

THE PROUD HERO.

He rode in state before the crowd That lined the thoroughfare; He heard the cannon booming loud, He saw the hats in air.



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CHAPTER VIII.

Leaving the physician's office, Holbin made his way through the streets, where excited crowds were discussing the approaching conflict.

But why not Frances? No explanations were necessary there; and she was young and, of course, easily frightened.

"I have a matter of great importance, Frances, to discuss with you in private, and much as I dislike to be guilty of intrusion there seems to be no help for it."

"To you, Mr. Holbin, I am always Miss Brooklin, and there cannot possibly be any subject in which we are jointly interested so important as to necessitate immediate discussion."

"I am sorry if I shall appear abrupt," he said, "but there is a subject, and there is no time to waste. Night before last a man sat in this chair, you knelt in front of him, and some one fired through the window, wounding him in the head."

"Mr. Holbin!" Frances, although forewarned, was but a girl, and could not keep the tell-tale blood from her face.

"Do not attempt to deceive me. Give me the name and your reasons."

"By what right do you demand this, sir?" Her voice steadied as she looked him fearlessly in the eyes.

"By the right which your father's will confers. For if you take one course under that will, this property is his widow's, my mother's; and if you take the other—"

"In the meantime," she said, coldly, "I have several years in which to decide, and during those years neither you nor your mother can drive me from this house."

"Drive you, Frances!" "Miss Brooklin!"

"Come, this is folly! I am, whether willing or unwilling, the present head of this family, or at least this household. All Richmond will hold me responsible for everything that happens here contrary to propriety, and I must insist that you explain this most remarkable occurrence. Do not force me to ask assistance of the police, and thus make the matter public." The girl did not flinch.

"I am not afraid that you will do that, Mr. Holbin; you have too much at stake. Dr. Brodnar, besides, has told you that he was in this room, and Richmond will want to know why, if there is anything wrong afoot, you do not hold him responsible. No one has been in this room—until now—except by my consent, and if any crime has been committed, the criminals are probably better known to you than anyone else. I am totally in the dark; I have no idea why anyone, especially a woman, should attempt to shoot a friend of mine here."

"A woman! Who told you a woman did it?" "My own eyes. I saw her tracks; and now, sir, who told you? Was it the woman?" Holbin laughed silently.

"You play that as though it were trump," he said. "Perhaps no woman's tracks have ever been there but yours. It is your garden."

"Only, I saw them before I made any tracks there," she said, quietly.

"I don't question your honesty, Miss Brooklin, but others might; and if people were disposed to judge you kindly they would simply suggest that you had a powerful motive." To this she disdained a reply.

"Your wife? Have you supposed for a moment, sir, that I shall ever become your wife?" Frances came back and stood before him. "Why, Mr. Holbin, there is not wealth enough in Virginia to bring about that!"

"Miss Brooklin"—and Holbin sank his voice to the most courteous of tones, and met her glances without embarrassment—"why is it that you dislike me?"

"I have not given the matter a thought, sir. I simply accept the fact." He was silent a moment, his eyes cast down.

"You hate my mother," he said, sadly and bitterly, "and I am included; I understand that. But admitting that you have cause to hate her—and I do not—you have none to hate me. Consider the injustice. Let me say now—I did not expect ever to say it, but a man is no man who will not defend himself—let me say now that, so far from having cause to hate me, if profound respect, if sympathy for your loneliness, if genuine affection and the tenderest love count for anything with a woman, you have more than sufficient cause to think well of me."

Frances looked upon him with amazement, touched in spite of her resolution. He was not slow to perceive this. "My mother," he continued, "is not from the world's standpoint a lovable woman, but she is—my mother; and I am her son. She is self-willed; but she is just. Shall I admit it to you? She has made my life unhappy; she has been the cause of my living abroad—"

"Who was Louise, then? And why should the mention of her name—have killed my father?" She covered her face with her hands, and gave way gently to her tears. He waited a few moments until she regained her composure.

