The Bloomfield Times.

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THE DISCARDED DAUGHTER.

OR

CAPTAIN JOHN'S COURTSHIP.

CONCLUDED.

With Saddler's help, he found, after a search of several days, a manufacturer of cravats, who agreed to take her into his work shop at a small compensation, and although the captain knew that she was capable of better things than this, she was so anxious to be doing something, however little, that he consented to her taking the place until a better could be found. As she realized her security in this new position and began to feel that the old life was really left behind, she began also to appreciably improve in spirits and appearance. Numberless little contrivances of taste in dress, forgotten and uncared for during the dark days of her former wretchedness, began to offer themselves to the captain's notice on his visits, and it was with much satisfaction that he saw the bloom on he cheek gain brightness and permanency as the days went by. She seemd to regard his frequent visits as the chief pleasure of her life. As he ascended the dark stairs, he would almost always find her at the top of them, waiting for him expectantly. On those evenings, poor Mary Marsh would endeavor to appear at her best. But Captain Burrill never knew that her toilet on those occasions occupied half an hour longer than usual. He never knew how frequently before his arrival she had cautiously opened the door and listened for his step. He never saw the brown eyes fastened upon him, as the eyes of men sometimes fasten upon the woman they love, following him in his every movement in the room. He only knew at these times that somehow his hat would be whisked out of his hand, his overcoat removed from his shoulder, the best chair in the room wheeled up from before the fire, and Mary seated in her old place opposite, almost before he had crossed the threshold.

One evening—it was winter then—he came to Mary's room with a budget of news for her.

"We are in luck," he said, after he had warmed hismelf by the fire. "I have got a place for you more adapted to your capabilities than a cravat-maker's shop. Look here!"

He took from his pocket a letter, upon which Mary, looking over his shoulder, saw the postmark, "Philadelphia."

"I have received this from a friend residing in Philadelphia," he continued, "who writes to request my services in finding for him a governess for his children, two little girls of six and eight years.—He asks me to send him a person of refinement, well educated and not too old to have some sympathies in common with the pupils who will be placed in her charge. For a teacher who will fulfil these requirements he will pay the sum of eight hundred dollars a year, besides receiving her on an equal social footing with the members of his own family. And whom can I recommend, Mary, but you? You have had an excellent education, and in the work of cultivating these little fresh hearts and intellects you will find the best assistance and grace for your own reformation."

He had expected her to overwhelm him with a profusion of thanks. He looked at least for some outward show of gratitude and enthusiasm. But she stood by his side gazing thoughtfully in the fire, and her cheek had grown white as the ashes beneath the grate.

"Mary," said the captain, reproachfully, "isn't this good news for you? Don't you rejoice at it, as I have done all the day before I came here?"

Still she made him no answer, and the captain, a little disappointed, put the letter back in his pocket.

"O Captain Burrill," she said, coming to herself at last, "is there no other way? Must I really go to Philadelphia?"

"Certainly not," replied the captain, in some surprise; "certainly not, if you have any objection, but you will never have another chance like this. Are you in doubt as to your ability? I have no fears of that."

"No," she said, "not that—not that."

"And what then?" asked the captain. "I should suppose you would be willing to make any sacrifice to get away from the scene of your past life. I imagined this city to be odious to you."

She turned away from the fire abruptly and, walking to the window, looked wearily out into the night. The captain, after a moment's hesitating wonder at her strange manner, followed her.

"Mary," he said, "there is some weighty reason why you do not think favorably of this plan. Can you not yet believe me to be your friend? No one can have your interests more at heart than I. Will you tell me what this objection is?"

"Oh," she cried, burying her face in her hands, "it is because you are so good a friend to me that I cannot tell you. You would hate me, you would despise me, if I should whisper it."

"Can it be worse than what you have already told me?" he asked. "You have related some terrible things about yourself, and yet I have not hated or despised you."

"It is worse—a thousand times worse," she said, "because it betrays a weakness I thought I had conquered long ago. Spare me this, sir, and let me go on in the old way. I am earning very little, but let me stay here."

"You shall stay, if you desire it," said Captain Burril, knitting his brow; "but you have disappointed me."

"O my God!" she cried, wringing her hands. "You will wrench it from me. Can you not see the truth?"

