

against one whose love for me has been well proved; but my heart returns to him all the more fondly for having proved you false. Farewell! Heaven pardon you the suffering you have ceased and the ruin you have planned for.

Dolly Vernon."

"That will do," he said, hastily, before she had time to add date or address. "Here's an envelope—quick—write 'Miss Ellis' merely—we must go at once."

She obeyed in haste.

Rose, who had meanwhile been sent for a carriage, announced it now at the door.

"Stop," cried Fred, "this woman must not know who your friend is. It won't do to give her any clew. Rose, where's Dick Ferret?"

"Out for this hour past," Rose answered; "and no telling when he will come in."

"So much the better. Wait for me one minute, Dolly, dear."

He sprang away up-stairs, but returned almost immediately. As he entered the room the women cried out in surprise, thinking, at first, it was some stranger.

He had put on a loose cloak and a large black beard. No one, on a mere hasty, casual glance, would have suspected his identity.

"Now said he to Rose, "tell the man to hurry with the trunk, and do you get into the carriage."

Having seen the baggage safely stowed, she obeyed him. Meanwhile, he had placed Dolly in her seat; then telling them to wait for him, he re-entered the house, to change the envelope on Dolly's letter.

And at that very instant Dick Ferret turned the corner of the street—not whistling just then for a wonder—and saw the carriage waiting at the door, saw the blackbearded man rush hastily into the house—saw Dolly's anxious face look from the coach window.

"Hallo!" breathed he, softly, checking the long whistle that had nearly escaped his lips; "who's that? and what's the racket here, I wonder? I'll keep still a bit and watch."

And he did so, stealing up softly and hiding on the other side of the carriage unobserved. It was not difficult to manage this—easier was advancing, and darkness closing around.

Presently, the black-bearded man came from the house, closing the door after him. He sprang into the carriage hastily.

"Drive to the L—House," he said, naming a private hotel on a quiet street.

"It's Mr. Hastings," he muttered, lost in wonder. I'd swear to the voice. Mr. Hastings in disguise. What's up, I wonder? I'll find out."

To resolve with Dick was to do. The coach-door shut with a clang, the driver mounted to his seat, the horses started. Away they went, a snug little party of four—three inside, and Dick perched lightly behind, hanging on like a cat or a monkey.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HE dropped off, as they stopped at the door of the hotel and slunk away into a corner to watch. He managed to follow Hastings into the office unseen, and heard him give orders for supper, and a private room for "his sister and her maid," where they could wait until the late train. Then he slipped out again, thoroughly bewildered, and asking himself:

"What sister? What train? What's up? Where are they going?" and more than ever bent on finding out.

Thus far he had played the spy on Fred from impulse and idle curiosity, but now a vague, uneasy doubt possessed him.

"Something queer's afoot," was his mental verdict. "All ain't square, I think. I never did like Mr. Hastings; but I'll run him to earth, as sure's my name is Dick Ferret, and if he is playing any tricks on pretty little Dolly, why, just let him look out for me."

Dick's mention of his little mistress was not very reverent in its style, perhaps, but the likelihood that dictated it was sincere; and if he appeared rather an insignificant foe for Fred, or ally for Dolly, what of that? Is it not recorded that a mouse once freed a lion from the snare? And Dick was worth a whole world of mice.

When Fred left the hotel Dick followed, unsuspected. Followed him to the depot, heard his inquiries about trains, saw him purchase tickets for an out-of-the-way Long Island village.

"I've heard him speak of an old house he had there, where some old servant lived," thought the quick witted boy. "Something is wrong, now, sure."

Still, he could think of no better plan than to watch. If he lost sight of his game it might "get to earth," as he termed it, without him. And there would be time enough to notify Cyril when his suspicions were confirmed—indeed, perhaps, without absolute proof, Mr. Vernon would not believe him.

"He's so wrapped up in his cousin," thought Dick, discontentedly. "For my part, I think he could manage his own affairs a great deal better without him."

So he kept on the watch. At about ten o'clock a second carriage conveyed them and their baggage to the depot, and again Dick hung on quietly behind. Unobserved by them all he purchased a ticket and got on the cars, and still unobserved, he got off at their destination, and followed through the darkness the rickety

country conveyance that took them to the lonely house.

"Cyril not here?" he heard Dolly say, looking around her with a pale, scared face, as she stood for a moment on the platform. "How could we have missed him so? Can he have got there before us?"

The boy's indignation rose high. He had seen his master that afternoon, and knew he had no knowledge of this journey.

"She's fooled!" he thought, angrily. "He's cheating the little innocent thing; there's a piece o' devil's mischief brewing! And there's Rose too,—the great dumb faithful fool—can't she see? But no matter, Dick Ferret'll put a finger in your pie, Mr. Hastings, that'll spoil its flavor, I'll promise you."