"There are turned down pages in the lives of all men, Miss Brooklin—and in the lives of some women. Another time I shall tell you the history of Louise, and let you judge me if you will. But I swear to you now as though I stood in the presence of God, that I did not lead her off by means of a mock marriage—I did not! You may not understand it, but there are times when the man is not alone to blame in these matters. He is involved through his chivalry; and in trying to protect a woman he sometimes ruins both the woman and himself. I have sinned, but if you knew how I suffered you would pity, not blame me. Complete reparation was impossible—but I have done my best; and to-day my life is as free from evil as most men's."

In no other way could Holbin have so touched the girl's heart. At the moment she did pity him. Recent scenes in her own life rose before her as he had spoken. She turned to him, generous and impulsive.

"Forgive me if I have misjudged you," the words surprised and alarmed her. He was not slow to see his opportunity and take advantage of it.

"If you misjudged me, it was natural; for never was a man more unfortunately situated to achieve the dearest wish of his heart than I am."

"Your dearest wish—" she began.

"The wish to make you my wife, Frances; you will think it a very natural wish under the circumstances surrounding us, I am afraid, and yet, whatever may have been my mother's interest in your father's will, I knew nothing whatever of it. Why, I have been here a few weeks only. And do you suppose for one moment that I could share in any property extorted from you by such strange circumstances? I am not the heir, if you refuse to marry me, but I may help you, and I will. My dear girl, upon the 27th you are 21 if I am sure that you do not wish to take your property with the encumbrance of a husband, I shall in writing decline to marry you."

"Oh, Mr. Holbin!" "For the rest—this miserable mystery—you are answered already. If I believed that you were in any way compromised, I would not admit that I love you—!"

"Please! please do not—!" "I could not even remain in this city and doubt you. But as a man who has seen many a woman the innocent victim of mistakes and bad advice, I am bound to use every endeavor to protect your own and my mother's interests. This Dr. Brodnar—"

"He is my friend! Don't speak ill of him!" "I speak ill of no one. But I warn you that he is absolutely unfit to advise a girl. Headstrong, opinionated, arrogant, he stakes everything upon his own judgment, and when such a man loses, he loses for others besides himself. Frankly, I have seen men by the ten thousand until one man's face anywhere indicates the moral tribe to which he belongs; and I tell you Dr. Brodnar may be true to one friend at the expense of another—"

"I cannot listen if you accuse him." "I shall not accuse him. I shall only say that I now demand nothing of you, but I ask you as a man whose tenderest solicitude is for you to inform me of the mysterious occurrence in this room. Will you?" Frances

was embarrassed; but she looked up at length with a kinder look in her face than he had yet seen.

"There is nothing I may tell you," she said, "but this: I am sorry, sincerely sorry, that I have misjudged you, and I think you are generous and kind to me."

"For that I thank you. And now again forgive me for having troubled you to-day—the matter seemed a pressing one. Will you—will you still insist on the 'Miss Brooklin?' May I not sometimes say 'Frances?'"

"It matters little," she said at length. But when he was gone she reviewed her action with growing wonder. "What possessed me—what influenced me to yield so much?" she asked herself over and over. She was too young to know that a mystery was involved in that question as old as the human race.

CHAPTER IX.

The momentary happiness which his unexpected impression upon Frances brought to Holbin soon gave place to jealous rage. It was impossible for him to rest satisfied. He told himself that the war was on; that he had been wonderfully successful in his contact with the secret foe, and that victory was still possible.

He went forth blindly into the city, seeking information of an unknown wounded man, but, of course, no explanation was forthcoming, for the reason that no one knew of such a man. At dark he sought the policeman whose beat was nearest the Brooklin residence.

