



CHAPTER XXV.

part Harland anticipated finding his... and he meant to remain there... as the fugitive did. The young... had no thought that he was ventur-... into peril.

He instantly appeared in the rear... he was set upon and overpowered... the men assembled there.

He was too late that he had walked... a trap, and although he battled... he was dragged down a... of steep stairs, through a dark... and into a cellar-room.

The young man's captors dashed him... heavily upon the earthen floor, and... he was partially stunned they hastily... and secured the door of the... behind them.

Stuart regained his feet and threw... self against the door, striving to open... all his efforts in that direction... the door would not yield. He... did not open it.

Stuart reflected upon the... getting himself, Stuart reflected upon... folly in rushing into danger. Pres-... he heard the sound of footsteps on... floor above his head, and the sound... female voice.

Listening intently, he recognized... Oakburn's voice, and he heard... prayer and the words that pro-... duced it.

She is innocent. Now I have the... That simple prayer, addressed... him, who reads the 'secrets of all... is a proof positive of her inno-... said Stuart, mentally.

He distinctly had heard Marion utter... words.

Father in heaven, Thou knowest that... I am innocent!

Stuart had resolved to inform Marion... his presence in the chair, and he was... out to pronounce her name when she... opened and four of his captors en-... ded.

The young man was seized and drag-... to a rear apartment of the cellar,... he was locked in and left to solit-... and gloomy reflections.

The proprietor of the place had just... thought that possibly Stuart might com-... mune with the captive in the room... to the apartment to which he was first... assigned, and that was why he so in-... portunately changed the young man's... quarters.

When Stuart was dragged to the cel-... lar, the supposed assassin fled.

On the night of Stuart's capture by... Oakburn's jailers, the man who... brought her letter to Stanmore ap-... eared at the latter's hotel again.

Stanmore had liberally fed the man, and... he had agreed not only to guide his... to Marion's prison, but also to... assist in accomplishing her escape.

The night was dark, and everything... seemed to favor Stanmore's project.

He followed his guide with implicit... confidence, and the latter conducted... in a straight to the house in which... Oakburn and Stuart Harland... were both captive.

The building was a long, narrow... structure, and on each side of it there... was a vacant lot.

The room in which Marion was im-... prisoned was on the ground floor in the... rear of the house.

In this room there was but one win-... dow, and this was protected by heavy... outside wooden shutters, which were... closed, and thus secured by a number... of iron spikes, so that Marion had found... impossible to open them.

Stanmore's guide was thoroughly in-... formed as to the habits of the inmates... of the house; he informed that gentle-... man that at the hour when they reached... the door of the dwelling it would be safe... to force open the blind, and attempt to... enter Marion's room through the win-... dow, for just then "the game" played in... the rear of the restaurant proper would... be in full progress, and all the men... about the premises would be assembled... there.

Stanmore's companion, in anticipa-... tion of what was to be done, brought... with him a small iron crow-bar and a... steel chisel.

With these implements he set to work... to open the blinds on the window of the... room occupied by Marion Oakburn, and... Stanmore assisted him.

Working almost noiselessly, the task... of opening the blind was very soon ac-... complished.

Meanwhile, Marion had been warned... by the man who was now with Stan-... more that an attempt for her liberation... could be made that night. Marion... caught the sounds made in opening the... blinds, faint though they were, but as... he thought they were made by the... friends who had come to liberate her, he... was not alarmed.

There was a light in the apartment, and... when the blinds were open Stan-... more saw Marion at the window.

Wonderously beautiful Marion looked, and... though she was pale and careworn.

"Poor girl! Poor girl! I hope, your... blinds will soon be over now," muttered... Stanmore.

Then he forced the window open and... entered the room, and Marion greeted... him joyfully.

Stanmore's companion remained with-... out the house to be ready to signal his... associate of the night.

As soon as the blinds were open, the... man, his eyes... without the least... the fact.

betray them.

"I received your message, and I have... come to save you; you did well to... trust me. You must leave this place at... once," said Stanmore, taking Marion's... hands.

"I knew you would not fail me. I am... ready to go with you anywhere. You... remind me of one who is very dear to... me, and I know that if you are like the... absent one, I can trust you even with... my life," said Marion.

"You can trust me even as you would... trust him of whom you speak," replied Stan-... more, and his voice trembled slightly as... he spoke.