"No, on my life I can't," replied the captain, bewilderedly.

She turned to him and gently folded her white arms about his neck.

"I love you! she whispered.

If a thunderbolt had come crashing through the ceiling and buried itself at the captain's feet, or Satan had risen, robed in all his blazing terrors, from the glowing coals in the fire-place, the captain could hardly have been more completely astounded. So great was his amazement that he involuntarily recoiled a step and seized the woman by the wrist. In an instant she tore herself from his grasp and sank down upon the floor, trembling like a leaf.

"I knew it," she cried, swaying herself to and fro in the intensity of her emotion.

"Why don't you tell me that you hate me? Why don't you strike me from you in scorn and contempt? But you made me say it. You made me say it."

So bewildered was the captain still, that he remained gazing at her for several moments in a sort of stupefaction, without replying a word. When he came to his senses at last, he gently raised her to her feet and led her to a chair.

"Mary," he said, taking a seat beside her, "you have surprised me more greatly than I can express, but do not believe that I hate you or condemn you. Still let me be your friend—your sincere and faithful friend—as I have been since that dreadful night of long ago. More than that I cannot be, for whatever I may once have been I am now no longer in possession of my freedom. I can blame no one but myself for this. I should have told you long ago."

And then, as gently as he could, he whispered to her listening ears his own story. He told her of his early life, his subsequent career upon the sea, his success and rapid promotion in his profession. He spoke of his little windfall of fortune, and lastly, he told her of his approaching marriage, and described to her the virtues of his intended wife. Throughout the whole of the recital his listener sat motionless, her eyes fixed steadily upon the fire and her hands fast clasped in one another. As he ceased his story, she raised her hand and asked a simquestion.

"Will you tell me the name of your future wife?"

Simple as was the request, Captain Burrill could scarcely bring himself to answer it. Again the resemblance between these two women flashed into his mind, and an indefinable feeling of restraint in speaking of one to the other seemed to place a seal upon his lips. But still did Marry Marsh look into his face inquiringly, and Captain Burrill, unable to withstand the mute appeal of those deep brown eyes, turned towards them and answered her:

"She is the daughter of my employer. Her name is Marion Marshall."

The girl's features contracted as with a spasm of intense physical pain, but the feeling whatever it was, passed as quickly as it came, and left her as before, gazing dreamily into the coals.

"Do you love her?" she asked after a moment's silence.

"Yes," said the captain, wonderingly. "That is, I think so. Why, yes, of course I do;" and he laughed at his own absurdity. "Would you die for her?" asked Mary.

The captain looked at her in some perplexity. He had never asked himself such serious questions as these. When he first met Marion Marshall, he had become lost in admiration at her royal beauty, her intelligence and her accomplishments. She was something as far beyond the ideal which had been the aim of his ambition through all his life—a woman so much superior to all his idle dreams of what his future wife should be—that, in the surpise and delight at finding her really in his possession, he had hardly stopped to ask himwhether his feeling was a love springing from the depths of the heart, like the deep-sea swell in mid-ocean, or only a transient emotion, like the breaking of a wave over a shallow bar in a passing gust of wind.

"I don't know," he replied, to Mary's question." I don't see how I can tell until an opportunity affords. I suppose I would."

"If he loved her truly," thought Mary, "he would know that he would die for her."

Long after the captain had gone that night did Mary Marsh sit gazing wearily into the fire. On parting, he had left the imprint of his lips upon her forehead, and it seemed to her that the kiss burned there like a coal of fire. Yet in her face was an expression of blank despair—the sorrow of desolation. She was alone again. A desire to leave the spot which had witnessed the extent of her humiliation, and tear herself loose from the protection of him whose presence her own shame would henceforth render painful to her, took a fierce possession of her heart. Once more to cast herself upon the mercies of the world, perhaps to seek even yet a home beneath the dark waters of the river, became her purpose now. Wearily, wearily sighing to think how wretched had been her failure to regain her fair fame once more; wearily pressing her hand to her aching heart to silence its burning throbs, she rose from her seat at last and began to collect her few scanty articles of dress. From place to place about the room she went, thinking at every turn, of the happy memories with which each nook of the poor apartment was fraught—memories of the pleasant hours which she had passed with him and in listening to his kind words of encouragement and comfort. The things which he had given her she left untouched, and dressing herself in the faded gown and shawl which she had worn on the night of her rescue—a night which came to her recollection now with a distinctness that made her shudder—she sat down once more before the fire with her hood held carelessly in her hand, to dream one more dream of the things that might have been, before she loosed her grasp upon those golden possibilities forever. How long she sat thus she knew not, but the fire had deadened into a purple heap of mouldering ashes, and was sending a single spiral wreath of smoke curling softly up the chimney before she came to herself again. Then with a sudden cry she sprang to her feet and, with one lingering look around the room, passed quickly across the threshold and gently closed the door behind her.

