Gray Room, proceeded to her own room, into which she locked herself.

Hardly had she quitted Gertrude than visitors were announced.

It was the rector, the Reverend Septimus Sheldrake, with his wife, and Mr. Bryerton.

The rector was a portly five feet sight of clerical respectability, with a condescending air and woolly voice. His better half was a short, brisk, bright little woman, ready to attend to range, with a few trivial matters before her own; while their friend was a thin, withered little man of nearly seventy, so brown and dry that he almost Madame, life was dancing, as the brave, Gertrude Greville advanced to welcome them. The rector took the lead—as he did in everything—left side of the window, in his speaking hand, plump, hand, said woollyly, "My dear Mrs. Greville, excuse this intrusion, I beg; but my friend here, learning, during his flying visit to your house, that you were a widow, as the widower of his dear old friend, Mr. Arthur Greville, lived so near, actually would not allow me a moment's rest—not a moment, dear madam — he will call, and shall, for I—the rector rolled his eyes, as thoughtfully, he followed the clergyman.

On their returning to the drawing-room, Mrs. Sheldrake broke off her long account of her own meeting, and rose to lead the gentlemen. Gertrude was now quite her usual self again; and she bade Mr. Bryerton good morning, hoped, with a winning smile, to have the pleasure of again seeing him. The Holme.

"It is an honor," regret I must forgo, was
CHAPTER V.

MAJOR FERRARO'S RIVAL.

GERTRUDE GREVILLE was right when she said there would be enough company at The Holme to prevent the proprieties being outraged by Major Ferraros's presence there. Hambledown had been invited to the village inn to the Gray Room that same evening, on which also arrived the other guests—but very recent acquaintances of the widowed, aged, staid lady in black silk, who—her white hand still on the chair-back—unwillingly responded to the inclination.

Thus the officer and Mrs. Hendriksen met.

GERTRUDE GREVILLE: “As I leave Cornwall to-morrow. And it is not likely I shall ever find my way so far west again.”

Gertrude's lips murmured sorrow, while her heart beat based by her breath. "I am moving quickly to the coach, she sunk down, and her hands clasped hard, muttered, "Who would have dreamt of meeting a friend of Arthur's in such a place?" She lifted her hand as if to bring him! Thank Heaven, he will not come again."

She passed, her beautiful eyes avert on the floor, her brows knitted. Then she added, in a whisper, "It's a dangerous game—a very dangerous game! But I'll play it out.

Leaning back, she buried her face in the velvvet cushion, and became silent, motionless. Nearby an hour must have passed, when she was startled by a slight sound—a thin fallling on the table.

She looked up quickly, and saw Mrs. Hendriksen quietly at work in her usual pace.

"I did not know you were here," she exclaimed, somewhat sharply. "I did not hear you come in.

"But you were asleep," you were so quiet that I tried not to disturb you. The Gray Room is prepared; all is in readiness. Hark! there is the sound of wheels on the drive."

The companion rose as she spoke, and moved toward the window.

"Do not go!" exclaimed Gertrude. "It may be he."

Mrs. Hendriksen returned, but did not resume her seat. She stood, one hand leaning on the chair-back. Feetsteps in the hall; then the door opened, and Major Ferraros was announced. Glad in mourning, he was paler than his wont; but that only made him appear handsome as, at the first glance, believing Gertrude to be alone, he advanced quickly, with great eagerness, to meet her.

But extending her hand quietly, she said, with a glance of checking his impatience—"a thousand welcomes, Major Ferraros, to The Holme, which I trust will not frighten you away by its dreariness." "And on the quiet, still, aged lady in black silk, who—her white hand still on the chair-back—unwillingly responded to the inclination.

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CHAPTER VI.

MRS. GREVILLE RECEIVES A SHOCK.

It soon appeared apparent to all at The Holme that the Honorable Augustus Beckwith was embittered by Gertrude's refusal and that in him the Major had a powerful rival.

To no one was this more plain than to George Ferramore himself. Gertrude was a child of great hopes, but she had felt rather than saw the preference that was given to Beckwith. Openly, he had no complaint to make upon the score of their friendship. Nevertheless, he knew that he had been before that of the new-comer; and, according to human nature, it aroused his pride and heated his blood.

He considered himself unjustly treated, ill-used by Gertrude. What had he not done for her? What had he not sacrificed for her! But he, after all the past, to be cast out for another?

As had grown to be his custom, he took his grip to Mrs. Hendrixson. The latter generally sat in a private parlor after breakfast, making the daily arrangements, giving orders to the servants. Here the Major would lounge in, and whenever he found it to his advantage, about a week after Augustus Beckwith's arrival.

"You do not look very well, Major Ferramore," said the companion, glancing up from her housekeeper's book. "I observed it at breakfast."...

"Did you? It was very kind of you, I am sure." He returned that interest, Mrs. Hendrixson.

"Just like you," he said, wavering as he went and leaned on the mantelpiece near the small table.

"Just like me?" she smiled. "How do you mean?"

"That you possess one of those pure, sweet, unsullied, womanly natures which is ever thinking of others before yourself?"

Mrs. Hendrixson raised her eyes rapidly. The pen she held slid from her fingers.

"Do you have you read me thus, Major Ferramore?" she murmured in a low tone, "Be-lieve me, I feel complimented."

"Truth is not compliment," he proceeded.

"Mrs. Greville," she said, "you tell me very truly what I think?"

"I should be flattered by the confidence."

"That you are one on whom a man might place his trust, and never be deceived; who would be a support to him in any hour you cared for in the hour of trouble, and would offer you a sacrifice for them. One of those noble women's natures to which a strong man clings in times of trouble."...

"Do you really think that?" said Mrs. Hendrixson, leaning over her housekeeping book. "Major Ferramore," she observed, giving me a character which so well pleased me.

"Which so well suits you, rather," he answered. "Goodness and you, Mrs. Hendrixson, I believe to be synonymous. Have you ever awakened with the consciousness of having dreamed a perfectly happy dream, though you could recall no incident, and all through life you remember that moment as a sweet memory?"

"Yes; most people have done so, Major Ferramore."...

Then you, Mrs. Hendrixson, seem like an embodiment of that memory—of some happy period passed."...

Mrs. Hendrixson was silent a space, making some entry in her book. Then, with a little laugh, she replied, "Really, Major, if you talk like that, I shall have to forbid these little matters of cure."

"Pray don't do that," he ejaculated, earnestly. "You do not know of what a comfort you would deprive me."

"I don't like her. She sees all—I might say watches all—but says nothing. I mistrust her."

Mrs. Hendrixson, slightly turning bent her eyes, which looked very bright through her spectacles, upon him.

"Major Ferramore," she said, in her steady, monotonous tones, "when I first saw you here I believed you the happiest man under the sun. I am a man who had got his dearest wish fulfilled, and that I had."

"You see me the most wretched," he broke in,
"Why?"

"Come, you ask, Mrs. Hendricson?"

And he laughed a trifle bitterly.

"Surely your eyes have discovered it! Conféss—yes, I am sure I may trust you for my confidence?

"You may, indeed."

"Then has not Mrs. Greville treated me most unjustly, eh? After—after all, she is greatly attached to me, and she asks me aside for this—this Augustus Beckwith?"