Pistol shot? Oh, yes; he had heard pistol shots every night since the war fever came on; and the town was full of excitement. And the officer remembered also that recently a carriage had been twice driven furiously upon his street near daylight—the incident had impressed him because the hour was that in which the city was usually quietest. He had been under the impression that the carriage belonged to Dr. Brodnar, and he had satisfied himself with the reflection that some sudden illness had made the speed necessary. "Why," he asked, "is there anything wrong afoot?" Raymond assured him that there was not and passed on, leaving the officer convinced to the contrary.

All the facts Holbin had gathered now confirmed Louise, but he had reached the limit of his powers except in one direction. "Mammy" was the last witness, and he hesitated long because of her relation to Frances. Finally, in desperation he privately summoned her to his room. The woman stood looking curiously at him as he charged back and forth across the floor until he paused and confronted her.

"You are called mammy, I believe," he said, sternly.

"Yes, sah!" Mammy was startled and amazed.

"You are, of course, aware that you now belong to my mother, and that I have charge of all her property."

"Huccum, sah, I b'long to yo' ma? I done b'long ter ole miss, an' she gi' me 'specially to Miss Frances!" Mammy adjusted her glasses and looked at him anxiously.

"That makes no difference, woman. We recognize no will in this house that conflicts with my mother's! I

want you to answer my questions now and conceal nothing, or it will be an unfortunate day for you, old as you are! Where were you night before last?" Mammy was astounded. No one ever addressed her in such a manner. She had long been a privileged character. True, since the coming of the second Mrs. Brooklin she had lost much of her prestige, but she still held sway over the servants; and in the wing she reigned supreme.

"I was out to see my daughter what is hired to Dr. Brodnar, an' her husband, he b'longs ter de doctor, sah, an' tends de horses."

"When did you return?" Mammy looked critically at her questioner and waited. "Answer me!"

"Oh, I come erlong back nex' day, sah."

"At what time—at what time?" "Long 'bout daylight, I reckon, sah."

"Where was your Miss Frances when you came?" "Where was Miss Frances? Where you reckon Miss Frances gointer 'bout daylight but in bed?"

"In bed, was she?" "Yes, sah; an' sleepin' like er fed kitten. What for you askin' me 'bout young miss?"

"Answer my questions. Where did you daughter's husband spend the night?" "He spen' de night wid de doctor, 'course—comin' an' goin' to sick folks dese like 'e always do!"

"Did he have the carriage out?" "Course he hed de kerriage out!" Holbin walked the floor, more and more disturbed. He adopted a more gentle method.

"Mammy, how long have you been with this family?" "Ole marster—way back yonder—gi' me to ole miss when she was born; an' ole miss gi' me ter Miss Frances, sah. Been hyah always!"

"Nothing on earth could tempt you to say or do anything that would endanger your young mistress, of course."

"No, sah. Ole miss say, day she die: 'Mammy, take eyar my chile; an' I hole 'er han' an' promise.'"

"Do you know that I am to marry your Miss Frances?" "Fo' God! Who tol' you dat?"

"It was in her father's will. But you are not to speak of that—not a word, even to her. The time will come, mammy, when I shall rely upon you to help me take care of her and make her happy. Will you help me?"

"Yes, sah. You can depen' on mammy night or day. But, marster, when you goin' marry Miss Frances? She ain' nothin' but er chile now."

"I know that, and that is why I am consulting with you. I am going to tell you a secret. Will you keep it? It is to help her."

"Yes, sah! I ain' goin' tell nobody, sah."

"Do you know what happened in her room night before last, mammy, while you were away?" "What happen dere, sah?"

"A man was shot in there and desperately wounded." "Hush!" The woman's dismay was genuine; so was her curiosity. She leaned forward eagerly. "Who dat done shot 'im?"

"I don't know." "Who de man got shot?" "I don't know that. Was there nothing wrong about the room when you came back?" He saw the quick intelligence in her face; and then the African cunning and secretiveness returned.

She shook her head. "No, sah. Warn't nothin' wrong when I come." Then he played his last card.

"You know more than you will tell me; but I cannot waste any more time with you, mammy. If your mistress is arrested before morning you go back to the country for life."

