

NOT LIKE OTHER MEN

By Frederic Van Rensselaer Day.
Author of "The Brotherhood of Silence," "The Quality of a Sin," etc.

CHAPTER I.
"SHE SHALL THINK AS A MAN AND BE AS A MAN."

A MAN and a woman faced each other in the center of a brilliantly lighted room. The woman's eyes were filled with tears that were only half manifest through the content and proud disdain with which her entire being seemed animated. Her form was erect, her head was thrown back, and her right hand clutched tightly the knotted lace which covered her bosom, while the left one hung loosely at her side. Her eyes, dark, luminous and filled with longing, dread, anger and defiance, were unflinchingly fixed upon the man who confronted her. His features were distorted with passion. His eyes glowed and glittered with jealous rage. His forehead and cheeks were waxen in hue, and his lips, slightly parted and bloodless, transformed what otherwise might have been a smile into an expression of ferocious triumph. He turned her contemptuous stare with one of suppressed but indelible hatred. Between them, prone upon the floor, senseless, inanimate, was the body of a man, apparently lifeless. It was a mute but effective barrier across which neither dared to tread. There had been no word spoken between the woman and the man since the latter, unannounced, entered the room and dealt the blow which completed the tableau; neither she nor the senseless man between them was aware of his presence. It had been obligations to all things save themselves. She was the first to break the silence that followed upon the assault.

"You have killed him," she said.

Her voice sounded strangely calm and unfeeling, but it belied her. She



The woman started toward him.

wondered vaguely why she did not scream aloud and tear her hair and throw herself upon that prostrate body in a passion of tears, entreaties and accusations.

"He is not dead; he will revive," was the low toned reply, deadly calm. "It is you who deserve death, not he. For him I feel nothing but contempt; for you"—he paused, shrugged his shoulders with an expression which words could have never conveyed.

"For me—what?" she inquired calmly.

"Words, mere words," he responded coldly. "Reverberations are useless. I will not indulge in them. This is the first time since I was a boy that I have lost my temper. I will not repeat this experience. I have a few words to say before this person revives. They will be the last that you will ever hear me utter."

"Say them, I listen."

"I will arrange that an ample annuity be paid to you. You may name your own annuity, but I will make none. If the reasons for my departure are ever known, the knowledge will come from you or from—him; not from me. That is all."

He did not bestow a glance upon the form at his feet, but he had regained his wonted calmness; the fury had gone from his eyes; there was only pain there now.

The woman started toward him. Her body moved, but not her feet. She could not step across that mute barrier that was stretched between them, but her devoting eyes watched him while he crossed the room to the door and reached out one hand to open it.

"Philip!" she said.

He turned and faced her. He did not reply, but waited for her to continue.

"I—I was about to ask—nothing," she finished lamely. Pride conquered all other impulses.

He inclined his head, opened the door, crossed the threshold, relocked the door and stood alone in the silent hallway. For a moment he hesitated. Then he sighed, mounted the stairs and entered a room on the second floor, where for many minutes he stood with folded arms, gazing down upon the occupant of a canopied crib, upon a rosy, smiling, sleeping baby girl, a living picture of peaceful innocence. The only living human thing in which God had permitted man to behold absolute purity and goodness.

"One year ago today you came to me. I cannot, I will not, leave you here," murmured the man.

Meditatively he turned away. With deliberate calmness he busied himself with the preparations upon which he had determined, and a half hour later he descended the stairs and went out through the front door. Upon his left arm rested the infant, still sleeping; in his right hand he carried a satchel. Behind him was his invidious home, to which he gave no thought.

Within it, in the room where he had parted with his wife, a man had just staggered to his feet to behold upon the floor near where he had fallen the senseless form of the woman who only a short time before had stood so proudly erect above his own inanimate body.

ing concerning detail, and he concluded his recital with these words:

"I could not leave my baby there, so I brought her here. I shall take her away, and she will disappear forever from the sight and gradually from the memory of everybody who has known me—from everybody except yourself. I shall change my name, and only you shall know who I am. My property, fortunately is nearly all in negotiable securities and can easily be transferred. My real estate I will you to accept in trust for my wife, paying her the income from it as long as she lives. It will amply provide for her every want and leave her a comfortable surplus besides. You can draw all the papers and fill up the new deeds to me."