And the Major, pulling his mustaches, began pacing the room.

Mrs. Hendricson, rising, leaned against the mantelpiece, as she answered, quietly, "Don't you think, Major Ferramore, in the end you may be glad of the fruit put aside? Mind, I, too, speak in confidence."

Halting, he abruptly confronted the speaker.

"Fray explain," he said, a shade stiffly, "I do not understand your intendment."

"Then, a little while back, I told you that I guessed your secret—you loved Mrs. Greville."

I recall that assertion, for only now have I guessed your secret. You do not love Mrs. Greville!"

"Not love her!" exclaimed the officer, starting.

A moment he stood silent, thoughtful, as though the declaration had struck some secret chord in his mind.

But however, he threw up his head, saying, "No, Mrs. Hendricson; you were right at first, you are wrong now. I do love her. You would say I am but fascinated, but under the circumstances, I advise you to listen to me, over and over again have I thought so myself—have tried to convince myself it is so."

"Not, I fancy, very strongly."

"Major Ferramore," he added slowly, for, in his delusion, it is love. If not, should I stay here?—should I feel this jealousy of this Mr. Beckwith? No! I tell you, Major Ferramore! I would do her slightest bidding for a smile! I would die for her! In fact, I—I would do any thing rather than see her—the past—another's, Mrs. Hendricson."

He was pacing the room again, irritable from checked passion.

"Mr. Beckwith must look to himself, I have sacrificed too much—you know not how much—for I now turned aside by a rival."

"Major Ferramore," said the companion, her eyes bent on the empty fire-grate, "you should not have said what you have done.

Mrs. Hendricson,녀, you are being again unheedingly repeat, the feeling possessing you is not love. You are jealous—you are passively the consequence of a delusion. A delusion may serve to open your eyes; your destiny depends on whether that triste ever arrives. Mrs. Greville is beautiful, but she is selfish—false. Your own self is conscious of this, though at present you are not."

"Mrs. Hendricson!" ejaculated the officer, amazed, and with knitted brows, as he regarded the quiet, firm-spoken woman before him.

"Major Ferramore," she said, extending her hand, "I did not judge of you, you are sure! You are the last person who would make me sorry. Remember, what I have said was in confidence."

"Your secret? not; but you are wrong," he said, a little coldly, as taking the hand, he touched it with his lips.

"Let time show," remarked Mrs. Hendricson.

"Great Hark! Here is some one. Come in."

It was a servant to inform the Major that the horses were waiting. Wishing the companion "Good-morning," he at once hastened away.

At breakfast, a riding party had been proposed to Launceston, and when the Major resumed his seat, no horses, but the guests, some of them already mounted.

He bit his lip to find Gertrude among the latter, and, with Augustus Beckwith close beside her, his heart already proceeding toward the lodge gates.

Gertrude Greville never looked better on "on her back, and as George Ferramore saw the two—how beautiful!—to follow happily to two; her companion, who bent low toward her; she was burned by jealousy and fury.

Proceeding to his horse, he was in the act of gliding himself into the saddle, with the intention of breaking the dangerous talk between the two, when the mellow tones of Mrs. Helton arrested him.

"Major Ferramore, dare I ask your assistance for me to-morn? I have dismissed Mrs. Helton, her chaise. Indeed, no one can do it protest, like you.

The officer could not but comply, muttering a curse deep down in his throat against all beings. Confused, the lady had thought to please him by her compliment, she failed.

Her large blue-gray eyes smiled without response; and her face was covered, when first she dropped her whip, then entreated him to fasten the button of her gauntlet. When finally he sprung into his saddle, to his annoyance he found all the rest were riding down the avenue, and he was alone with Mrs. Helton.

As a gentleman, he could not leave her.

Was it a plot against him—a plan to separate him from Gertrude? He began to believe so; that these three, the Heltons and Mrs. Greville, were playing into each other's hands to secure Gertrude!

"But, by Heaven, they shall not succeed!" muttered the officer, through his teeth. "If any one will or can save Gertrude, I will.

If a woman was ever hated, it was, at that moment, Mrs. Helton. If a woman perfectly well knew it, it was she.

Major Ferramore was notGertrude," he ejaculated, emphatically, "then it was her spirit! No; it is not likely that I should ever forget that countenance."

He went on thoughtfully, his face contracted. Within half a mile he met a field-laborer plodding along the road. The man stopping, inquired of him about the riding party.

The courier could not give him any information. In 4 parts everybody knew Mrs. Greville and 't party at T Holme.'

In which, the commercial traveler, still meditative went on.

CHAPTER VII.

"MAJOR FERRAMORE, SAVE ME FROM THAT MAN!"—THE MINE-SHIFT.

"The gentleman, if you please, ma'am, says he is not obliged if you could see him for a few minutes. He told me to add, ma'am, the matter is important."

The speaker was Mrs. Greville's footman, and he was addressing Mrs. Hendricson herself, at the very moment, she stood searching in a book-look that stood on a table in the bay-window recess of the dining-room.

Gertrude paused, her hand on the books, yet for a moment not speaking. Even when she took the card the man held to her, she did not raise her head. Once her eyes rested on a slip of pasteboard, then the long, slender fingers slowly crushed it in her palm as, in a clear but low tone, she said, "I do not know this man, Truthful, and he is her.

"In the library, ma'am. He—he looked respectable, ma'am," added the footman, apologetically.

"Did you doubt. That will do. I will see him. You need not wait."

When alone, she did not move for a space, but remained slightly bent over the table. Yet her eyes did not nod so much as look.

"I have expecting it all day, and it has come," she murmured, huskily. "He did know, then?"

She looked back into the drawing-room. A subject of general interest had been started, and the conversation was being carried with animation by all present; but a self had come to seek a book in reference to the topic. All were too occupied, even Mrs. Hendricson, busy at work at her usual table—to notice anything.

In a second, Gertrude Greville had passed through the open windows onto the broad, firm gravel-path that ran around three sides of the house. This was Gertrude Greville.

The night was dark, starless and oppressively sultry. Had it not been the latter, Gertrude was too agitated to remember she had no cov
erating, save the delicate, soft lace, over her weak shoulders.

Rapidly she moved from the lighted windows to the other side of the house, where all was dark, and a grove of trees shadowed it.

The light fell back and fro, her beautiful head drooping, her lips compressed, her hands clenched, and the soft folds of her evening dress causing a low whish-whish as she moved and ceased.

After ten minutes she paused, and pressed her hands to her temples.

"Why do I delay the moment? she thought.

As if he were near; as if she felt the full current of the past as the present since this morning? Have I—have I not arranged for it should it come? And—"is here! I must, if the worst be as I fear, commence the battle at once, unaided, unimproved.

By an effort she seemed to steady her nerves, then re-entered the house by a side door. Reaching the hall, she crossed to the library, and as she placed her group on the hand, fancied that she heard some one on the stairs.

But all was silent. No one was there. Going back to the library, she opened the door, and the exact moment stood before the commercial traveler.

Five, ten minutes—a quarter of an hour—half, but Gertrude had not appeared in the dining-room. Hall or parlor, she looked in vain. Major Ferramore had noticed her absence, and gradually had dropped out of the conver-
sation.