"Take up my Miss Frances!" Mammy staggered and sank upon the edge of a chair.

"Yes. The man who was shot in that room is dead."

"Dead!" "Yes. And I can do nothing. Everybody hides the facts from me."

"Young marster, you don't mean dey gointer tek up ole miss's chile?" "I can't say positively. If I thought so, I would have her out of this city in six hours, and you with her."

[To Be Continued.]

A BABYLONIAN BRICK.

Record of a Domestic Incident Preserved in One of the Perishable Tablets.

It is marvelous what a mass of detailed information has come down to us in the form of perishable brick tablets inscribed, or rather stamped before firing, with minute and complicated inscriptions and preserved in the buried libraries beneath the mounds of the Tigris and Euphrates valley.

Prof. Sayce is able, for instance, to tell us from one of these tablets how a widow brought an action before the royal judges to recover her husband's property. She stated that after their marriage she and Ben-Hadad-Nathan had traded together and that a house had been purchased with a portion of her dowry. This house, the value of which was as much as 110 manehs, 50 shekels, or £62 10s., had been assigned to her in perpetuity. The half-brother now claimed everything, including the house. The case was tried at Babylon before six judges in the ninth year of Nabonidus, and they decided in favor of the plaintiff. This might be an extract from the law reports of the 'Times, and other details of ancient Babylonian and Assyrian life are not less precise. "In the reign of Ammidadak three men rented a field for three years on terms of partnership, agreeing to give the owner during the first two years one gur of grain upon each acre. The whole of the third harvest was to go to the lessees and the partners were to divide the crop in equal shares on the day of the harvest." This seems a pleasant kind of agreement, worthy of imitation. The third year free of rent must have been delightful.

Mimicking the Queen. Few people are perhaps aware how thoroughly Queen Victoria enjoyed a joke. A gentleman in waiting, whom we will call Mr. B—, distinguished for his imitative powers and dramatic talent, was a frequent visitor at both Windsor and Osborne. One day the queen, looking with a certain austerity straight into his face, demanded: "Now, Mr. B—, I am perfectly well aware that when my back is turned you imitate me. I wish to see how you do it this minute!" Poor Mr. B— fell straightway into the royal trap, crimsoned, faltered and utterly lost his countenance. "Ah!" exclaimed the queen, "I see I was right. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" and then added, laughing as heartily as any schoolgirl: "But, mind you, don't do it again."—London Chronicle.

His Wise 'Sav.' The bishop of Ripon, Dr. Boyd Carpenter, as becomes the only Irish occupant of an English see, appears to be the wit of the Episcopal bench. When about to lay the foundation stone of a new vicarage at Wakefield not long ago he was invited by the architect, who handed him the trowel and the line and plummet, to become "an operative mason for a few moments."

"I cannot," answered the bishop, "lay claim to the title of an operative mason, but I am certainly a working Carpenter."—Chicago Times-Herald.

DISCOVERY OF BOTTLED BEER.

A "True Piece of History"—The Happy Adventure of a Reverend English Fisherman.

A great deal of controversy has been going on of late regarding the origin of "bottled beer," and the following piece of true history will therefore be interesting, as it is little known, says the London Globe.

In the middle of the sixteenth century Alexander Nowell, D. D., was head master of Westminster school, a prebendary of the abbey, and the possessor of a charming country residence, named Redhall, situated near Clitheroe, Lancashire, whither he was wont to retire during the holidays.

Now, Dr. Nowell was a staunch Protestant, so when Edward VI. died and Queen Mary succeeded to the throne, he thought it prudent to forsake the cloister for Redhall Park, having a very shrewd suspicion that if he did not trouble might befall. The doctor was an enthusiastic and expert angler, and, thanks to the well-stocked trout streams running through his Lancashire demesne, he had every opportunity for indulging in his favorite pursuit.