"And the reversion—what about that in case of the death of your wife?" asked the lawyer.

"Let the child inherit, and you be trustee for the benefit of my heirs. If I ever want the property, I will come to you for it."

"Are you aware that you are placing more than a million in my possession?"

"Perfectly. I have twice as much more, as you know, in negotiable securities. That will suffice for me."

"You will not apply for a divorce?"

"Certainly not."

"What name will you assume?"

"Yours, I think—I do, is your last one. If you will permit, I will call myself Richard Maxwell."

"Why not Philip Maxwell?"

"No; I will retain nothing of the past. I am only 30 years old, but as long as I am permitted to live my life shall be devoted to my child. I have no other ties, no one to exist an hour ago. I will sleep here in your house tonight, if I may. In the morning I will ask you to take some checks to the banks for me and secure in their places cashier's checks that I may withdraw my securities from the safe deposit vaults and bring them to me. Such other affairs as need attention I will remember before morning, and before night tomorrow I will be gone."

"Where will you go?"

"I have no idea. I probably will not decide for some time to come. I will let you know in good time."

"You are very unwise, Philip. Your suspicions may be unfounded, your conclusions wrong."

"Perhaps so. My decision is irrevocable, however, so we will not discuss it."

"You cannot be father and mother to that child to that little girl. If she were a boy, it would be different."

"I will be father, mother—everything—to her. Do not argue with me, Max. Will you show me where I am to sleep? My duties begin at once. I shall not avoid them."

Not until the man who had decided that he was henceforth to be known only as Richard Maxwell was alone in the room that had been assigned to him—no, not alone, because the little girl, still quietly sleeping, unconscious of the tragedy that had already occurred in her young life, reposed upon the bed—until then did he slow any sign of the ravages of the moment which wind that had passed over him, and even then his face did not lose its calm, although tears trickled down his cheeks and splashed unheeded upon the pillow where rested the companion of his first.

He remained thus silent for several moments, and then he began restlessly to pace the floor with bowed head and hands clasped behind his back, up and down, up and down, endlessly, ceaselessly, untriflingly, his footsteps falling with absolute precision, keeping time like the ticking of a clock—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, turn—two, three, four, five, six, seven, turn—hour after hour. Once the baby awakened, and his little voice murmured, "Mamma!" and then the father went to the bedside, raised the small head tenderly, administered a few drops of water, and then the rosy cheeks with his lips and saw the gentle, sleepy eyes close again in slumber. Then once more he began that restless, tireless pacing and kept it up until the curtains that shrouded the windows were drawn, and the light of dawn came, a gray light stole into the room, sparrows began to twitter on the window ledges, and the world slowly awakened to a new day.

After breakfast, while the child stood clinging to a chair between them or sat upon the floor in the midst of an agglomeration of parlor bric-a-brac that had been hastily provided for its amusement, Richard Maxwell and his attorney concluded the conversation of the preceding night.

"I've thought it all out," he said, "and I have fought it all out as well. My course is laid as certainly as is that of a sea captain who sails for a distant port, and I shall follow it as blindly, depending only upon my chart and my compass."

"You have not slept, Philip?"

"Call me Richard. No, I have not slept."

"Why that way?"

"Because I desire it. Lise shall be my son and my daughter in one, and I shall educate her to be both. She is the only child I will ever have. I want a son; she shall be my son; I will rear her as a son. I will train her to face the world as a man would face it. I will teach her the ways of the world as a man would learn them; I will instruct her in all things as a man should be instructed, and until she is old enough to know for herself she shall not discover that she is not masculine. She shall not know that there are women in the world."

"You had better cut her throat at once," said the lawyer grimly.

"Max," replied the father slowly, "let there be no argument or comment upon anything or concerning anything that I have decided to do. Nothing short of my own death can alter a plan that I have made."

"Very well. What more have you to say now?"

"Only this: My wife will apply to you for information concerning me. You will tell her all that is necessary concerning me."