He knew she had left by the window. He had seen her had she crossed to the door. Had she felt the heat too oppressive, and been seized with faintness?

Impatiently he watched the ormolu clock until the half-hour was growing to forty minutes; then, unperceived, managed to quit the room into the grounds.

He had hoped and expected to see Gertrude's graceful figure there, but was disappointed. He walked in every direction without success. The thrilling mind to return to the guests, he found another entrance into the house, crossed the hall and entered the library. It was dimly lighted; that is, the lamps were shaded, illuminating the room with a faint light.

On the threshold he stopped, for he per-
ceived the room was occupied by Mrs. Greville herself. She had not heard his entrance, but was as if by the window, one hand grasping the heavy curtain, which she held back, her tall figure slightly inclined, as if she were intently contemplating the stormy night.

That was enough. Ought he to advance?

Why not?

Was she alone?

How rarely he found her so now?

Why should he lose so excellent an opportu-
nity? The remembrance of his jealousy that morning, his fear that Augustus Beckwith might command him, urged him, and he approached noislessly over the thick-plied carpet at her side.

What do you find so charming in the as-
cert of such a night, Mrs. Greville—dear Ger-
trude?

The last name dropped softly from his lips as he leaned on her.

With a startled cry, almost one of terror, she turned upon him.

She was deathly pale.

"Gertrude," he cried, in alarm; "what is the matter?"

For a space it seemed as if she could not speak, though she tried. She regarded him with large round eyes, leaning back from against the open window.

"Gertrude, my dearest love!" he proceeded, drawing nearer. "Speak! What is the mat-
ter? Tell me! Would I not die to serve you?"

Abruptly her hands caught his arm. She bent toward him.

"You would?" she ejaculated, almost in a whisper.

"Can you ask, Gertrude? Dearest, try me."

"I will—I must, Major Ferramore—George! Freeme from that man!"

As she spoke she pointed from the window. The officer strode quickly after the man slowly crossing the broad sweep of lawn at an angle to the small boundary gate.

"Who is he?" asked the Major.

"My wife's enemy—one who holds my happiness in his hands, and will be pitiless!" she answered, wildly, entresting-
ly. "He has come here to threaten. To mor-
row he shall know the consequences. Oh, George; George—Ferramore—and casting herself at his feet, she caught his hand in hers—" you say love me, and I believe you! Do you love me, George; love me, and you are my hap-

ness. Save me from that man!"

"Gertrude, tell me how but I may, and I will, I swear it!" he replied, excited, bewilder-

ed, as he stepped back on the steps.

"Then—then," she proceeded, hurriedly, her dark eyes riveting his, "he has to return to the village across the moor. He is a total stranger to the way. George; George, if you love me, let him not reach the other side!"

"Great Heaven!"

In his amaze he would have recoiled, but his hands held him. She drew herself to her feet.

"George; George," she pleaded, "if you really love me, you will save me! You know not how I make this request. You know not how I have suffered—how through this man, without your aid, I may be made to suffer. O listen to the hand—this heart shall be yours! Save me and I will be your wife. Decide, for the matter will not bear delay.

As she seems to have dropped on the floor, her dark hair streaming over her white shoulders.

Major Ferramore's brain was in a whirl. He was lost to reason. All that he was conscious of was the misery, the distress of the beauti-

ful woman at his feet. So placed, few could have remained calm or self-possessed. The next moment however, he said, tremulous, "Gertrude, what is there between you and that man?"

"Nothing—I swear it—nothing!" she an-
swered, sobbing. "George, I swear it. George, swear to me you will not hide the truth. Yonder man was a lover before I left for India. With girlish vanity I seemed to favor him. I never knew him. I have never turned, my position altered. He has discov-
ered me—would wreak vengeance upon me for the past. But—"and she drew herself erect, with a languid, sad, ex-
pressing expression, rested on the officer—"I will not live to be the victim of his revenge— to have my sole hope of happiness destroyed by the villainy of this man. Every one has the means to escape suffering in their own hands. If he survives this night, I will not."

"Gertrude," ejaculated Major Ferramore, horror-stricken, "you would not attempt self-
destruction?"

"Why not? Is not death happier than a life where all hope is crushed? Yes—yes—and she touched her lips on his arm—"it is hard to die so young. George—George, it is very hard! Will you not save me?"

He caught her to him, pressing his lips to her forehead.

"Yes, Gertrude, I will save—preserve that life which now by your promise I hold as mine. And fear that man no more. Leave him to me."

"George!" she softly murmured, as she touched his lips to her cheek.

The officer strode quickly through the officer's veins as, breaking away, he sprung through the open window into the grounds.

With a strange expression, Gertrude fol-

lowed him. When he had left the house, and gone into the moor, she turned, composing her features, she returned to the guests. Meanwhile, the officer strode quickly after the man. For long now he had been out of sight, but Major Ferramore knew by this time the paths over the barren waste land accurately, and he had no doubt of speedily over-
taking him whom he was pursuing.

With what intent was he following?

Certainly not with that the beautiful siren at the house had concurred—hope.

Muder was as far from Major Ferramore's thoughts as mistrust of her had sought to urge him to it.

He proceeded, purposing to overtake this man; to inform him that Gertrude had confided her trouble to him, and that henceforth with him, Major Ferramore, the other would have to be seen no more.

He purposed to make him renounce his threatened vengeance on a weak woman for a girlish indiscretion, and force him to quit her shelter forever.

How was he to effect this? He too no time to consider, Men, when under the influence of strong excitement, such as the Major's at that moment, are incapable of reasoning.

Out beyond The Holme boundary; out onto the heath, with the heavy thunder-wrack flying over.

All objects indistinct in the oppressive sum-
mer night gloom, or looming forth in mere outline mass.

No man, not far off, nor right or left. Had Gertrude Ferramore missed him—
Surely he could not so speciously have got beyond being overtaken.

The horizon was a faint, pale gray haze of light.

It was immediately in front of him. Kneeing, he looked along the ground. Here—; he saw the man now. He was kneel-
ing too. What was he doing? Rising, the officer went on.

Suddenly he saw a faint flash of light. The man had struck several Lucifer, or taper, to-
gather, and was examining the ground. Why?

The truth broke upon the Major. He had reached the spot where the path, little more than a trodden, separated into two, one leading to the village, the other to the unpro-
tected mouth of the old mine-shaft.

Gertrude had said he was a stranger to the way. He had doubted it, and it scarcely be. He evidently knew of the exis-
tence of those two paths, and was seeking the right one.

Major Ferramore had halted during these speculations. Now he gave a start and a low cry of surprise, blended with alarm.

The man finally had taken the path leading to the mine-shaft, and was pursuing it at a quick pace.

Did he know what he was doing? Was he a stranger, after all, and in ignorance had se-
lected the wrong route? Suddenly a horrible thought occurred to him.

He recalled how he had come upon Gertrude Greville the night before. He recalled her pos-
tion, the pallor and agitation of her features. He recalled, too, her words—"If he survive this night, I will not."

He appeared, and she had appended to him. Supposing he had not come?

The officer recited at the words which fol-

lowed.

Had she herself sought to remove this man by directing him to take the wrong path?

