



CHAPTER IX. A FAMILY PLOT.

Little did poor Dr. Walker imagine as he sat at his breakfast table next morning that the two sweet girls who sat on either side of him were deep in a conspiracy, and that he, munching innocently at his muffins, was the victim against whom their wiles were planned.

"It is a beautiful day," he remarked. "It will do for Mrs. Westmacott. She was thinking of having a spin upon her tricycle."

"Then we must call early. We both intended to see her after breakfast." "Oh, indeed!" The doctor looked pleased.

"You know, pa," said Ida, "it seems to us that we really have a very great advantage in having Mrs. Westmacott living so near."

"Why so, dear?" "Well, because she is so advanced, you know. If we only study her ways, we may advance ourselves also."

"I think I have heard you say, papa," remarked Clara, "that she is the type of the woman of the future."

"I am very pleased to hear you speak so sensibly, my dears. I certainly think that she is a woman whom you may very well take as your model. The more intimate you are with her the better pleased I shall be."

"Then that is settled," said Clara demurely, and the talk drifted to other matters.

All the morning the two girls sat extracting from Mrs. Westmacott her most extreme views as to the duty of the sexes and the tyranny of the other. Absolute equality, even in details, was her ideal.

Enough of the parrot cry of unwomanly and unmanly. It had been invented by man to scare woman away when she poached too nearly upon his precious preserves. Every woman should be independent. Every woman should learn a trade.

It was their duty to push in where they were least welcome. Then they were martyrs to the cause and pioneers to their weaker sisters. Why should the washtub, the needle and the housekeeper's book be eternally theirs? Might they not reach higher—to the consulting room, to the bench and even to the pulpit?

Mrs. Westmacott sacrificed her tricycle ride in her eagerness over her pet subject, and her two fair disciples drank in every word and noted her every suggestion for future use.

That afternoon they went shopping in London, and before evening strange packages began to be handed in at the doctor's door. The plot was ripe for execution, and one of the conspirators was merry and jubilant, while the other was very nervous and troubled.

When the doctor came down to the dining room next morning, he was surprised to find that his daughters had already been up some time. Ida was installed at one end of the table, with a spirit lamp, a curved glass flask and several bottles in front of her.

The contents of the flask were boiling furiously, while a villainous smell filled the room. Clara lounged in an armchair with her feet upon a second one, a blue covered book in her hand and a huge map of the British islands spread across her lap.

"Hullo!" cried the doctor, blinking and sniffing, "where's the breakfast?" "Oh, didn't you order it?" asked Ida. "Oh, no; why should I?" He rang the bell.

"Why have you not laid the breakfast, Jane?" "If you please, sir, Miss Ida was a-workin' at the table." "Oh, of course, Jane," said the young lady calmly.

"I am so sorry. I shall be ready to move in a few minutes." "But what on earth are you doing, Ida?" asked the doctor. "The smell is most offensive. And, good gracious, look at the mess which you have made upon the cloth! Why, you have burned a hole right through."

"Oh, that is the acid," Ida answered contentedly. "Mrs. Westmacott said that it would burn holes."

ical experiments a little later in the day." "But Mrs. Westmacott says that women should rise early and do their work before breakfast."

"Then they should choose some other room besides the breakfast room." The doctor was becoming just a little ruffled. A turn in the open air would soothe him, he thought.

"Where are my boots?" he asked. "But they were not in their accustomed corner by his chair. Up and down he searched, while the three servants took up the quest, stooping and peeping under bookcases and drawers.

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Gems or Turkish. I wish, pa, when you go into town you would get me some Turkish."

"I will do nothing of the kind. I do not at all think that it is a fitting habit for young ladies. I do not agree with Mrs. Westmacott upon the point."

"Really, pa! It was you who advised us to imitate her." "But with discrimination. What is it that you are drinking, Clara?"

"Run, papa." "Run? In the morning?" He sat down and rubbed his eyes as one who tries to shake off some evil dream.

"Did you say run?" "Yes, pa. They all drink it in the profession which I am going to take up."

"Profession, Clara?" "Mrs. Westmacott says that every woman should follow a calling, and that we ought to choose those which women have always avoided."

"Quite so." "Well, I am going to act upon her advice. I am going to be a pilot."