On finding herself in the street, Mary Marsh stood still in momentary indecision. Whither she should go or what she should do was a question that, until now, had scarcely crossed her mind. The snow was coming softly down and already the silent streets were covered with a white and fleecy carpet. A dread of returning to her old haunts, and a lingering desire to breathe a last farewell to him whom she had made the object of her hopeless love, decided her to turn her foot-steps northward, and wrapping her thin shawl tightly about her shivering shoulders, she turned her face against the cutting storm and started towards Jacob Marshall's house.

It was a long walk, and nearly an hour had passed before she arrived before the wide portal of the mansion. Although the hour was not far from three o'clock, a light was burning in one of the upper chambers, and rightly conjecturing this to be the captain's room, she looked towards it reverently anb softly whispered a prayer for the future welfare of the occupant. Then with a sad farewell upon her lips and a cutting pain at her heart, she turned away to retrace her steps through the freshly-fallen snow.

As she did so, her eyes fell upon the figure of a man, seen indistinctly through the darkness and the blinding storm, emerging from beneath the shadow of a doorway on the opposite side of the street. The man stood for a moment on the sidewalk and gazed cautiously around him, while Mary, with a new feeling in her bosom which caused her to skrink from the possibility of being accosted at that hour of the night, withdrew herself behind a pile of bricks before an unfinished building and waited for him to pass on.

As the figure slowly advanced towards the street-lamp, however, a peculiarity in his halting gait attracted her attention, and as his face was turned towards her in the glare of the light, she, with a start of surprise, recognized the man as an old acquaintance. As she had hinted to the captain, her life previous to his discovery of her, had not been especially creditable in its associations. Chief among those with whom she had been thrown in contact during those dark and dreadful days, was a noted thief and burglar, whose daring and cunning were only equalled by his ferocity and brutality. Pinky McGuire, hideous in feature and revolting in every aspect of his nature, had still a soft spot in his heart which Mary's beauty had touched, and he had made himself her compulsory companion too often for her not to have become thoroughly acquainted with his appearance. And if Mary Marsh was not greatly mistaken, Pinky McGuire stood before her now, intent, as she could have sworn, upon some mischief of no ordinary magnitude.

The Marshall mansion stood upon a corner, and had connected with it a large garden which extended some distance in the rear of the house, and which was hidden from the view of persons passing through the side street by a high brick wall. With this garden, communication was had by means of a small green gate, used chiefly by the butchers' boys and milkmen, as affording the easiest access to the kitchen. Pinky McGuire, after standing for some ments upon the sidewalk, listening for approaching footsteps, crossed the street and stepped cautiously to this gate. Then pulling from his pocket a long, brass key, he gave one more furtive look up the street, and, unlocking the barrier, passed into the garden, leaving the gate ajar behind him.

All of these things were perfectly visible to Mary from her place of concealment before the house, and it needed no great discernment upon her part to convince her that Mr. McGuire intended nothing less than a burglarly. Shuddering as she thought of the consequences of being discovered by the monster, her desire to apprise the family of their danger outweighed every consideration of prudence, and she resolved, if the thing were possible, to thwart the bold rascal by alarming the household. She waited for several moments and heard nothing. Then she stole cautiously to hte half-opened gate and was edified by the sight of Mr. McGuire's brogans just disappearing over the kitchen window-sill. After listening again until she felt sure that the coast was clear, she dropped her shawl upon the ground and followed him.