One fine May morning, then, saw Nowell preparing his rod and tackle, and, as it promised to be a scorching hot day, he, before starting out, took the precaution of filling a large stone bottle with home-brewed ale. The sun rose higher and higher in the heavens, the fisherman got warmer and warmer, and the stone bottle became more and more of an incubator. He, therefore, determined to leave the bottle in a safe place until he felt ready to enjoy its refreshment, and what could be more suitable for the purpose than the hollow of an old pollard tree, overhanging the water, ensconced in which the stream could gently lave the bottom of the jar and keep the contents fresh and cool. Hardly had this been done when he heard a voice calling his name, and, looking around, saw one of his servants, his features agitated with terror. "They've come, sir! They've come!" the man cried. "Who has come?" asked the amazed doctor. "The soldiers of Bloody Mary, sir; they are searching high and low for you; they are ransacking your chests; and one varlet has a piece of paper bearing a great seal and the queen's name on it."

"Has he" grimly replied Nowell, and, without further ado—forgetful of his fish, forgetful of his stone bottle—he tucked up his cassock and fled across the meadows. After some days of perilous wandering Nowell reached Chester safely, where an old Westminster boy, named Francis Bowyer, a merchant of the city, received him into his house and eventually smuggled him to the continent in one of his own trading vessels.

Six years had elapsed; Queen Mary was dead; Queen Elizabeth was on the throne, and Nowell was back in Lancashire. Once again a hot May morning saw him setting forth to fish, but this time, fortunately, neglecting to take with him a bottle of ale. As the day waxed hotter, Nowell became both tired and thirsty. He dropped his rod, and his thoughts drifted back to that eventful May morning six years ago, and then to the stone bottle which he had so carefully stowed away in the hollow of the pollard tree. Was the bottle still there, he wondered. He wandered down the stream until he picked out that particular root, and, kneeling down, thrust in an arm. Out came the bottle, apparently none the worse for its long sojourn. Nowell was very thirsty; the icy coolness of the stone was most tantalizing. Of course, the contents were undrinkable, thought he; still he was very thirsty; just one cautious sip. The cork, swollen and damp with age, was extracted, and the bottle lifted to the lips. Ye gods and little fishes. What was this heavenly nectar he was tasting? Nowell threw back his head and took a long, deep draught. Could anything be more delicious than this amber ale, mellowed by time and cooled to a nicety? What were the wines of Rhineland which he had thought so excellent during his exile in Germany as compared with this delectable fluid?

That same night Dr. Nowell summoned his whole household in solemn conclave. Every empty pitcher, jar and bottle that could be found was filled with honest English ale, corked, and then consigned to the cellars. The doctor had "discovered" bottled beer; but for some years it was a still-room secret of Redhall park, until at last the discovery was given to the world, and the popularity of the new liquid speedily established itself.

She Knew. Mildred, who is a wee mite in years and stature, is the sunshine of a certain home. It is frequently the custom for her father to read aloud from the daily papers to the family members when he comes home in the evenings. His business has to do with the wholesaling of books, and for that reason he is much interested in the benefactions of Mr. Carnegie in establishing free libraries. These articles he always reads aloud, and Mildred has come to know in a vague way about the philanthropist giving away so many free libraries. It so happened that on a recent evening her father noticed an advertisement in the paper which he thought might interest his wife, and he read it aloud. The advertisement was headed "A Picture Given Away Free." Mildred listened closely, and after he had finished she said: "I bet I know who giv's th' pickler away."

"Who, dear?" queried her mother. "Why, Mister Carnegie—'at's who," Ohio State Journal.

THE SASKATOON DISTRICT.

One of the New Western Canada Districts—The Great Advantages of Settlement Where the Soil is of Unexampled Fertility.

During the past year or two a large number of American settlers (those going from the United States to Canada), have made homes in the Saskatoon district in western Canada. They have found the climate all that could be desired, and their prospects are of the brightest. In writing of it a correspondent says:

The lands for sale are choice selections from a large area, and every farm is within easy distance of a railway station. Experience has shown that this district enjoys immunity from summer frost, from cyclones and blizzards. The South Saskatchewan, flowing through the tract, is one of the finest rivers in the country, being navigable and having an average width of stream of 1,000 feet.

