

upon his angry and excited hearer.

"You may be right," he said more quietly. "Meantime the miserable truth remains that my wife has gone—she has been lured away—and that she must be sought for."

As he spoke, a sudden thought inspired him to search the desk; instantly he missed the papers.

His alarm deepened.

"What does this mean?" he cried, in consternation. "Dolly did not know I kept them there—would never have opened my desk. Rose gone, too, there is some strange mystery here; I cannot comprehend it!"

At that instant, his anxious glance, searching eagerly around the room, fell upon something white lying in a corner.

It was an envelope, he picked it up; an envelope that had been hurriedly addressed to Miss Ellis, in Dolly's hand, and then torn open and flung away.

He uttered a cry of triumph, the mystery was beginning to clear; a sudden inspiration came to him.

He refolded the letter and placed it in the envelope he had found; it fitted exactly.

Then he took up the other, addressed to himself and carried it close to the light. On the outside was written only "To my husband," but inside—written in pencil, so faintly that Fred, in his haste, had never noticed them, were the words: "With my whole heart's love."

Cyril uttered a sudden cry of joy. He recognized the envelope, which had contained a little birthday gift, and pressed it to his lips in rapture.

"Thank God!" he cried aloud. "Oh, thank God! My wife is true! There has been treachery here; this letter was never written or meant for me!"

"For whom, then?" demanded Mr. Lisle, excitedly.

Cyril held up the envelope.

"For Miss Ellis, evidently," said he.

Then he went over the whole mysterious affair, as it appeared to him. May was in love with himself, and had suspected the existence of a rival; she had not only discovered Dolly, but who Dolly really was. "And then set herself to be revenged for the insult to her love and her pride. She found my little darling out and poisoned her mind against me. Something has afterward made Dolly suspect her, and she wrote her this letter. Rose is the friend with whom my wife has left her home, and I—I myself—am that 'other,' of whom she speaks so fondly. Doubtless my darling has sought some place of temporary refuge, where she can be secure from further annoyance. Dick Ferret may be with her, too; in which case he will communicate with me. Meantime, Miss Ellis has paid a second visit, finding her intended victim gone and this letter waiting for herself. The sequel is obvious. She conceives the idea of palming off the letter upon me. In order to do this she breaks open the desk and discovers our marriage certificate, which she removes or destroys, and changes the envelope of the letter. Do you not see? The whole plot is transparent as glass. I am ashamed to have been deceived by it for one instant."

Mr. Lisle considered earnestly for a few moments, his eyes fixed anxiously on Cyril's handsome, hopeful face; his own aspect, though troubled still, yet gradually growing reassured.

"It sounds probable," he said, at last; "much more easy of belief than that my daughter should forget her duty to her husband. But you have failed to explain one mystery—who is this man with the long black beard who was with them?"

Cyril looked uneasy again for a moment, but for a moment only.

"Pshaw!" said he. "Some neighbor or friend of Rose's, whom she asked to find them a lodging. My anxiety now is, not for my wife's safety—Rose will look out for that—but for her happiness and peace of mind. I long to dispel whatever doubts of my love and truth this woman's falsehoods may have engendered in her breast. I can know no rest until I find her. The question is, as to which is our best course—to remain here and wait for news, or go out at once and commence inquiries?"

After some brief but earnest discussion, the latter course was decided on; Cyril being of opinion that Fred ought to be found and advised with before any hint of their knowledge of her guilty treachery was given to May.

Poor May! superintending, at that very moment, so busily and happily, the preparations for her quondam rival's reception and welcome to her home! If every one human being was made the innocent scapegoat for another's crime, certainly Cyril made May the scapegoat for Fred's.

While the husband and father of the woman whom she had tried so bravely and generously to serve were viewing her actions in so false a light, and interpreting her motives so uncharitably, May was waiting, in a kind of happy impatience, for the arrival of her expected guest.

The long drawing-room was gay with lights and flowers and a bright fire, made beautiful to welcome Dolly home. Such, at least, was the hospitable thought of May's kind heart as she sat waiting to receive her.

Mr. Lisle had been dispatched for her at about six o'clock. May calculated that she might expect them between eight and nine.

She began to wonder a little when the gilded clock upon the mantel chimed half-past the latter hour, but as yet she felt no misgivings.

Just as its tiny, silvery notes fell upon the soft, warm silence of the bright room, Captain Frank Osborne was announced.

It had been agreed that he should come at this hour, and May welcomed him gladly and joyfully.

"No news yet," she said. "We must not be impatient, however. She must have had many preparations to make and so much to say to her father. The ride down here, too, is a long one. I don't doubt that they will be here within half an hour."

Her beautiful, animated face, and bright eyes, her sunny smile made a pleasant picture to the eyes of the man coming in out of the darkness and coldness of the streets.

Almost unconsciously Frank raised the white hand she had given him to his lips and kissed it warmly.