"What a beautiful baby girl!" she remarked gently.

cerning the arrangements for her income. You will say that I came here with the child—omitting its name—and left instructions with you and that I went away again without telling you where I should go. You will instruct her no further on any point whatever, and to every other human being you will be entirely silent."

At 7 o'clock that evening, when the St. Louis express rolled out of the station of the Pennsylvania railroad, the stateroom of one of the Pullman sleepers was occupied by a man who was traveling alone with a little child which nestled upon his shoulder in happy content, and a woman who noticed the child and was attracted by its beauty passed, patted its little hands and remarked gently:

"What a beautiful baby girl!"

"My baby is a boy, madam," was the calm reply, and thus was begun the strange career of Lise Maxwell.

CHAPTER II.

CRAIG THOMPSON, MONTESUMA.

IT WAS the week of the annual "round up" in the Smoky valley, which nestles in the embrace of towering mountains along the western boundary of the state of Nevada. Upon the crest of a range of ground which overlooks the entire valley a horseman, who had just risen over the height, reined in his mount and with bated breath and eager enthusiasm surveyed the spectacle before him.

"It is grand—beautiful!" he exclaimed aloud. "It is strange that my father has never permitted me to see it here; strange that he hesitated now. But I am here in spite of him, and he will not send me back. He must not, I will not go."

The youth turned his head and looked back in the direction from which he had come, and there was a pleased, if somewhat anxious, smile upon his face when he noted toward the southeast a heavy cloud of dust which extended backward along the trail as far as the eyes could reach, but which was steadily though slowly coming nearer. To his practiced eyes that cloud explained that beneath it was moving an army of cattle numbering several thousands, that their track lay over the ridge where he was standing and that their destination was the valley beyond, where the different brands were to be singled out and separated, sorted and assigned to their respective owners.

For an entire week—perhaps for two, for the number of cattle was known to be greater this year than ever before—the Smoky valley was destined to become a scene of life and activity. There would be collected there cattle and horses by the tens of thousands, and cheros and vaqueros by the dozens and scores; there would be trials of skill of every kind which finds proficient performers and ardent admirers in the wild, free life of ranchmen and their cowboy assistants. There would be fighting and frolic, danger and pleasure—all things desirable and every thing supposedly attainable for Lise Maxwell, the margin of whose life hitherto had been the limits of his father's ranch.

As he looked again toward the valley he could see that thousands of cattle had already arrived. They browsed along the mountain slopes as far as his vision could extend, and his keen glance could detect here and there the figures of horsemen on guard near the entrance of passes where they were stationed to prevent the animals, gathered with such difficulty, from straying again. Hoarse howlings and muttering murmurs drifted along the mountain sides, telling of disputes between rival brands which had met upon the first time, and away up the valley glistened a lake beside which he could distinguish the outlines of a corral, near which he knew was situated the camp.

Lise was undetermined what to do. His impulse was to ride on into the valley and make himself known to the men, who one and all were acquainted with his father and who would therefore make him welcome. Some of them were acquaintances of his own, for he had met and learned to know several ranchmen and cowboys who during years past had made occasional visits to his father's ranch. On the other hand, he feared the anger of his father, whom thus far in life he had never dared to disobey in other than very little things.

"If I await him here, he will send me back again," mused Lise; "if I go, he cannot, or at least, if he does so, I will have seen something of what I came to see."

While he still hesitated the entire scene changed. The moving panorama in the distance faded from view as his interest centered upon an incident that was taking place almost in the immediate foreground.

Up the side of the mountain toward him, and not a quarter of a mile away, slung a manly galloping steed, and behind it, too distant to cast his rope, but nevertheless with the ready loop of his riata swinging in his hand, rode a horseman. He was surrounded,

fringed, gilt spurred and bedecked in his best, for cowboys attire themselves for the annual "round up" with as much care as a dandy in his evening dress. The cowboy spurred his horse unmercifully, but the steed was little inclined, swift and wild. It ran as free as an antelope and as easily led the pace.

Young Maxwell quietly took the eddled lasso from the pommel of his saddle, disengaged the loop, balanced it in his right hand, seized the reins in his left, settled himself more firmly in the saddle and waited. Then, when the steed came nearer, he started his horse forward by touching his heels gently against the animal's sides, guiding him toward the left by an almost imperceptible pressure with his right knee.