It could not be. She, the last of all, against it? It was strange to him the more as this seemed clear from her brain. One thing was to him imperative—that the man must be watched.

Quickening his pace to a run, Major Ferramore was in the act of raising his voice, when, as if it had detached itself from the sur-
rrounding gloom, his sharp eye caught a figure, enveloped in the dark.
Holme until he had freed Gertrude from her enemy, even if it meant keeping the ton itself.

One thing was evident. He could not ac-

cept him with that third party present. Who

could she be? She was insignificant, and slackening his rate of walk-

ning, he followed, keeping the two, who were now going on together, and still in the direc-

tion of the old mine, just in view.

At this juncture, a particularly heavy rack, accumu-

lated in density, seeming to stoop to the earth, Major Ferramore lost sight of the two figures.

The deeper darkness was but transient. Yet

before it lifted, leaving the atmosphere lighter than previously, the loud plunging cry of a man left

it was followed by a fainter one, like a muf-

fled echo; then all was silent.

The clouds lifted, and Major Ferramore knew that the dim outlines of ground before him was the old mine-shaft.

"Merciful heavens!" he cried, as he ran for-

ward; "they have gone in—they are killed!"

Madly he shouted, grasping the rugged sides, and peering into the black, awful chasm.

Nothing was to be ailed to lend no aid. Still, how could he!

Wildly he gazed around, with the vague hopes of yet seeing these two figures. None came.

Stay! what was that moving yonder in the direction of The Holme? It had vanished, how, unless before Major Ferramore had recog-

nized it as the figure of the woman he heard answer.

"Oh!" he ejaculated, shuddering. "She is safe!

is he only who is killed! Horrible—horrible—horrible!!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED—DO NOT DE-

SERVE.

"What can he have done t’ him? Where can he

ha’ got to? It’s a mystery, it is. He wur a very respectable gent, but not quite o’ that sort as would have been asked t’ stop at The Holme all night.

The above was addressed to the lady at

the door, who, taking his hat, he prepared to start for The Holme. I was not half arrested by the prospects of losing him by setting forth. Day had dawned and advanced toward noon, yet Mr. Grim-

shawe had not returned.

He had told the landlord, on starting, that he was going to the Holme; consequently the landlord went there, naturally, to make in-

quiries.

Reaching the servants’ quarters, Treherne, the footman, could but tell him that Mr. Grimshaw had called and sent in his card to Mrs. Greville, who, declaring her ignorance of the name, had yet consented to see him. After that, how or when Mr. Grimshaw took his departure, the footman knew nothing.

And Mrs. Greville kindly see the land-

lord?

Treherne didn’t know, but would inquire. She wasn’t very well that morning; indeed, he, Treherne, didn’t know what had come over everybody. There was the Major going about as pale and wretched-looking as a ghost. Only Mr. Greville was as usual; in fact, if any-

thing, she was bright.

Recalling, he brought word that Mrs. Gre-

ville was in her boudoir, and would see the landlord.

What did this beautiful, composed woman, before whom he stood admiring and respectful, know of Mr. Grimshaw? Nothing.

Nothing could gladly tell him all she knew. It appeared that he had been acquainted some years ago with a young person who had been in Mrs. Greville’s family, and had called to information of that young person.

Unfortunately Mrs. Greville could give him none, having lost sight of the party in which he was interested of her (the speaker’s) going to India.

Whereupon Mr. Grimshaw had taken his departure. He had driven to the library win-

dow, across the lawn, it being a frosty morning, and he feared the breaking of the snow.

"Then I tell you what, my lady," remarked the landlord, "t’ thing’s not clear. To poor gentleman’s down t’ mine-shaft?"

Mrs. Greville uttered a cry of horror.

"Impossible! Surely he knew his way, com-

ing, as he had done before?"

"He’d ha’ none with him, my lady; and I gave him the direction plain; but coming an’
going over such a ground there be two different matters. Be sure he’s in t’ shaft."

"If you fear that, can no means be taken to discover?"

The question was put with real interest. The landlord shook his head gloomily.

"That’s t’ mine that was flooded, my lady, and any who goes in never comes out, dead or alive! Many thanks, my lady, for your kind attention. I’ll trouble you no longer."

As the door closed upon the landlord, Ger-

trude drew a deep breath of relief.

"Neither do I!" she repeated, softly, as she leaned back in her chair. "That’s fortunate; the future is still my own. But I must play out my game now quickly."

Her mind was bent upon Major Ferramore. Since they had parted in the library, she had not seen him.

On coming back the previous night, he had gone straight to his room, sending word that he had begged her to excuse him, as he was not well, while the footman said he was as white as a ghost.

In reply, she had sent him these words on a paper: "Tell me!"

His answer, also written, was: "Your desire has been accomplished without my instrumen-
tality."

Gertrude had destroyed this, and waited, patiently as she could, until she should see the writer.

What had happened on the heath?

Whatever had, she knew by that brief note it had changed Major Ferramore toward her.

She questioned herself as to whether, after what had occurred, he would claim her promise? She hoped not.

When would he come? She desired, at the same time feared, the interview.

She raised her head, alarmed by a tap at the door.

In reply to her "Come in!" Major Ferra-

more entered.

The pallor of his features, the heavy, hag-

gird expression of his eyes, told how sleepless had been the night.

His countenance was grave; his manner cold and distant.

As Gertrude Greville perceived it, she bowed her face on her hands.

"You need not speak, Major Ferramore," she murmur. "I must not letting my enormity in your features. I deserve it; I am a miserable—a guilty woman! Yet, re-

member, you came upon me in an hour of mad-

ness—of despair at many things—of what I either said or did. I only know that in that moment of bitter trial you appeared— you, whom alone in all the world I could dare to trust—thus, to claim my confidant—my only friend?"

He did not approach her. If her words had moved him, he would have come.

Leaning one hand on a chair, he said, "I have come, Mrs. Greville, to inform you of my intention to leave The Holme."

She shivered. A sound like a sob broke from her.

"I expected this, Major Ferramore. I de-

serve it," she whispered, humbly. "Still, may I not know what—what occurred last night?"

"You already know, Mrs. Greville, and had called to information of that young person."

"I?" she looked quickly up. "I know nothing!"

"But true, her expression astonished him, for it carried conviction with it.

Had he wronged her? How sincerely he prayed that he had.

The next day came, he exclaimed, in some agitation, "Mrs. Greville, answer me truly— I entreat, I implore you! You know well that your secret is safe with me. Did you not falsify this major in his mettle? Did you not send him on to the heath, and lure him to his death?"

"As requested, Major Ferramore, this time rising to her feet. "Major Ferramore, what do you mean? Am I mad still, or are you? What impels you to make this most unfounded charge?"

Rapidly, clearly he told her.

Before he had ended, Gertrude had resumed her seat. Her lips were pale, her hands tightly clasped, and it was to him that she listened in genuine surprise.

"Mrs. Greville—Gertrude!" he exclaimed, in conclusion; "tell me, were you not that woman—have I wronged her?"

"Most cruelly, Major Ferramore!" she answered. "I will give you but the simple deed, even will but have to question my guests to learn that truth! You, my sole departure I joined them, and did not leave them again until we separated for the night."