"Dear, dear May," he said impulsively.

She instantly withdrew the hand—not harshly, however, timidly rather—and her fair cheeks flushed a sudden crimson, and her dark eyes sank beneath his own.

Frank saw, and his own heart gave a bound. A sweet half wild suspicion thrilled him; could it be that the sweet feminine friendship he had found comfort in was not friendship after all, but true love?

He had believed that he would never love again, that his heart for all time to come was consecrated to memory and regret; but that conviction grew suddenly weak and wavering now. Life might hold wider and more blissful possibilities, if beautiful, noble May could give him her love.

He had never thought of her in that way at all before. Dolly had filled his heart and mind too exclusively. But Dolly was another's wife, while May, dear May, he began to wonder how it was he had not loved her from the first.

Silence had fallen between them while these thoughts were chasing through Frank's mind, a silence that, to May at least, was growing embarrassing.

"You are not very curious about your old sweetheart's affairs," she said at last. "You have never asked who Cyril Vernon is."

Frank came out of his pleasant reverie with a smile.

"There has been so little time for question or explanation," he said. "I know at least that he is some of your, and that our little stray lamb is his wife. Of course it is neither desirable nor to be expected that I shall feel the same interest in Mrs. Vernon's affairs that I once felt in those of Dolly Lisle."

The smile upon his face grew softer and happier at those words.

He saw that, although she kept her eyes cast down.

"I have given orders that they shall be shown up to this room as soon as they arrive, which will surely be shortly now," she said. "Dolly must not find you here; the sudden meeting would be sure to embarrass her. Besides, you know I gave a promise in your name, that she should not see you unless by her own consent. You must help me to redeem my word."

She arose and went over to a glass door which led into another room, fitted up half as a study half conservatory.

"Here is a place of concealment and refuge. Here you may see her without being seen. The moment you hear them announced you must run in here."

Frank promised to do so.

"They cannot be much longer now," he said. "It is after ten. I will avail myself of your permission and look upon her face unseen, tonight, once more. Poor little Dolly."

The tone was one of tender, soft regret—regret for a wasted love and a blighted hope.

There was nothing of that bitterness in it however which belongs to an incurable wound; rather did its gentleness denote pity for her than for him self.

But May did not judge so. Jealously sprang up in her heart at the tender mention of Dolly's name, and jealousy is not apt to discriminate very closely. She spoke out impulsively:

"You love her still. She is Cyril's wife, remember. Oh, Frank, will you go on forever wasting your true and noble heart on a hopeless love? Will there never come a day in which some other woman's true affection may win you from the misery of a vain regret?"

She stopped suddenly, turning from crimson red to ashy paleness.

Frank with one stride, was at her side, and had caught her trembling hands within his own.

"You ask me that? Do you know of a woman who would give me such love, May? I know only one from whom I would accept it! If that one can love me, all the sorrow of the past will be as a dream blotted out by a new joy—a present bliss—a love stronger and deeper, far, than the unrequited affection that has been so miserably thrown away! Dear May—sweet May—you bid me love again; will you promise, then—you only can—that the last love shall be hap-

pier than the first?"

He drew her, unresisting, to his arms. Her dark, ingenious eyes were lifted to his face, in love in joy, in timid questioning; but suddenly she sprang away—before the answer that trembled on her lips could leave them, the door was flung open wide, and a servant announced:

"Mr. Egbert Lisle, and Mr. Huntsford."

Absorbed in each other, the lovers had never heard the carriage drive up to the door. Nor did Frank, now, hear more than the first visitor's name.

The instant it fell on his ear he concluded that Dolly had arrived, and darted at once into the conservatory.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MAY PLUCKS OUT THE HEART OF FRED'S MYSTERY.

May stood bewildered by surprise as her visitors entered.

"Mr. Lisle and Cyril together!" she thought, "and without Dolly. What can it mean?"

Cyril did not keep her long in doubt. His excitement and anger had been only increased by a vain search for Fred Hastings (who at that very hour, was engaged in imprisoning securely his unwilling prize). He announced the purpose of his visit brusquely, and with scant politeness.

"I want my wife," he said, with a cold bow. "Her father, here, Mr. Lisle"—May bowed in acknowledgement of the introduction—"informs me that you visited my house this day, many hours ago. Her letter to you—which you were kind enough to leave for my perusal—sufficiently explains the nature of the interview you had with her, and its immediate result has been that she has left her home. If your object in intruding upon my domestic affairs, was to separate her from me, it has failed. I shall find her again and refute your slanders. If you have had any hand in her disappearance, be advised and give me such information as you are able, otherwise I shall find means to compel it from you."

He had spoken rapidly and excitedly, more rudely, too, than he was perhaps altogether aware; before May's indignation at his tone had time to find a vent in words, however Frank flung open the conservatory door and made a fourth to their party.