"My dear Clara! A pilot? This is too much." "This is a beautiful book, papa. 'The Lights, Beacons, Buoys, Channels and Landmarks of Great Britain.' Here is another, 'The Master Mariner's Handbook.' You can't imagine how interesting it is."

"You are joking, Clara. You must be joking." "Not at all, pa. You can't think what a lot I have learned already. I'm to carry a green light to starboard and a red to port, with a white light at the masthead, and flare up every 15 minutes."

"Oh, won't it look pretty at night?" cried her sister. "And I know the fog signals. One blast means that a ship steers to starboard, two to port, three astern, four that it is unmaneuverable. But this man asks such dreadful questions at the end of each chapter. Listen to this: 'You see a red light. The ship is on the port tack and the wind at north. What course is that ship steering to a point?'"

The doctor rose with a gesture of despair. "I can't imagine what has come over you both," said he.

"My dear papa, we are trying hard to live up to Mrs. Westmacott's standard." "Well, I must say that I do not admire the result. Your chemistry, Ida, may perhaps do no harm, but your scheme, Clara, is out of the question. How a girl of your sense could ever entertain such a notion is more than I can imagine. But I must absolutely forbid you to go further with it."

"But, pa," asked Ida, with an air of innocent inquiry in her big blue eyes, "what are we to do when your commands and Mrs. Westmacott's advice are opposed? You told us to obey her. She says that when women try to throw off their shackles their fathers, brothers and husbands are the very first to try to rivet them on again, and that in such a matter no man has any authority."

"Does Mrs. Westmacott teach you that I am not the head of my own house?" The doctor flushed, and his grizzled hair bristled in his anger.

"Certainly. She says that all heads of houses are relics of the dark ages." The doctor muttered something and stamped his foot upon the carpet. Then without a word he passed out into the garden, and his daughters could see him striding furiously up and down, cutting off the heads of the flowers with a switch.

"Oh, you darling! You played your part so splendidly!" cried Ida. "But how cruel it is! When I saw the sorrow and surprise in his eyes, I very nearly put my arms about him and told him all. Don't you think we have done enough?"

"No, no, no. Not nearly enough. You must not turn weak now, Clara. It is so funny that I should be leading you. It is quite a new experience. But I know that I am right. If we go on as we are doing, we shall be able to say all our lives that we have saved him. And if we don't, oh, Clara, we should never forgive ourselves."

[CONTINUED ON THURSDAY.]

A Winter Day. The sky is ashen gray, and o'er its face is spread a sullen, angry snow. From far as eye can pierce the trembling snowflakes like pretty butterflies they dip and dart. Now right, now left, as if in very play. With streaming hair and cheeks with health aglow.

The little children, just let loose from school, to catch the feathery sprites all madly run, but strive they as they may 'th' elusive flakes by many devices paths to earth descend. And find their bed with crystals beneath. Reverting through the cold, crisp air, their merry voices ring in hoarse, hoarse glees. Brightening a scene most melancholy else. Her ladyship, proud earth, like some grand dame, is robed in warm, soft cloak of ermine rare. The tin horns blare the elements driving. And the children's feet dash the drifts aside. With nimble feet some dash the drifts aside. To gather sustenance 'mid the wintry blast. From every cave pellucid pendants hang. And hide the coming of the sun's first rays. To catch their warmth, then disappear from view.

All nature lies in sweet repose. But, lo! Upon the ear the sleighbells' jingle falls in rhythmic cadence, if unmusical. But faint at first, then with a gradual swell. Clear and more clear the chime, till all the air is filled o'erflowing with a wild delight. —Michael Joseph Donnelly.

The Duel. There, in the merciless morn's first glow, Grim offspring, I faced my foe, He who had wronged me with savage hate, Face to face on the field of fate, And I said, "He must die; he hath played his part!" My sword shall cleave through his hateful heart! Then to the battle, with one true thrust He stood defenseless, his sword in dust. I marked the way where his false heart lay. I lifted my glittering blade to slay. When lo! in my fury I seemed to feel A hand that clutched at the lifted steel— And wild before me a woman knelt. I could not strike my hated foe. In wrath and mercy I bade him go. To drown revenging the wrongs of years, Poor fortune's revenger in a woman's tears. —Frank L. Stanton.

Justice, when equal scales she holds, is blind; Not cruelty nor mercy change her mind. When some escape for that which others die, Mercy to those, to these is cruelty. —Sir J. Denham.