The agents of the government of Canada, whose advertisement appears elsewhere in your paper, and who will be glad to give full information, tell me that within the limits of the tract there are two distinct varieties of soil. One is a rich black loam; and the other is a somewhat lighter loam, containing a small admixture of sand. There appears to be no appreciable difference between the fertility of these two kinds of soil. Both are alluvial in their characteristics; both are marvelously productive, and both rest upon a sub-soil of clay. The advantage of this formation is that it retains the heat of the day during the night, and is favorable to the early maturity of crops. Every kind of crop will here attain the highest perfection of quality. The land is admirably adapted for stock raising and dairy farming, as well as growing grain. Some idea of the richness of the natural grasses of the prairie may be formed from the fact that more than 200 tons of hay were gathered within a short distance of Saskatoon and stored up for use during the winter. A growth so luxuriant demonstrates beyond all possible question the suitability of the land for pasturing cattle, and no doubt this important industry will be largely carried on.

Nature has been lavish in her gifts to this territory. Not only is the soil of unexampled fertility, but the climate is delightful and healthy. Such is the testimony of every settler, and this testimony is confirmed by enthusiastic opinions from every traveler, explorer, missionary or newspaper correspondent who has ever visited this far-famed Saskatchewan Valley. In former years vast herds of buffalo came here to winter from the elevated storm-swept regions south of the United States boundary line, proving thereby the adaptation of these rolling prairies to the purpose of raising stock. The land is dry, with sufficient, but not excessive, rainfall, capable of early cultivation in the spring, and free from summer frosts. The configuration of the country renders artificial drainage unnecessary, and prevents the accumulation of stagnant pools; mists and fogs are seldom seen. The days of summer are full of sunshine, under the genial influence of which crops rapidly ripen. Autumn is characterized by an almost unbroken succession of fine weather, during which the crops are safely garnered. In winter it is cold, but extremely exhilarating and pleasant, owing to the wonderful dryness and bracing qualities of the air. The winter is a source of profit as well as enjoyment to the people, being far healthier than a humid climate.

Water and fuel, these two prime necessities of life, are plentiful throughout the district.

WOMAN RACES AGAINST TIME. Charters a Special Train to Catch a Steamer at San Francisco.

Miss Margaret Windeyer, of Sidney, Australia had an expensive race to catch the steamer Sierra, which sailed the other morning for the antipodes. Miss Windeyer was coming across the continent to take the steamer, and late in the afternoon of the day before the steamer sailed she learned that the train would not reach San Francisco until three hours after the boat had sailed.

She was determined to get the boat. She had to reach Sidney by a certain date or lose much money, because of some legal contract. "Get me a special train," she told the conductor. A locomotive and one car brought her to San Francisco from Wadsworth, just three minutes before the Sierra was to move from the wharf.

One of Traffic Manager McCormick's young men was waiting with a carriage, into which he hurried the young woman, and the hack was furiously driven to the wharf. The hackman obtained five dollars for his skill.

Smart Answer. "You fell into the creek with your new breeches on?" "Yes, pop. You see, I fell in, so quick I hadn't time to take them off."

A smart answer, my son. So suppose you take them off now."—Philadelphia Times.

A New Monocle. "What a peculiar monocle that golfer is wearing!" "Yes, that is the very latest. It is called the boot-monocle."—Detroit Journal.

The Cloth of Fall River. Fall River easily leads all other cotton manufacturing centers in America. It has about one-fifth of all the cotton spindles in the United States, and more than twice as many as any other industrial center in America. It makes 843,000,000 yards of cloth annually. Every working day its mills weave more than 1,500 miles of cloth. If all the mills could be run on one piece of cloth the fastest express train could not travel fast enough to carry off the piece as it is woven, since the product is more than two miles a minute.—New England Magazine.