Marion put on her hat and cloak, pausing... now and then to listen, and all the... time in fear lest Stanmore should be... discovered, and her escape prevented.

She continued speaking as she attired... herself, saying:

"I wronged the honest man, of whom... you remind me, by doubting his truth... and honesty, but now I know that he... was the soul of honesty and honor.

At that moment Stanmore heard a... half-stifled cry from without, and he... thought he recognized the voice of the... man he had left on guard without the... house.

At almost the same moment there... came the sound of a commotion in the... other part of the house, and the tramp... of heavy footsteps coming toward Ma-... rion's room.

Stanmore sprang to the window, and... tried to open the shutters.

To his surprise and consternation, he... found that he could not open the blinds, and... he comprehended that they had been... secured on the outer side since his en-... trance through the window.

"Has my companion betrayed me, or... has he been overpowered by the mem-... bers of the House before he could give... an alarm?" cried Stanmore.

He believed that Marion's foes had... entrapped him.

Stanmore now heard the sound of gruff... voices from without the window, and... the men whose footsteps he heard approach-... ing the door had almost reached it.

Escape in either direction was cut off, and... Stanmore could only remain to face... what fate might have in store for him.

He resolved to make a determined de-... fense, and to battle for his life desper-... ately, if he was called upon to do so.

"The terrible men of this house will... be here in a moment! Oh, to save me... you have imperiled your life, my noble... friend! I fear you are lost!" cried... Marion.

"I mean to make a fight," said Stan-... more, resolutely.

Then he dragged the bed and all the... other furniture of the room against the... door thus barricading it.

"At this moment of peril, when I have... proven myself a true friend, can you not... trust me? You are innocent. Tell me... all, and I will believe you," said Stan-... more.

"This is no time for explanations. I do... not doubt your friendship or your truth, but...—oh, they are here!" cried Marion.

Stanmore placed Marion behind him, and... drawing a revolver he leveled it at... the door.

The next moment there came a heavy... rap on the door, followed by the sound... occasioned by the drawing of bolt and... the removal of bar.

Just then the window blinds, which had... been closed, were thrown open, and... Stanmore and Marion saw several police... officers guarding that avenue of escape.

"The police! They have come to ar-... rest me!" screamed Marion, clinging to... Stanmore.

"Courage! Courage! I will not desert... you!" cried Stanmore, and he trembled... at the contact of her yielding form.

The next moment there came a crash... against the door, the barricade was... overthrown, and half a dozen police... officers, headed by Paxton, the detective, rushed into the room.

Stanmore and the detective confronted... each other.

It was an exciting moment.

But how came Paxton and his men to... arrive just in time to prevent Marion's... escape and surprise Stanmore?

The two men who had been instructed... by Paxton to shadow Stanmore had... faithfully discharged their duty, and by... their expert trailers Stanmore and his... guide had been tracked to the house in... which Marion was imprisoned.

While one of the shadows remained... on watch, the other carried the informa-... tion to his principal that they had lo-... cated Marion's prison.

The detective laid his plans well. Guided... by the shadow, he hastened to the... house where Marion was a captive, accompanied... by a police force. The man Stanmore had left at the window... was surprised and overpowered, and the... blinds were fastened.

Leaving several of his men at the... window, Paxton entered the house. The... inmates fled precipitately at the sight... of the police and the detective, and his men... made their way directly to the door of... Marion's room.

As he beheld Stanmore and caught... sight of the leveled weapon in his hand... at the moment when he rushed into Ma-... rion's room, Paxton replied.

There was a moment of silence while... Paxton and Stanmore stood face to face.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a suspenseful silence which... had fallen upon the thrilling scene of... the drama in the room where Marion... had been imprisoned, and where Paxton... had surprised Stanmore, who now con-... fronted him weapon in hand.

"You are wrong again. I've a lit-... tle secret," said Stanmore, smiling.

"I shall only tell to save... my skin," said Paxton, and he said:

more on masses had the former given... them a word of command. But no such... order was given. On the contrary, he... gave his auxiliaries a signal to fall back.

Marion's dilated eyes were riveted... upon the detective's face, and the ter-... ror-stricken expression of her counte-... nance told of the fear that was in her... heart.

The hunted girl's brain was frenzied... with fright; but even in her terror her... beauty was so grand and imperious that... all who beheld her new were impressed.

Paxton was the first to speak.