JUDGES SENT TO JAIL. They Prefer Imprisonment to Making an Unpopular Tax Levy.

The judges of the St. Clair county court in Missouri, D. R. F. Copenhaver, George H. Lyons and Thomas D. Nevitt, have again been sentenced by Judge Phillips of the United States district court to imprisonment in the Jackson county jail in Kansas City for contempt of court. Judges Copenhaver and Nevitt have both been imprisoned before for the same cause, but their associate on the bench was so old and feeble that he was not imprisoned. Judge Lyons was elected last fall to succeed Judge Johnson and knew he would have to spend a large portion of his term in jail.

In the language of the commitment, the judges are to remain in jail "until such time as they comply with the writ of mandamus heretofore issued in the case of the Ninth National bank of New York against St. Clair county." The writ of mandamus mentioned requires them to make a tax levy for the payment of certain bonds issued by the county as a bounty for rail-



THE JUDGES IN JAIL.

roads that were never built. This the judges, in obedience to the well understood wishes of their constituents, refused to do, as they had before refused and the judges of Cass county, who it will be remembered were imprisoned about a year ago, had also refused.

The view of the matter taken by the United States courts is that the bonds bid the county for the payment of their face value, and that, having passed into the hands of "innocent third parties," they must be paid, no matter whether the work for which they were issued has been done or not. The people of the counties claim that the issuance of the bonds was obtained by fraud and false representations, and that their payment cannot equitably be demanded. The sentiment against paying them is very general, and the judges were elected on that issue.

There is a pitiful story connected with the case of Judge Copenhaver. During his first imprisonment his daughter was taken ill and then became insane and was sent to an asylum. Upon his release from jail he took her home, and under his care she regained her reason, but lost it again soon after his commitment last winter. He was released from jail on parole in February to convene court and commit her once more to the asylum. He then returned to jail, and his daughter's death was announced. Shortly after that the judge was released under the poor debtor's act, the sentence having included a fine. As soon as the new bench was organized the mandamus directing the tax levy was served upon the judges, who refused to obey it and were again placed in jail.

A BRAVE YANKEE GIRL. She Drives a Stage, and No Footpad Can Hold Her Up.

Ellen Stewart of Yarrow valley, Conn., has been a stage driver for three years or more, and her route is over 20 miles of very rough and lonesome country. She has had many adventures, of course, since she has been at the work, and more or less serious accidents from washed out roads and snow drifts, but she has kept right on, driving every day in the year but Sundays, and the business in the route has increased considerably since she has had charge of it. She says she never being frozen to death one night last winter, when she was stalled in a snow drift and found it impossible to dig her way out, but some farmers rescued her, and in a few days she was on the box again.



ELLEN STEWART.

Miss Stewart also had some trouble from tramps. One night in the spring one of them attempted to "hold up" the stage. It was a bright moonlight night, and Ellen was late. In a lonely part of the road where heavy forests flanked it on either side a man suddenly stepped from behind a tree, and catching the horses by the bits stopped them.

"Throw over that mail bag!" commanded the fellow gruffly. Miss Stewart always carries a revolver in a convenient pocket, and in the wink of a cat's eye she had the muzzle of it squarely on the tramp's head.

"Get up on that rear horse!" was the reply that the highwayman got to his order. The man didn't move. "Get up there, or I'll shoot you," cooily said the girl. The tramp came to the conclusion that he had better obey orders and scrambled on to the back of the horse.

"Now, sit still till I get to the postoffice, or you'll be sorry," said the girl, who kept the man didn't move. "Get up there, or I'll shoot you," cooily said the girl. The tramp came to the conclusion that he had better obey orders and scrambled on to the back of the horse.

He was beyond the possibility of escape. He was tried for attempting to rob the mail and is now within the walls of the penitentiary. For this piece of work Miss Stewart received a purse of \$100 contributed by the farmers along the route.

EVE'S TEMPTATION.

She put her hand into the breast pocket and drew out a little package wrapped in paper and tied with blue ribbon.

"I do wonder what it is!" said she, and then she undid the ribbon, unfolded the paper and saw letters.

"Tom won't mind," she said. "I will just take a peep. I'm sure it's for me." Then she undid the ribbon, unfolded the paper and saw letters.

"Then she began to tremble a little, for the letters did not begin with 'My dear son,' nor with anything like it. She cast her eyes over them. They were love letters.