As if she were well acquainted with every inch of the premises, she sped swiftly across the kitchen to the hall beyond and ascended the broad stairs, stopping at each landing to listen. She knew that the captain was still awake, and forgetting the equivocal position in which she would be placed were she discovered, she wended her way as quickly as she could with any degree of caution, towards the guests' chamber, where from the street she had noticed a light still burning. So well did she seem acquainted with the house, that she lost no time in reaching the room. A little slanting ray of light streaming from the keyhole told her that the inmate had not yet retired, and with an unuttered prayer in her heart that her summons might arouse none but the captain, she raised her hand to knock upon the door.

But, noisless as had been her movements she had been heard. Before she could execute her purpose, two brawny arms closed tightly around her and she knew that she was in the grasp of Pinky McGuire. Turning partly in his embrace she seized his hands with all her feeble strength and screamed aloud. With a fierce oath, the brute pushed her against the wall and, raising his arm, struck her senceless to the floor. In a moment more the door of the captain's room flew open and let a flood of light stream forth into the hall. Something glittered in the captain's hand, and the burglar had scarcely time to leap for the stairway before the report of a pistol rang through the house and a bullet grazed his cheek and buried itself in the plastering above.

Leaving Mr. McGuire to make his undignified escape, the captain stooped over the prostrate body of the girl. Raising her head upon his knee, he recognized her features with a cry of alarm. The inmates of the mansion, flocking to the scene in all stages of dishabille, had been too thoroughly frightened by the report of the pistol to notice the captain's position.

"There has been an attempt at burglary," he said, in answer to their excited questions, "and perhaps a murder. Search the lower part of the house, some of you. Where's Mr. Marshall Somebody must do something for this poor child."

Marion, emerging from her room robed in a silken wrapper, was the only individual of the thoroughly alarmed household who retained any degree of presence of mind. Advancing in quiet dignity across the hall, she stooped with the captain over the senseless girl, whose brown hair was falling loosely across his knee. Then she, too, started back with an exclamation of surprise.

"Blanche!" she cried.

"No, not Blanche," replied the captain, "but Mary Marsh. I know her well. For Heaven's sake, Marion, have these stupid servants bring me some water. I fear she is dying."

"You know her well," said Marion slowly, without heeding his request. "And I know her well—too well. If you entertain the regard for me which you have hitherto professed, you will have her sent to the nearest police station."

"To the police station? She?" said the captain, in astonishment.

"Yes, at once." She stooped and whispered to him fiercely before turning away. "I hate her!"

"But, Marion," said Captain Burrill, "the girl is dying. Will none of you help me?" he asked, turning to the servants.

"You will assist him at your peril," she cried, to one of them who, with terror in her face, had turned to go down stairs.—"I appeal to the master of this house, Captain Burrill, for confirmation of my orders."

But the captain did not hear her, for the woman in his arms opened her eyes—those soft, brown orbs which had gazed into his so many times before—and a faint, fluttering sigh escaped her pale lips. Raising her gently, the Captain carried her to his own room and laid her tenderly upon his own bed. Then, sitting by her side, he softly clasped her hands until she came slowly to herself again, and he was able to draw her head against his shoulder.

"My poor child," he whispered, as she looked into his face with a mild terror in her eyes; "no harm can come to you now. Don't explain anything. I believe in you still."

"Take me away from this dreadful house," she exclaimed, trembling with agitation as she became aware of the group around her. "Let me go. O don't, don't let my father see me here."

"Your father!" said the captain, in amazement.

"Yes. You have never known but half the truth. O, let me go."

She turned towards the door as she spoke, and her eyes fell upon the figure of old Jacob Marshall standing with Marion on the threshold. With a wild cry she sprang from the bed and fell upon her knees before them.

"Father! sister!"

But Marion looked down upon the kneeling, self-abased girl with a cold, hard stare, in which was no feeling of kindness or charity.

"Never call me by that name again," she said. "Have you not disgraced us enough already? One would think the robbery of our domestic peace had been enough without this attempt upon our money too."

"No, no," cried Blanche, wringing her hands in the agony of despair. "I am innocent of that. Believe me, I have only tried to save you. Let me go, I will never trouble you with my presence again. You shall never see me, never hear me, but believe me that I am innocent of this."

Upon Jacob Marshall's face there came a

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