Suddenly extending his hand to Stan-... more in a friendly way, he said:

"I know all. The chief of police has... entrusted me with your secrets, and I... honor you for your devotion to the... woman you love. Your error was in not... confiding all your secrets to me."

Stanmore returned his revolver to his... pocket, and grasping the detective's... hand with a friendly pressure, he an-... swered:

"I was waiting for the day of my vin-... dication. In my judgment, the time had... not come for such a revelation. But... tell me, did the chief tell you who I... really am?"

"Yes; you are Donald Wayburn, Ma-... rion Oakburn's affianced husband,"... answered Paxton.

"Donald! Oh, why did I not suspect... the truth. My heart was drawn to you... from the first," said Marion, and she... rested as though about to faint, but... Stanmore folded her in his arms.

"At last, my darling, after all these... years of separation we are reunited," he... murmured.

"But only to part. Judith Kredge has... denounced me. Oh, Donald, I am ac-... cused of murder," answered Marion, in... a voice of horror.

"But it is a base lie. We will prove... it so," Stanmore rejoined encourag-... ingly.

"Miss Oakburn," said Paxton in a... kindly, gentle tone, "I am as ever your... true friend, but justice in this case, united... with duty gives no choice. The... truth of the mystery of your fate must... be discovered, or an innocent man may... yet lose his life. I allude to Stuart... Harland, who will surely be again... brought to trial, if it is not proven that... he is innocent. I must do my duty, painful... though it is. You must now ex-... plain your mysterious conduct, or I must... place you under arrest."

Marion trembled as she clung to Stan-... more—as she shall continue to designate... him, but she did not answer.

"Do not despair; you shall be saved. I... am wealthy now and I will expend all... my fortune if necessary, to establish... your innocence," Stanmore whispered... in Marion's ear.

"Mr. Stanmore, I trust you will not... judge my motive unjustly; I only seek... to do what is right," said Paxton.

As he spoke he took a forward step.

At this critical moment a man forced... his way into the room through the group... of policemen, at Paxton's back about... the door.

The new arrival was Stuart Harland. He... had succeeded in liberating him-... self from his prison in the cellar, and... from without the door which he was... passing stealthily, unaware of the pres-... ence of the police, he had heard all that... had just been said.

He comprehended Marion's peril, and... he felt a thrill of joy in the thought... that it might be given him to save her.

"Hold! Stuart cried, 'I was the one... to first confirm Judith Kredge's accu-... sation of Marion Oakburn, but I now de-... clare that I know she is innocent!'"

"Do you mean that? Explain!" cried... Paxton in amazement.

Stuart then in a few words explained... how he had been captured and impris-... oned, and in conclusion he repeated Ma-... rion's soliloquy which he had overheard, and... the opening words of her prayer.

"She would not call upon her Creator... to bear witness to a lie. The last shadow... of a doubt is banished from my mind... now. She is innocent, and it would be... cruel to subject her to the ignominy of... arrest, even as a measure of compell-... ing her to speak," said Paxton, and he... added:

"While a shadow of doubt was in my... mind I felt it my duty to arrest you, as I... have said. Pardon me. I am glad my... purpose was not consummated before this... information was received."

Then he addressed a few words to his... men.

There was some further conversation, and... then the party left the house, and... Stanmore escorted Marion to the house... of a kind, motherly old lady, who, for... her lover's sake, agreed to receive Ma-... rion as her daughter. The poor girl... wished to avoid Judith Kredge, and she... assured Stanmore that she felt a pre-... monition of approaching illness.

The recent experiences through which... Marion had passed had proved too ter-... rible for her to endure without evil con-... sequences resulting, and her brain... whirled, and she felt the fire of fever in... her veins as she told Stanmore that she... had been seized and chloroformed in her... own house by Judith and her brother, and... that she knew no more until she... awoke and found herself a captive in a... strange house.

Meanwhile Levi Kredge and Judith... were exulting over the turn affairs had... taken.

Kredge believed he was safe now that... Judith had denounced Marion, and since... the plot with which his father had been... shot had been discovered in her trunk.

"The wretches meant to sacrifice Ma-... rion."

Upon the occasion of Judith's next... visit to Levi's cell, the rascally janitor... asked her the following questions:

"Do you really think Marion killed her... father?"

"Yes," answered Judith, confidently.

"You are all wrong," said Levi with a... cunning leer. "I don't think Marion... killed her father. And coming close... to Judith, he added in a startling whis-... per: "In fact, I know she did not kill... him."