He turned. "You who write to Major Ferramore. To me that is a mystery even as to your self?"

And the sudden anxiety on her countenance was proved.

There was a pause. Gertrude broke it.

"Major Ferramore," she said, in a low tone, "last night, in a moment of despair, I did you a great wrong. I urged you to commit a deed which I hoped would leave me free to enjoy unmolested that happy future which the possession of you promised. I trusted in my madness that it might strengthen your affection, as it would have done mine."

"Gertrude," he said, slowly, "I now see that you are right. All must be over between us. You can but despise a woman who used her power to urge you to a crime, which Horrible—Horrible—Horrible— Horrible!"

"Gertrude," he broke in, seriously, "you are mistaken. When I quipped you it was with no intention to do harm to that unfortu-

nately, my young woman. You had a friend to protect you, and to force him not to molest you. As Heaven hears me, no evil intent on earth would make this hand that of an assassin!"

Starting, she looked sharply toward him. She knew what he had said was true, and in her heart rejoiced that fate had prevented his meeting the other.

"I am glad of that!" she answered. "There is one sin less upon my conscience, Major Ferramore. We are neither of us guilty. Do you still intend to go?"

"I think it best—at least for a while."

"Will you do me one favor—though, truly, I have no right to ask it now?"

"If possible, I will?"

"Thanks. Do not, then, leave The Holme. The storm is past, it has been quite blown over. That man has been hanged to-night. Pray let nothing occur that may create the least sus-

picion."

He declined; then answered, "I think that would be wise, I will remain."

"I feel too weak to thank you as I should," she said, meekly. "I owe you too much ever to reject your zeal. I only wish to think as well of me as you are able, and to re-

member I had cause to feel bitter enmity to that man. Farewell!"

She turned from him as she spoke; her head drooped; then, as it were, timidly, nervously, she extended her hand.

He could not, least, forget that he had loved this beautiful woman, or had believed that he loved her. He could not see her thus trouble without being moved.
Taking her hand, he touched it with his lips. He turned to Gertrude, and wishing Gertrude, shall be for your happiness. For myself I can but say, that we had never met!

She raised, yet holding her hand. Then, "Gertrude, may Heaven pardon you as I do, he said, released her fingers, turned, and left the room.

"It is over," she thought, as she dropped back into her chair. "Better, far better than I expected. I will never betray you, and Edwin Grimshawe's death will be soon forgotten."

Major Ferramore, at the same moment, was thinking, as he reached his apartment, "I mean to be no more spoken of with such a semblance of truth. Then who was that woman?"

That evening, at dinner, naturally the chief subject of conversation was the disappearance of the commercial traveler-locking man.

"Another nineteenth century mystery," said Major Mrs. Holton.

"No mystery at all, my love," remarked her husband. "When a man pops head foremost, or walks, into one of those dangerous mishaps, everybody knows where he has gone, and so the thing ends. In fact, it is ended already."

"There you are wrong, Holton," remarked Admiral Dickson, turning from his side of the table. "Having nothing better to do, I went over to the 'Tamar Inn' this afternoon to learn if there was anything fresh."

"Well?"

"Well, a fellow's come over from there, mentioned to me, this afternoon, who had some trouble over the family."

"Come; for what purpose?"

"To make inquiries. He declares he knows something of the private history of Grimshawe, and the man who came in, I thought, could not do something with such a semblance of truth. Then who was that woman?"

Major Ferramore and Gertrude's eyes met. She was deathly pale. He feared she would faint; but, with effort, she commanded herself, and gave the signal for the ladies to rise. As she passed the Major, who had opened the door for their exit, she whispered, "For mercy's sake, do not desert me!"

CHAPTER IX.

GERTRUDE PLAYS HER LAST CARD—THE SECRET!

The information the Honorable Augustus Beckwith had obtained from the "Tamar Inn" was perfectly correct. A gentleman, Mr. Lawrence Power, a thin, middle-aged man, whom he met in public, and in private, had evidently, in the darkness, fallen into the mine-shaft. Mr. Power did not gain say that. He merely remarked, "Those same mine-shafts were very convenient things at times."

In a quiet, busy way he noted down every word, every name, every story, an amount of knowledge respecting the event, as also of the sayings and doings of Mr. Grimshawe, greater than those who had been on the spot.

The next day, after the completion of his friend's visit to The Holme, and as naturally proceeded thither to pursue his investigations.

As Mr. Beckwith was walking toward evening up the lime-tree avenue, and looked first at that side and then upon the well-kept estate, a smile more than once spread over his face, and, in an accent of evident admiration, "A pretty thing to do. To say the least of it—a very pretty thing!"

Mr. Beckwith's eye was to see Gertrude was immediately granted, and he was ushered into the boudoir where the lady was seated, apparently engaged in writing.

Whether Gertrude had or had not expected this visit, and whether or not she had taken more than ordinary care with her toilette, it is certain that she made the most of what she usually was. And, as, with a graceful but stately inclination, she lent her dark, proud eyes on her visitor, the latter mentally confessed he would have been so lovely a woman.

"You desire to see me, sir," she said, in her soft, musical accents, "in regard to this late evening's interview with Mr. Mrs. Grimshawe—what is the name?"

Mr. Lawrence Power bowed.

"I fear I can assist you but little; but I will willingly do that for you."

"If, madam, you will do that, I shall be satisfied," responded the other. Then, after a glance at the door, and removing his chair nearer the writing-table, "You speak my friend's name, Mrs. Grimshawe, as if it were strange to you."

"And, sir, how otherwise could it be?"

Because at one time, Mrs. Grimshawe, it was familiar enough on your lips. Therefore, though nearly ten years have elaped, you should not have forgotten her.

Mr. Lawrence Power spoke quietly, but his words were none the less effective. Gertrude's lip quivered convulsively; her white teeth were tightly clenched; her eyes were blazing with a rage, which was unconcealed.

"I do not comprehend you, sir," she succeeded in replying, haughtily.

"Furnish me, madam, with no credence to that assertion," Listened. Mrs. Grimshawe. To a business man, such as I am, time is money; while, in any case to waste it is unnecessary. Before you have left, I intended to speak to you about the bush. You, at least, will understand that when I say I am conversant with all Mr. Grimshawe's affairs, I know how once you were friend, as, I am sure, the other day, when you recognized him, though, by making your horse rear, you tried to prevent his doing so. I know that he sought an interview with me in the evening. I know what must have been the subject of that interview. You saw in him a man who, by lifting his voice, could bring all this glorious fabric; you have so skillfully, so daringly, erected, about your ears. Mr. Grimshawe returned not to the inn and the supper he had ordered it.

"And, sir," demanded Gertrude, fiercely, defiantly, through her teeth, if all you have dared to assert were true, what had I to do with it?"

"That, Mrs. Grimshawe, will be my care to prove.

"You are a lawyer, sir?"

"I am."

"To prove, you must have proofs."

"I have them; and witnesses!"

"Well?"

The word broke from her lips involuntarily, and she sat suddenly erect.

"Exactly. That you parted from Mr. Grimshawe under a semblance of contrition—of friendship; that you pressed his hand in parting, and took most especial care to direct him to follow the same path over the housetop; "Great Heaven!" gasped Gertrude, dropping back, white and trembling.