The horse had also perceived the approach of the steed and its pursuer and had accordingly well what was expected of him. In advancing the speed was gradually increased, so that when the steed dashed over the brow of the hill Lise Maxwell, with the loop of his riata coiled like a huge serpent about his head, was within easy casting distance of the object of his attack.

The steed, startled by the unexpected apparition directly in front of him, swerved to the right, while the horse that young Maxwell rode described a graceful curve to the left. At the same instant his forehead and mane flew from the rider's hand, the horse stopped, planted his feet firmly in the sod and braced himself for the shock that was to come, and the next instant the steed, firmly held by the rope, which had caught one of his hind feet, plunged headlong upon the ground, kicking up the earth and sod and bellowing furiously.

In an instant he had struggled to his feet, but instead of seeking to escape he turned and faced the enemy with lowered head, muttering distant thanks to the gods and in a moment or two threw them violently into the air. Then he charged, but the horse, obeying a slight pressure of the knee, easily avoided him, dashing past the infuriated steed so closely that Lise could hear the snort and snuff of his nostrils. The steed was again dragged to the earth by the suddenly tightened lasso.

It was at that instant when the original pursuer appeared upon the scene. Another writing, twisting, coil of rope darted through the air just as the steed was struggling to his feet. It settled over the animal's horns and head and seized his throat, and the beast was

captured. It was not the first time that he had been compelled to succumb to the power of mind over matter, and as soon as he found that he was indeed a prisoner his wild rage gave place to sullen docility, and he allowed himself to be led away over the road he had come, knowing that those relentless loops were still fast upon him and that the next sign of resistance would again be dragged remorselessly to the earth.

"Well done, sonny!" shouted the stranger. "Mighty well done for a young like you. What outfit are you with?"

"Maxwell's. The bunch is two or three miles behind me, to the east."

"Dick Maxwell's, eh? Crescent and cross," naming the brand worn by Richard Maxwell's cattle. "What may your name be?"

"Lise Maxwell." "So you're Dick Maxwell's kid. You're a youngster, sure enough, but you ain't as young as you look unless I'm mightily mistaken. I saw you when you first came to this region, and that's high on to 17 years ago. You've got to be at least 2 then. How old are you, anyway?"

"I am 18."

"Well, you don't look it; not by two or three years. Is the old man with the outfit?"

"Yes."

"What are you doing here? Why ain't you back with the bunch?"

"That's my business, sir. At all events, it doesn't concern you. The stranger chuckled audibly.

"I've heard tell that you was sassy," he said, "but you ought to wait till you grow more'n you have before you try your sass on strangers. Some of 'em ain't as good natured as I am. Ever here afore, was you?"

"Never."

"Well, you've got a mighty uncommon lot to learn; don't forget that. But I'll stand square for you with the boys, and that won't do you any harm. I'm Craig Thompson. Maybe you have heard of me."

Lise looked upon his companion with added interest then, for indeed he had heard of Craig Thompson, and not many men of his range, and he had been in Nevada longer than any of his neighbors. But all of this had nothing to do with his reputation. That was derived from a habit of his that was known and feared by every one who knew him. It was that he would speak at a time when he was possessed by what was known as his sullen fits, and during those periods it was as much as a man's life was worth to speak to him and certainly to cross him. It was impossible to say that he was as loquacious as he had previously been taciturn, as kindly as he had formerly been ugly, as gentle as he had been rough, as tender as he had been hard and cruel and murderous. He was a strange mixture of saint and devil, of kindness and brutality, of generosity and merciless cruelty—a paradox and that which begets more outside interest than any other human attitude, a mystery.

"Why ain't you ever here before, sonny?" he asked presently. "Or

most that man any of my business either?"

"My father would not permit me to come."

"Oh, that's all right. And he gave in to your father's?"

"No."

Craig Thompson chuckled again.

"You was Lise? That's what you have answered? That's what you're ahead of the bunch. Just jumped the steed, flew the corral, lit out, stampeded all by yourself, same's that steed you rode in such good style, and Dick Thompson rode on up and sound at home, eh? Is that the ticket?"