Judith was intensely excited, and... as she saw Levi's arm she hissed: Then... you killed him!"

"No, you are wrong again. I've a lit-... tle secret," said Judith, and I'm keeping it."

"I shall only tell to save... my skin," said Levi, and he said:

"I cannot comprehend, and I suppose... it is useless to ask an explanation, for I... know your stubborn nature as well."

"Quite right," rejoined Levi.

But leaving this interesting pair, we... will turn our attention to more agree-... ble characters.

The morning following the night of... Marion's rescue, after a night of painful... anxiety on her account, Stanmore called... at the house of the good woman with... whom he had left her, and he was start-... led by receiving the information that... Marion had become delirious after he... had left her, and that a physician who... had been summoned in haste, pro-... nounced the unfortunate girl's malady... brain fever.

Stanmore was terribly alarmed, and... he remained in the house until he saw... the physician who was attending Ma-... rion, as he came to make a morning... call.

The doctor assured Stanmore that... Marion's condition was exceedingly pre-... carious, and that he could not decide on... a positive prognosis as to her recovery... as yet.

As it was thought that his presence... might further excite Marion, Stanmore... refrained from seeing her.

When Paxton visited the Chief of... Police, to inquire about Stanmore, the... official in question in reply to the other's... interrogatories said:

"I am an old and confidential friend... of Mr. Stanmore's, but under the pres-... ent circumstances I think it best for him... that I should confide his history to you."

You have told me that you have dis-... covered that Stanmore is only an as-... sumed name. You are right. Donald... Wayburn is my friend's real name.

"You know that he fled from New... York some years ago, and that he was... accused of defrauding and swindling. I... knew all that. Stanmore has not de-... ceived me, rest assured on that point. But... I tell you now that Stanmore is an... innocent man. He was ruined by Pratt... and Weeks. He was himself deceived, for... he was young and inexperienced. Those... scoundrels put him forward as the... head of a gigantic swindle, in which... he had implicit faith. Stanmore was... made to seem to be the very prince of... scoundrels and swindlers, and while he... lost his fortune and his reputation, he... was obliged to leave the country to es-... cape arrest. Pratt and Weeks reaped a... harvest of ill-gotten gains."

Stanmore, when he fled from New... York, went to the South African dia-... mond field, where he became a fortunate... digger, and soon accumulated a modest... fortune. He then became a dealer in... supplies for the mines—a speculator in... claims and a broker in diamonds. Suc-... cess followed every venture and he is... now very wealthy.

Previous to the time of his acquain-... tance with any of the schemes of Pratt... and Weeks, he was engaged to Marion... Oakburn. When the speculation, of... which he was the figurehead put forward... by Pratt and Weeks, failed, and John... Oakburn, who, by Stanmore's advice, had... invested in the unlucky venture, lost his... money, he denounced Stanmore in... round terms, and forbade his daugh-... ter having anything to do with him in... the future. Her father caused Marion... Oakburn to believe for the time that... Stanmore was guilty, and she would not... see him before he fled, and when he... wrote her from the African diamond field, as... he did, she did not answer his letter.

Then, as Stanmore has told me, he... vowed that he would never see her again... until he could place the proofs of his... honesty and his honor before her.

"From having some time later over-... heard a conversation between Judith... Kredge and Levi, who were formerly, at... the time Stanmore became involved... with them, in the service of Pratt and... Weeks, Marion learned that she had... wronged Stanmore, and that he had... been himself duped and deceived by the... swindlers. Then Marion wrote to Stan-... more, addressing him at the African dia-... mond field. This letter he only recently... received, as he had left Africa before it... arrived there, and it was forwarded to... him here."

This was the history of Stanmore, given... by the chief of police.

CHAPTER XXXII.

We have seen Stanmore receive Mari-... on's letter, which had been forwarded... to him from Africa.

Naturally the reception of this mes-... sage of love afforded him the greatest... pleasure, and we have noted how de-... lighted he was.

But to return to Paxton.

The detective, some time subsequent... to the occurrence of the events just... narrated, was reflecting upon the case... which he had built up against Levi... Kredge, and he thought:

"Pratt & Weeks must speak and tell... where they obtained the marked money. Perhaps... in their evidence I shall find... further proof of Levi Kredge's guilt."

Paxton still adhered to the idea that... on the night of John Oakburn's murder... his savings were in the little safe; that... this money had been stolen by Levi... Kredge; and that this was the source... whence he derived the money which he... had contemplated investing in real... estate.