The house to which Fred took his captives stood alone, densely shaded by old trees, that at this season of the early spring looked grim and gaunt as specters. They had not been expected, and the inmates were asleep, nor did it prove an easy task to rouse them.

"My husband is not here," Dick heard his mistress say to Rose, as she peeped out from the clumsy vehicle, while Hastings was thundering at the cottage door. "Something is wrong Rose. If he were here he would come to meet me: my mind misgives me, Rose, terribly, terribly!"

Rose answered nothing. Her misgivings had begun some time ago; she would gladly have recalled the fatally misplaced confidence that had induced them to leave New York.

By this time Hastings had succeeded in awaking an old woman, who came winking and blinking, and muttering crossly, candle in hand, to the door; her grumbling ceased when she saw who had summoned her, however, and she welcomed her visitor with mingled delight and surprise.

Hastings talked with her for a few moments in tones so low that, listen sharply as he might only an occasional word came to Dick's eager ears, but he caught the old woman's answer:

"The back room up-stairs, my dear. Safe as a cage. There's a good stout lock on the door, and a bolt inside. I'll keep 'em for you, comfortable. There's a pane o' glass or so out o' the window, but I'll make a good fire and they'll never feel that."

Hastings pondered for a moment.

"Isn't there a shed under the window of that room?" he asked. "Couldn't they get out that way?"

The old woman shook her head vehemently.

"No, no; a man might perhaps, but not a woman; besides, the window is nailed up fast; I tell you that room is safe, my dear!"

Apparently he was satisfied for he said no more save to bid her get all ready, and then he brought his victims into the house.

"Wait!" he said to the driver. "You can take me back to the station," then to Dolly he added: "I shall go back by the two o'clock train."

She made no reply. She was white as death and trembling violently, for an awful nameless fear had taken possession of her, although, as yet, it was not actually fear of him. He felt her tremble, and put his arm around her to support her steps, and took her cold little hand within his own. The thrill of that brief embrace—his pity for her pallor and fatigue—the dangerous knowledge that he had her completely in his power—all proved too much for his prudence; with a mad impulse of passion he suddenly strained her to his breast and pressed his burning lips upon her own.

They were alone, for Rose had followed the old woman up-stairs to make ready for her mistress' reception. The poor child struggled madly in surprise and terror, and tore herself from his arms, and stood, outraged and furious, before him.

"Are you mad?" she cried, while her blue eyes fairly lightened. "You, you to insult me so! oh, you, coward! Cyril! Cyril! Why are you not here? Oh, he shall kill you for this!"

She was almost beside herself with anger; for the moment it quite overcame all natural fear. Hastings shrank and hung his head in shame and vexation at his own folly: while Dick outside the window where he could both see and hear, chuckled silently at his discomfiture.

"I won't move," he thought. "She'll give it to him. She's all right for this time anyway!"

"I believe you have deceived and betrayed me!" cried Dolly, her latent misgivings taking sudden and fearful shape. "That you have decoyed me from my husband's house for some base purpose! Speak, sir, where is Cyril? Why have you brought me here?"

He flung aside the mask; it was useless he thought, to wear it any longer, and answered looking boldly into her flashing eyes:

"You have guessed near the truth. As for Cyril, you will see him no more, and you are where he will never find you! I have loved you long, my pretty, fiery cousin, and now, by Heaven, I've got you!"

But her roused spirit did not quail she laughed scornfully.

You black-dyed villain? You—whom we trusted and loved! And you've got me safe and fast because I have believed your lies? I'll die before you shall lay fingers on me! Cyril will

find me—oh, be sure of that! and punish you sir!"

Her blue eyes blazed, her cheeks flushed crimson, she held herself erect and proud like some little outraged queen. Hastings was quiet and pale, as he answered, low and firmly:

"Cyril will never find you; I have taken care of that; he will not even try, for he is weary of you. Your own heart told you that, long since, and spoke more truly than I did to-day, when I convinced you of the contrary. Besides, even if he loved you still, even if you did not stand between him and fortune—he is too proud to follow the false wife who has fled, with another lover!"

She put her hands up to her head, bewilderedly. Fled from him! another lover! I! He will not believe the lie!"

"He will believe your confession—written in your own hand. Have you forgotten the letter you wrote to May?"

"No. What of that?"

"I put it into an envelope addressed to Cyril, and Cyril will receive it."

Dead silence followed. She stood, striving to realize the consciousness of this foul deceit, striving to remember her written words. Alas! they came back too plainly.

"I leave my home with one whom I can trust. You turned me against one whose love was proved, but now my heart returns to him."

She saw the net whose meshes had ensnared her—saw that she was caught and caged. Cyril would believe her false—would think that she had fled to Frank; all that her fatal letter had left unsaid Hastings would add.

A great despair came over her soul; strange noises surged in her ears; a mist came round her. She flung up her arms toward Heaven with a low, sobbing moan.