Mr. Lisle's face brightened at the sight of him, but Frank looked at Cyril, only.

"You forgot yourself," he said sternly. "You have no right to use such a tone toward this lady who is your wife's true friend. You are Mr. Cyril Vernon, I presume." Then suddenly his face darkened. "I met you at the ball a few weeks ago. You were not called 'Vernon' then. You were Mr. Huntsford. I remember." He turned with quick vehemence upon May. "Speak May. What juggling is this?"

She drew herself up proudly, but said no word. Cyril broke in too quickly:

"I am Cyril Vernon Huntsford, sir—heir to the great Huntsford fortune on condition I marry the lady now standing by your side. She has taken some pains, I suspect, to smooth the way to the altar for me; but I decline to walk in that road for all that. I am already married; there is no more to be said. Keep the Huntsford thousands, May, and give me back my wife." May burst forth now, impetuously, half angry, yet half pleased:

"You madman! how can I give you your wife? I wish I could. You are worthier of her now than you ever were! and I like you and esteem you, in spite of your rudeness, as I never esteemed you before! You are talking in enigmas, Cyril; I have received no letter from your wife; I don't know what you mean. Be calm, be reasonable, be just to me. Don't rage and fume like a boy; sit down and explain what has happened, or at least let me hear from Mr. Lisle."

She heard it, from both—the story of Dolly's disappearance, as they understood it, and then Cyril gave her the letter.

Her face paled and changed as she read it; she clasped her hands in perplexity and fear.

"Oh, Dolly! Dolly! Some one has overheard us and deceived her. There is some cruel, dangerous mystery here! Oh, Cyril, indeed you take it too lightly if you think she will or can return. She has been got out of the way; I know it—I feel it!"

She paused a moment, her beautiful face stern and dark with earnest thought.

"Cyril," she said, suddenly and impressively, and laying her hand upon his arm, "Uncle Huntsford left a private letter for you, into the contents of which I have no wish to inquire, but which, I presume, bore reference to the Huntsford property, and may throw some light on this dark mystery. Whether you or I inherit the property now, the next heir will be your child. Is there any person in the world whose interest requires that that next heir be put out of the way?—for whom it would be better if Dolly's child and yours were never born?"

Cyril uttered a cry of horror. He started from his chair like one before whose eyes some grisly phantom rises, and came quickly toward her.

As he gazed into her earnest, candid eyes, he saw in them the same hideous suspicion that was even then darkening his own.

"It is impossible!" he cried, answering the look rather than the words. "It is impossible!"

"Not half so impossible," cried May, impatiently, "as that I should wrong, without motive even, the poor, innocent girl, or she fly from the husband she adores. He has been in your confidence throughout—she told me so. I believe him, as Uncle Huntsford believed him, to be unprincipled and unscrupulous. And where is he now?"

They had sought for him at his hotel and at every place where he was likely to be found, but quite in vain.

Cyril's face was white with horror as he said these words.

Frank and Mr. Lisle looked at each other in dismay; a heavy cloud had fallen upon them all. All private and personal doubts and injuries were merged in this great anxiety. These four, between whom had been so much resentment and wrong, drew together and confided in each other as sworn friends. Under the spur of this common interest in Dolly's fate one thing was especially noticeable. Everybody understood perfectly that it was upon Fred Hastings that May's suspicious had fallen, although not one of them had spoken his name.

It was not long past midnight. Although none of the anxious hearts assembled there could hope for sleep or rest, nothing more could be done until the morning.

May suggested that the gentlemen should be her guests for the night, and in the morning arrange a plan for search.

Frank and Mr. Lisle agreed—not so Cyril.

"Late as it is, I shall go down to his hotel once more," said he, and he did so.

The hotel was closed when he reached it, all dark and silent as a tomb; it was indeed near three o'clock in the morning. To his surprise, however, his summons met a speedy answer.

Mr. Hastings was in, and in bed, the porter told him. Had come in immediately after Mr. Huntsford was inquiring for him last, about half-past ten o'clock. Went to bed suffering from a terrible headache, and had given orders not to be disturbed. Still, if Mr. Huntsford wanted him particular, why—

The night-porter held a five-dollar bill in his hand while he spoke, and folded it and unfolded it nervously.

Cyril considered. Fred was all right, after all, he thought, and May's wild suspicions wronged him. Probably his own idea was really the right one, and Dick might be waiting for him even now with some message, up at the house. No use in rousing Fred, especially if he was sick. Really, May's fancy was quite too romantic and ridiculous!

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; nay its spirit enter all hearts for the salvation of the republic and the upliftings 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.

We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.

We demand a graduated income tax.

We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all state and national revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government economically and honestly administered.

We demand that the postal savings bank be established by the government for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

### TRANSPORTATION.

Second—Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people.

### LAND.

Third—The land, including all the material resources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. And lands now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government for actual settlers only.

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