"That is exactly the situation, Mr. Thompson," replied Lise slowly. "When I first saw you swinging after the steed, I was wondering whether I had better keep down the valley or turn back and meet my father. But you have answered the question for me, for now I've got to help you in with this steed."

"Humph! Look here, Lise. Just consider that we've shook hands, will you? That makes us friends. Now, I'm going to give you some advice, and it strikes me that for a kid who has passed all his life, if it ain't only 18 years, punching cattle, roping steers, shooting stars out of the sky and occasionally pinking an Indian or a maverick man—for that's what I've heard about you—you need it as much as any feller I know. In the first place, don't 'mister' any of the boys up here on this mesa, or they'll make a curiosity out of you before you're 24 hours your present senior. In the second place, when you have once started out to do a thing don't turn back on any account. Do it or drop in your tracks facing it. It's a whole lot better to be shot between the eyes than it is to be kicked behind. That ain't elegant, but it's God's truth. In the third place, the up to Craig Thompson for anything that you can foresee at this writing, and if he happens to have one of his fits on don't you mind 'em. They ain't for everybody, and they won't be for you. Here comes two of my boys. They'll give you the word, and we can ride in mosey-fashion."

They were soon relieved of the care of the steed, and then they rode on silently side by side for some distance.

"Why wouldn't Dick ever let you come here before?" asked Thompson presently.

"I don't know. He would never tell me," replied Lise.

"Well, I can tell you."

"You can? Why is it?"

"I'll tell you by asking a question or two. Didn't you whine one of my cowboys, a fellow named Dickings, and then you ever come out to do a thing don't turn back on any account. Do it or drop in your tracks facing it. It's a whole lot better to be shot between the eyes than it is to be kicked behind. That ain't elegant, but it's God's truth. In the third place, the up to Craig Thompson for anything that you can foresee at this writing, and if he happens to have one of his fits on don't you mind 'em. They ain't for everybody, and they won't be for you. Here comes two of my boys. They'll give you the word, and we can ride in mosey-fashion."

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into the barrel of a ".44."

"Take that back, Craig Thompson," said Lise in a low tone, but there was an intense meaning behind the words. The ranchman had never been nearer death than at that instant, and he knew it. But he only smiled, and there was something in the altered expression of his face which Nevada men were not accustomed to see there. All the hard lines had disappeared, and his eyes, which ordinarily gave back a steely glint for every gaze which they encountered, softened into a translucent sparkle while he said slowly:

"I'll take it back, Lise, every word of it, for the Lord knows that I never meant it to sound as you took it. You needn't put your gun down till I've got through talking 'cause I've got something to say, and after that, if you want to use it or not, you can go ahead, and I won't make any kick. I like you, Lise, and I would honor you for killing me if you did it to resent an imputation against your father. I spoke on general principles, and now you know me. You've heard lots of bad things about me, and, supposing me to be as bad as men reports, do you think it would be logical to believe every other man in the world bad because I am or every

man good because your father is? 'Tain't sense, is it? 'E're you know enough to know that we're all born of women, and I suppose you do, you know that your mother and the mother of every one of that wild set of fellows that'll soon be raising lads around here. A woman may be bad before she's a mother, and she may be bad after she's a mother, but there ain't no exceptions to the rule that every one of 'em is good when she's a mother, so, you see, Lise, I didn't cast any reflections on your father when I said that. I only took your mother's part without thinking of him at all, and I wouldn't be of much account as a friend to you that's right, but up your gun. Now, shall we shake hands? That's the ticket. Maybe when you know me better you'll—know me better."

Then, side by side, in the beginning of a friendship which was destined to continue through bitter trials and the mother of every one of that wild set of fellows that'll soon be raising lads around here. A woman may be bad before she's a mother, and she may be bad after she's a mother, but there ain't no exceptions to the rule that every one of 'em is good when she's a mother, so, you see, Lise, I didn't cast any reflections on your father when I said that. I only took your mother's part without thinking of him at all, and I wouldn't be of much account as a friend to you that's right, but up your gun. Now, shall we shake hands? That's the ticket. Maybe when you know me better you'll—know me better."

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