"Lost! lost!" she cried, and fell forward, fainting, just as Hastings caught her in his arms.

Scarcely had he touched her, scarce had his eager, gloating eyes time to mark all the beauty of her lovely, but death-like face, when Rose re-entered and uttered an exclamation of pity and alarm.

"She has fainted, worn out with fatigue," Fred said; "I will carry her up-stairs and you must get her to bed immediately."

So he carried his hapless victim to her prison, and having consigned her to Rose's care, turned the key upon them both silently.

"And now for town and Cyril," he said, briskly when he had given the old woman her instructions. "I may not be able to return for a full week, but keep them close and safe. You shan't repent it, nurse," and he sprang into the wagon and was driven away.

Dick stood hidden among the shadows of the gaunt trees looking after him.

"I've got business with Mr. Vernon, too, I think," he muttered; "but it'll have to keep a while. I must see Miss Dolly first. Here goes for the shed under her window."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHE HAS FLED—SHE IS FALSE.

Meantime in the city events were transpiring of scarcely less importance to our little country girl than those which have already been recorded.

May Ellis upon her arrival at home, had found Frank eagerly waiting. She had given him Dolly's address and a brief account of their interview, and dispatched him to hunt up Mr. Lisle, and send him at once to his daughter.

It was agreed that he should bring Dolly to her. She set to work at once with hearty goodwill giving and superintending the execution of orders for her little rival's reception.

She felt joyous and light of heart. First, because her conscience approved her own kind feeling and generous action toward this poor girl; secondly, because she had made Frank almost happy.

He had caught both her fair white hands in his and kissed them. Half laughing she kissed them again herself where his lips had touched.

There had been a look almost like love in his eyes as he prayed God to bless and reward her.

"You are happy?" she questioned, looking wistfully into his eyes, "although she is married to another?"

He answered with a smile of glad relief.

"I had feared so much worse. Ah, my dear, if you could know how happy."

And her eyes fell and her heart thrilled at that simple tender word "my dear."

Perhaps, some day when his love for Dolly was a thing of the long past, he might love again, who could tell? She hoped that his second love would be happier than the first—happier for himself, and—and, well, everybody.

"I don't see how I could ever thought of marrying Cyril," she mused. "He's not the man for me, at all. Dolly and he are better suited by far, and I mean to do my best to make them happy."

Mr. Huntsford had called while she was out, they told her. He had waited long for her return, and finally gone away just before she came in.

It was so. But they did not and could not tell

her how his impatient nature had chafed at what he deemed her caprice, or how much her seeming neglect of his claims on her had availed to change and cool his growing fancy. Such was the case however.

"I dance attendance on this haughty beauty as if she were a queen," he thought impatiently. "Ann what do I care for her after all? Or she for me? My little Dolly, who adores me, if she were dressed and flattered, and followed like this heiress she would be a thousand times more beautiful."

And then he fell to thinking of her fresh and flower-like loveliness when she was first his wife, and conscience pricked him as he remembered how of late the bloom of her young beauty had faded and grown pale.

"I have neglected her, and she droops and pines," he thought. "My little tender love."

And then he thought of her poor little letter, slighted—her humble request refused, and shame and remorse took hold of him.

"I have not used her well. I took her from home and friends, and she is my wife—to what end is all this juggling and deceit? The truth must come out at last, after all."

And then his handsome face lightened with a sudden smile as a certain suspicion that had come to him of late—startling at first, then pleasing him greatly—returned with full force upon his mind.

"If it were so she would have told me," he mused, "and yet, perhaps not. She is so shy and timid, even with me, and I have been cold and negligent of late. God forgive me for it. She may have feared the news would be unwelcome. Oh, Dolly, darling my wife, and my own true love, have you found me so heartless as that? I will go to her at once, What is May to me that I should wait for her? I will question my darling and ask her to forgive me, and if it be as I think, ay, and hope, then in spite of Hastings, or the Huntsford fortune, and of all the world, I will immediately make known our marriage and do justice to the mother of my child."

Full of this resolution, he started at once for home, and reached the house just as the dark was falling. To his surprise, a carriage stood waiting and at the door a man stood knocking furiously.

To Be Continued.

PEOPLE'S PARTY PLATFORM.

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES.

First—That union of the labor forces of the United States this day consummated shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit enter all hearts for the salvation of the republic and the uprightness of mankind.

Second—Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. "If any will not work, neither shall he eat." The interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their interests are identical.

Third—We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning or managing any or all of the railroads, we should favor an amendment to the constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil service regulation of the most rigid character, as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees.

FINANCE.

First—We demand a national currency, safe sound and flexible, issued by the general government only, a full legal tender for all debts public and private, and that without the use of banking corporations, a just equitable and efficient means of distribution direct to the people at a tax not to exceed 2 per cent, per annum to be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmers' Alliance or a better system; also by payments in discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

We demand free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1.