A moment she was silent. Then, said some to her face. Your witnesses speak falsely. Direct him I did, but to the right path; not the wrong. My word, surely, is as good as theirs?"

"It would be, madam, if, by Mr. Grimshawe's death, the same personal advantage—the preservation of a dangerous secret."

"Do you mean, sir, that I—would have attempted this man's life?" asked, sharply.

"Why not, Mrs. Grimshawe? You are playing a dangerous game. You are a brave, a resolute, a sly woman. Who in this house had any desire for Mr. Grimshawe's death save you?"

Gertrude, her elbow on her chair, covered her eyes with her hand, apparently in thought. Suddenly slumping up, she said, haughtily, "And, sir, supposing this witness of yours should come forward—I gain credence where I could not—what would be the result?"

"Your arrest, madam."

"Mine? On what charge?"

"On charges of manslaughter!"

Again she hid her face. When once more she looked up, her countenance was haggard, but more calm.

"Who am I close, sir," she said, hoarsely. "What you force me to do, I from necessity, not inclination, must do. I would have died rather; but she shivered—"I cannot stop the criminal, for the curious to gaze at. Grant me an hour. Promise during that time to speak to no one on this matter, and, at the expiration of that period, will give you a full account of that unhappy evening."

Mr. Lawrence Power regarded her curiously. Did she mean flight? No; Mrs. Grimshawe was far too wise a woman to hope, which would instantly condemn her in the minds of a jury.

Besides, the space was so short, that he need never lose sight of The Holme. Again, he had strong reasons of his own for granting the request.

"Certainly, madam," he answered, rising.

"The favor is too slight, considering the reward, to meet with refusal. In one hour—... Return here and I will keep my word."

"Agreed!"

And, bowing, Mr. Power quitted the room.

When alone, Gertrude sat for some minutes immersed in painful thought. Finally, taking her pen, she began to write hurriedly, murmuring, "It is my only chance. After doing so much, I will not lose all. The game is played out!"

The letter she wrote was to Augustus Beckwith, and ran:

"DEAREST AUGUSTUS—"

I am grateful, after all, is less powerful love, or I am too weak to make myself a more capable one. Yet, as I told you, I could not, so, if your mind has not changed, an hour hence have the strength to do it."

"Yours, in sincerity and faith."

"Gertrude."

Addressing this, she ran the ball.

"Where is Mr. Beckwith?" she asked of the footman.

"I have just passed him in the hall, ma'am."

"And now?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then give him this note, and return to me."

On the man's coming back she told him when they would be ready; the man who had directed him, who would do in less than an hour, to see that he was shown into the library.

Gertrude repaired to her dressing-room, where she was busily engaged, until the period when Mr. Lawrence Power was to arrive. He was punctual; and as he entered the room by the door, he and Gertrude Grimshawe attired in a plain, dark silk, awaited him.

"His, sir, still your purpose to pursue this unhappy matter? she inquired, in a low tone, when he was seated.

"How, madam, could I do otherwise?"

"If you have no stronger cue to another, you would have been here."

Mr. Lawrence Power bowed.

"Then—and Gertrude drew a deep sigh—against my will, sir, you force me to confess the truth."

She paused.

He leaned nearer, anxiously.

"Such a period was that, I went to look. The subject of Mr. Grimshawe's interview with me was, as you stated, in reference to the past. What transpired, I do not feel called upon to state."

"It is not necessary, madam—at least not at present."

We parted better friends than we had met. He left the window, after I had directed him the path—mark me, sir, the right path—to take across the heath to the village."

Mr. Lawrence Power bowed.

"Now," proceeded Gertrude, "comes the most painful portion of my story. There is a
gentleman beneath this roof at the present moment who has honored me with his affection—no, no! Unhappily, coming to seek me, he entered the library unnoticed, and overheard the latter part of mine and your friend’s conversation.

"From which he drew, madam—"

"The truth—that Mr. Grimshaw was a former lover, and that I stood in fear of him. When he found me, he gave me no choice; so closely, that at the moment, desperate myself, I could not control my replies. I owned I regarded Mr. Grimshaw as an enemy; that while he lived I never could hope for happiness—never be his."

"And this gentleman?"

"Actuated by his love—I fear by jealousy—made my hand, bade me dread the man no more."

"Yes?"

"Saying this, he hastened from the window after Mr. Grimshaw. I know no more."

Mr. Lawrence looked steadily into the face of the beautiful woman before him. Her eyes met his unflinchingly, though sadly.

"As you must be aware, sir," she said, "this confession is very painful for me to make."

"I can understand that, madam. How did this gentleman behave on his return?"

"That is a question, sir, you must learn from me. He went as he came. I understand, however, that he was pale and agitated."

"I will detain you no longer then, madam," remarked Mr. Lawrence Power, rising. "Your opinion is—"

"The answer came clear and steady.

"That if Mr. Grimshaw was killed, Major Ferramore is his murderer!"

"No man can be so termed, Mrs. Greville," said a voice behind her, "unless the body is proved to be that of Mr. Edwin Grimshaw, but alive—not dead!"

Gertrude had started up with a cry, and now turning, recoiled, pale, trembling, before Mr. Power, the commercial traveler, and the white, accusing features of Major Ferramore.

"What right have you all here?" she gasped, seeking to recover her composure. "What does this mean?"

"That, Gertrude Sterling, more than I know you see the danger you are played," answered Mr. Grimshaw, stepping forward. "That the false direction across the heath which you gave me, intending my death, was certainly have led to, had not this lady saved me." And he indicated the companion.

Gertrude looked from one to the other like a beamed thunderbolt incessantly.

Her bosom heaved, but for a space she said nothing; then—"This has been a plot—a scheme against me," she cried, with defiance, "but you cannot arrest me—you cannot touch me! I dare you to do that! You live; no one has been harmed; and I defy you!"

"End it," said the officer, as if to prove whether they would attempt to check her.

They were silent.

"Mr. Grimshaw," she said, haughtily, "give me your hand—give it in your present condition."

"We have to answer at another time. Until then, this house is mine, and I order you—all of you—to quit it."

With a step of a queen, she swept by them from the room.

Then, however, her manner changed. Swiftly she ran to her dressing-room, hurrying for her opera attire, and taking a small hand-valise, which she had prepared, hastened by a servants' staircase into the garden.

The night was of a dense blackness. The storm which had been beating up for so many days, was about to break at last.

The distant thunder rolled incessantly.

A heavy, oppressive stillness seemed to hold all vegetation spell-bound. Gertrude heeded it not further than to revive in the darkness which insured concealment as she moved swiftly from the house. When she had crossed the lawn, she looked back.

The lights were in the library yet. She could perceive figures within, among them Mrs. Hendon and—Major Ferramore. We must have overheard her interview with Grimshaw, and followed and saved him. Hers was the female figure Major Ferramore had seen.

At this moment she reached the gate in the boundary fence. Opening it, she saw beyond a horse and chaise, with a man standing by. As she appeared, the latter stepped quickly forward.

"Gertrude, my darling," he exclaimed, as he caught her in his arms, "you have come!"