"Tom had loved some other woman before he met me," she said, beginning to cry. "Oh, what shall I do?" Then she cried out, "Oh, foolish creature that I am! Of course she died, and he only loves me now. It was all over before we met, and I must not mind."

But here she paused, gave a scream and then threw the letter from her as though a serpent had bitten her. It was dated in the previous week. It was not four days old. "Oh! oh! oh!" shrieked Eve. "Oh, what shall I do? Oh, where shall I go?"

"Eve! Eve! Eve! Where shall I go? Tom! Tom! He to be false—Tom! Oh, I have gone mad! Not there are they! They are really there—those letters! Why do I not die? Do people live through such things as these?"

Then she knelt down on the floor and gathered up the letters and steadily read them through. There were 10 of them. Such love letters! No other interpretation could be put upon them. They were absurd love letters, such as are always produced in a court case of a breach of promise. And they called him "Popsy Wopsy," "Darling Darling," "Lovey Dovey," "Own Sweetness" and "Angel of My Soul," and they were all signed "Your Own Nellie."

"It is all true," said poor Eve, wringing her hands, "and it is worse than anything that I have ever heard of. I trusted him so; I believed in him so. My Tom—mine."

Then she wiped her eyes, gathered up the letters, wrapped the silver paper about them, tied the blue ribbon and put them back in the awful breast pocket of that dreadful overcoat and hung it up in the hall again.

"Tom shall never know," she said. "I'll not reproach him. I will never see him again. When he comes home, I shall be dead. I will not live to bear this."

She sat down to think over the best means of suicide. She could hang herself to the chandelier with a window blind tied to her neck, but then she would be black in the face and hideous. She would drown herself, but then her body would be floating down the river into the sea, and drowned people looked even worse than strangled.

She was too much afraid of firearms to shoot herself, even in this strait. She would take poison. Yes, that would be best, and though she should never see Tom again he would see her, and remorse would sting him.

So having put on a hat and thick veil Eve betook herself around the corner to the nearest drug store. The druggist was an old German, a benevolent looking one, with red cheeks and a smiling mouth, and when she asked him for poison for rats he said "So!" and beamed mildly upon her.

"I want it very strong," said Eve. "So!" said the druggist. "But not to give more pain than is necessary, nor turn the face black," said Eve.

With a grave face he compounded the powder and handed it across the counter. Eve took it, gave him the few cents she asked and walked off. Once at home she went straight to her room and undressed herself and retired to bed, taking the powder with her. Once or twice she tasted it with the tip of her tongue, hoping that it was not very disagreeable. Then, finding it sweet she bravely swallowed it.

"It is over," she said. "Oh, Heaven forgive me and forgive Tom!" And then she laid herself down upon her pillow.

Just as she did so the familiar sound of a latchkey in the door below startled her. Tom never came home at noon, but there he was now. No one else but Tom would walk in that cool way, and he was calling her.

"Eve—Eve—Eve—where are you?" "Never before had she refused to answer that voice. Why had he come to torture her by his moans? Hark! Now he was bounding up the stairs. Are you ill, Eve?"

"What is the matter? Are you ill, Eve?" "No," she said faintly, "only tired." "Ah! You look tired, little one," said he. "I came home to get the overcoat. I suppose you have found out by this time that the coat in the hall is not mine. It was Johnson's home from the office last night by mistake. He's anxious about it. He asked me if there was any one in the house who would be likely to meddle with papers in his pockets. I said that I thought not. I hadn't a jealous wife! What's the matter, Eve?"

"Oh, Tom!" she cried hysterically. "Oh, say it again! It was not your coat? Oh, Tom, kiss me!" "Why, what's the matter?" cried out Tom. "You must be ill!" Then Eve remembered all. "I am a wicked woman, Tom! There were letters in the pockets—love letters. I read them. I thought you were false to me. I—I took poison. Tom, I'm going to die—and I long to live so. Oh, Tom, Tom, save me!"

"Yes—yes!" he cried. "Oh, good heaven! What poison?" "Hoffman will know. I bought it from him. Perhaps he can save me," cried Eve. Away went Tom, white as death, to the drug store around the corner. He burst into the store like a whirlwind, black in the face. "The lady!" he gasped—"the lady who bought poison here an hour ago. She took it by mistake! Can you save her? Is there an antidote? She is dying!"

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