"Did you mistrust me, Augustus?" she murmured.

"But pray do not delay. My heart yet hesitates at the step I am about to take. Still, loving you, how can I face him?"

"Better as it is, my sweet love!" answered Augustus Beckwith, quickly. "How you tremble! Fear nothing; I have arranged things for us. We shall drive across country to Llanecoston, catch the night's mail to the junction, and there change for Scotland."

As he spoke, he had been placing Gertrude in the chaise, the valise at her feet. Soon he sprang up by her side, and gave the rather melodramatic animal he drove its head.

Gertrude was by no means a shrinking violet. She shall, and at a sharp pace they dashed over the heath. The Honorable Augustus Beckwith was not likely to spare the trip. Was not the prize he had played for safe?"

Gertrude Greville was his.

Onward they went—onward, while the thunder rolled and thundered. It threatened to be a fearful storm. Never mind; they must go through it.

Ha! the lightning as last! A flash—flash—flash! In a second the whole heath was illumined by the cold blue light, showing the chaise and its occupants being whirled along. Then the thunder—then another flash—dashing down as if right upon them.

So vivid was it that the horse reared up in terror. Then, seizing the bit between his teeth, bolted. Augustus Beckwith was no bad driver, but it was his power to rein in the frightened animal. Finally, with a mouth of iron, it plunged on, but fortunately in the right direction.

"Be calm, Gertrude!" exclaimed the young fellow. "Keep your seat! The brute will calm down in a few minutes!" and he took a tighter grip of the reins.

His companion made no answer. She had stooped once, raising the valise nearer her hand.

Another flash!

Once more the horse reared—halting a second. Then that moment Gertrude seized. Rapidly, lightly, she leaped out upon the moor, with the valise.

Before Augustus was aware of it the horse was darting on again. Then he noted her absence with a cry of horror. Had she been hung out? Was she hurt? Was she dead?

She glanced back. There was no sign.

Why did not the lightning come now, when it was wanted?

Ha!

A violent jolt—a bump—the young fellow felt himself flying through the air.

Then a great crash—a thousand lights danced in his eyes.

Then oblivion!

CHAPTER X.

GEORGE FERRAMORE'S EYES ARE OPENED.

WHEN Augustus Beckwith came to he found himself in bed in a strange, plainly-furnished room. He felt weak and ill—almost too much so to wonder where he was.

The sound caused him to turn his head, when he perceived his friend Helton reading in a chair by the bedside.

"Hello, old fellow!" he murmured, faintly. "Are you there? What does all this mean? Where am I?"

In the best room of decidedly not the best in the house, Helton, a tall, good-natured fellow, had ventured to hear you speak. God! you have had a narrow escape, my boy!"

"I have been so near hob-nobbing, then, with Mr. Grimshaw, and—"

"Well; no; I did not refer to that, my Augustus! But get a little stronger, and I'll tell you all."

"Then, Helton! I'm strong enough—weak in limb, may be, but my nerves are all right. I want to hear everything. Of course you know that?"

"That you, by Mrs. Greville's suggestion, eloped with her?"

"Exactly; but that confounded storm?"

"Stay; do not conceal that. My dear Augustus, which, when you have heard from what it has saved you, on your knees you will bless me."

"For goodness' sake, Helton," exclaimed the sick man, irritably, "stop speaking in riddles! How did I come here? Was Mrs. Greville hurt?"

"I suspect not; it, as a short time after the horse and shattered trap dashed up to the door of the 'Tamar,' Mrs. Greville passed very calmly through the village, carrying a valise, on the way to the railway station. Here she is now I don't know. A party, fearing an accident must have happened by the state of the vehicle, and in the heat, found you insolensible, and brought you here."

"That explains something but not all. Mrs. Greville—"

"Took more Mrs. Greville than I am, but a Miss Sterling, an adventuress, of whom you were the dupe."

"No!" ejaculated Beckwith, drawing himself up. "I am the gentleman of the old fellow. You don't mean that both of us were deceived?"

"No.

It appears that, finding the danger game she had been playing was on the eve of exposure, she planned an elopement with you, that she might score one trick."

"What! and, then, what is she?"

"She was the confidante of your friend to Mr. Arthur Greville, an eccentric old fellow of over seventy, who long had renounced society, and led a retired life in a little house in India, holding no communication with his relations and the circle of his immediate care but distant ones. A stroke off the poor old gentleman one day; whereupon Miss Gertrude Sterling, who knew all her employer's affairs as well as he did himself, superintended the funeral, let the estate, realized all the money she could, and came quietly over here as Mr. Arthur Greville's widow."

"Yet she must have been sure of ultimate detection?"

"No doubt. But my idea is that she hoped before to effect the elopement."

"Helton," said the Honorable Augustus, "this has very nearly been a case of bitter bit."

"Exactly."

"But how has the detection come about?"

"First, owing to that Mr. Grimshaw who disappeared so mysteriously, but who reappeared again."

"He was not down the mine-shaft?"

"No. All that happened I do not know; but it seems that he knew this Miss Greville and—"

"Come you—speak up!"

"I regret to tell you, as Mrs. Greville, would not believe her story, and threatened, if he did not see the marriage certificate, to make his suspicions public, become invisible to Miss Greville. Secondly, the worthy rector has received a letter from a Mr. Bryerton, who, having his doubts of the charming widow, had telegraphed inquiries to a friend in Calcutta, from whom he has obtained the information I have just recounted to you."
ENTANGLED; OR, A DANGEROUS GAME.

The Honorable Augustus Beckett laid back on his pillow with the sensation of a man who had just escaped some terrible accident. He said, "I must get out of this" (he meant the inn) "as soon as possible. I must get back to town." "He is the boy. Therefore drink this, go to sleep, and get strong enough as soon as you can." The Information Mr. Helton had imparted to the Fried Egg was correct in every particular.

The morning after the elopement, when the rector arrived and walked over to The Holme, with Mr. Bryerton's letter in his pocket, to, as a friend, give Gertrude a hint of its contents, and that the heir-at-law of Mr. Gertrude had, not long before, left. Mr. Helton, finding the Holts already gone, the Vans on the point of departure, and the servants in a state of alarm about their wages.

From Mrs. Hendriksen, who was calm and self-possessed as usual, he learned all that had occurred.

Of Mr. Grimshawe's visit—how she, the companion, had overheard the interview, and had heard Gertrude Sterling direct Mr. Grimshawe to "go over there." He said, "I must make the best, and how she, following, had prevented his destruction. Mrs. Hendriksen said nothing of Major Ferramore, though she had heard that interview too.

Then the rector, having been told of the elopement, asked for a look at the letter from Mr. Bryerton, which both Misses Eliza and Josephine, the latter one, had brought. Mr. Bryerton's letter a secret, but made more visits in one day in his parish than he had ever done on any previous occasion.

Gertrude Sterling, on board a Weymouth packet, was proceeding to Jersey, whence she crossed to the Continent, and was lost sight of all in this story, after last night.

"My unhappy, most cruelly treated wife! Oh, Mrs. Hendriksen, I have been enthralled by a mad infatuation!"

"You loved her!"

"Loved her!"—and Major Ferramore started to cry. "After what you have witnessed, beheld, felt, you will not be surprised that I loved her, through all. I now know I never loved her—but that I was unworthy of her."

"Tell me of her. Do you know her?"

"No; no, I do not. I know of her only by good thoughts when in the act of committing evil. Now I feel my sole happiness in life can only consist in recollecting, in living upon the remembered presence of her who is gone."

He paused, overcome with emotion. Then he told her all.

"And not unwillingly, then, did you leave her on the wreck?" asked Mrs. Hendriksen.

"Willingly?" he cried. "Well, true, from what you know of me why should you judge me better?"

"Believe me, I will judge you at the best," she answered, kindly. "But now, what do you propose doing?"

"Remonstrating society, which no longer has charm or interest for me," he answered. "The present, the future, are dead. I have but the past to live in."

"Nay, nay; you have had a severe shock—may I say, a severe lesson?—Major Ferramore; but you are young—you will find time a marvellous healer. Happiness is yet in store for you, I trust."

"You mistake—never!" he answered, firmly. "Life can be but a wretched burden to one who is unable to bear the weight of a single soul."

"We are coming into the harbor, sir."

"Farewell, Mrs. Hendriksen, quitting you, I leave my only friend!"

"Farewell, but surely we shall meet again!"

"Goodbye, with emotion, while her fingers clung about his."

"To hope so would indeed give me pleasure," he said.

"Where—where are you going to from here, Major Ferramore, may I ask?"

"Certainly," he answered, with a wan smile. "I am about to recommend myself to your notice."

"I go to Stornoway."

"We shall meet—we must again!" murmured the companion. "That address will find me."

He took the paper she gave gratefully, kissed her hand twice, said farewell again, and was lost to sight.

As the door closed, Mrs. Hendriksen made a quick movement toward it. Then, by a violent effort, stopped.

"No, no, no—never! The time has not yet arrived. Let me not commit a folly—a madness! Ah!"

"There was the sound of wheels on the drive. The companion staggered rather than walked to the window. A chaise was rolling rapidly from The Holme.

"Go—go!" cried Mrs. Hendriksen; and sunk, half fainting, onto a chair.

CHAPTER XI.

ONCE AGAIN.

Six months have elapsed.

The Holme, swept and garnished, is now in possession of Mr. Arthur Greville, heir-at-law, and Gertrude Sterling, the new Mrs. Beesley.

Only does Mrs. Hendriksen recall her at this moment as she is whirled across Scotland to Stornoway.

She is not at all altered, only there is a present trouble and great anxiety on her features as she first looks at a letter she keeps guardingly in her hand.

Then out onto the bleak, wintry land the train is flying through.

The Mill is from Major Ferramore. It is from Stornoway, and runs thus:

DEAR MRS. HENDRIKSEN:

The end is near, and I rejoice that I am ill. The doctor calls it debility. He may be right. I know that I am dying, and half with delight the reality of the affair and Mrs. Hendriksen would not be any longer a danger to the grave. I cannot tell him that she is alone, while that Lucie awaits such a fate."

Before I depart, however, I could not resist one word of farewell to a woman to whom I owe so much. Good-bye, on this earth, kind friend, forever!"

GERTRUDE FERRAMORE.

The instant Mrs. Hendriksen had received this she started for Stornoway.

"Should she find a boat to take her over the Minch?"

And all at the wildly tossing leafless branches she feared.

Her fears were realized.

On reaching the port in Skye, from whence she had intended to embark for Harris, she found so rough a sea that no boat would venture out.

Could death be certain to those who tried the passage?" she asked.

"Not death, but trouble, risk, danger."

"Then," said Mrs. Hendriksen, firmly, "fifty pounds to the man who is brave enough to take me over. I have no fear."

There was silence, but the reward had effect. A strong, weather-beaten Skye man accepted the challenge. Mrs. Hendriksen was thus tossed on the stormy waters of the little Minch.

"The boat will never live," had been the remark on shore; and soon it was the opinion of the daring Skye man.

But the boat was good, and he and his small crew had land in sight; and Mrs. Hendriksen, with her passion, their hopes, their lives, rose on a wave.

After many hours of fierce beating about and peril, the harbor of Harris was reached.

Mrs. Hendriksen, fatigued, disheartened, was drenched with the spray, yet would accept neither rest nor refreshment but what she could take as she traveled.

She had that which is a passport in all civilized countries—money—and was soon being conveyed from Harris to Stornoway.

"I have reached it, and was ushered into Major Ferramore's room. He was seated in a pillow chair by the fire, pale and thin, but happily apparent.

His eyes brightened as he saw who was his visitor, and, extending his wasted hands, cried, "How do you think I could have stopped away! But no, no! you did not write the truth—you wrote only what you believed. You—you are not ill!"

"Yes, it is the truth," he smiled. "I am dying, because I do not care to live."

"What have you got in mind for this world?" she asked, in a low tone.

"I have one wish, a hopeless wish," he answered, gravely—"my Lucie's forgiveness, which is impossible."
"No, no! for she has forgiven long ago, George, my husband! do you not know me?" Major Ferramore uttered a great cry, for the disguise had been swiftly thrown off, and in the woman now kneeling before him he beheld the pretty golden head and fair, fresh face of his young wife.

"Lucie!" he gasped, overcome by a mighty joy, and with a burst of tears. "Ah!"

"Alive, to comfort—to support—to love you, my husband!" she answered, encircling him with her arms. Alive to bring you back to the toil—-to life, George, you will not—-you shall not die now!"

"Oh, Lucie, my darling, is it a dream!" he murmured dazedly, as he kissed her lips. "I was saved, George, in the life-boat!"

"Saved!" Yes. But thinking that I had ceased to possess you, George, you were weary of me when they asked our names, I gave as mine a strange one, that you might be free.

"Oh, Lucie!" he groaned.

"How, dearest," she interrupted, laying her cheek on his. "Aware, however, that this woman's subtle power would be exerted to draw you to her side—-though assured your love was but a mad, transient fatality, and that she cared little for you beyond a flattered vanity—I procured the place of that companion, which, as I said, George, on board, she said she required when at The Holme. Thus, love, I was able to be near you, who in all the world was still dearest to me, and on the spot to save you from the hands of the fiend Stirling. I contrived to place weding you, which, the more I was acquainted with her, the more certain I felt that she intended not to do."

"And, Lucie," he murmured, "you never made yourself known!"

"Why should I, when I believed my death had been a release to you? No, George, but for the confession you made me last evening at The Holme—but for your evident repentance—you never would have learnt another than that the sea had been my grave."

"But, my wife, why did you not tell me then that I was the happiest instead of the most wretched of men?"

She rested her face on his breast, and was silent.

"I know!" he exclaimed. "You would not trust so sudden a repentance. You wished to prove—to test my sincerity; and you were right."

"It was so, George," she answered. And now,—ah, Lucie! I fear to ask—to hope.

"Ask and hope, George, of me as you would have done of Lucie Markham when you first received her at the altar. I am your wife—your Lucie!; and now, for I feel that nothing in this world save death ever can again come between us!"

"It is so," exclaimed Major Ferramore, as he held her close—-close to his bosom. "Is there any thing on earth that can surpass a pure woman's devotion?"

The END.
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