This day while the detective was... walking along Wall street he saw Daniel... Pratt enter the office of Abraham Ben-... jamin, the Hebrew money lender.

Had Paxton followed the rascally... broker he would have seen him ushered... into the private office, where the old... money lender received him very affably.

An interesting interview followed.

Pratt cunningly broached the subject... he had in mind, and which was really... the object of his visit.

The substance of what he said was... that he offered Benjamin high interest... to lend him \$75,000 in gold, and accept... as security the same amount in bank... notes.

The old Hebrew pretended not to com-... prehend this remarkable and seemingly... absurd proposition.

Then Pratt threw off the mask, so to... say.

"You are a man of the world and not... particularly apt to how you earn a dollar... only so you can earn it. I'll speak freely. This is a strict business confidence, though, you understand," he said.

"Certainly, my friend," said Ben-... jamin.

"Very well. The plain truth of the... matter is, I've \$77,000 in bank notes, but... every note is marked in a peculiar... way, so as to render its positive iden-... tification an easy matter. I've reason to... believe that any one to whom this money... is traced will find himself in very se-... rious trouble, and so I dare not use it. All... I ask is for you to look it up in your... safe, and keep it there until I redeem... it," said Pratt.

"Ah, I think I understand. This... marked money is missing."

"Precisely. Missing is a good word,"... Benjamin, answered Pratt, with a... harsh laugh.

"Come, now you understand the mat-... ter, what do you say?"

Benjamin seemed to reflect for a mo-... ment or so, and then he answered:

"There is a good deal of risk in this... affair. I'll consider the matter. The... fact is, we are a little short just at pres-... ent. Call again at this hour, if you... like, to-morrow. We couldn't think of... touching that marked money for less... than 50 per cent. off. That is to say, if... we made the allowance at all, we could... not let you have more than \$38,500, half... the amount of the marked money."

Pratt's brows contracted into a frown, but... he thought rapidly.

"Thirty-eight thousand five hundred... is better than nothing. If it does not... save the firm it shall save me."

He was thinking of absconding with... the money, and of leaving his partner to... extricate himself from his difficulties as... best he could.

"I will call at this hour to-morrow. Necessity... knows no law, but your terms are... hard, Benjamin. Hard even for you," he... said; and after a little more... conversation he left the office.

When Pratt was gone, Benjamin... rubbed his hands and chuckled with... satisfaction.

"Now we have them. Stanmore's... hour is coming. Justice will overtake... those scoundrels at last."

That evening the old Hebrew reported... to Stanmore:

"You must let them think they are to... get the money. Pratt must be induced... to deliver the marked money to you,"... cried Stanmore, excitedly.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ROMANCE OF A SONG.

How the Popular Irish Ballad, "Robin... Adair," Came to Be Written.

Of all the old English ballads none is... better known nor more popular than... "Robin Adair." It is a song whose... pathos has appealed to listeners in... every land where the English tongue is... spoken, and unlike most of the old... songs of its kind it has not been crowd-... ed out of recollection by newer melo-... dies. Although usually classed as an... English ballad and sometimes referred... to as of Scotch origin, "Robin Adair" is... in reality neither English nor Scotch, but... a genuine Irish ballad. The air, through... which as well as the words the tears run, is... based on a very ancient melody of... similar style known as "Eileen Aroon," and... dating back beyond 1450. The more modern of the... two songs has its origin in an actual oc-... currence. There was a real Robin Adair, an... Irish gentleman who claimed de-... scent from the Desmond Fitzgeralds. He... was a handsome, dashing young fellow, and... it is no wonder that Lady Caroline Keppell... fell in love with him, even though she was... the daughter of the powerful earl of Albermarle... and he was as poor as the proverbial church... mouse.

The wooing of the handsome Irish-... man was impetuous, but the family of... Lady Caroline, true to the traditions... of noble families in all well-regulated... families, opposed the match. Lord... Albermarle sent his daughter away to... cure her of her folly, but she abso-... lutely refused to be cured, and it was while... she was sojourning at Bath, in order... that she might not meet Robin, that... she wrote the song. She pined for her... lover and her health became so poor... that at last the father relented, as most... fathers in romantic stories do at the... end, and Lady Caroline Keppell be-... came Lady Caroline Adair. Adair, who... was a surgeon of more or less ability, afterward... became quite distinguished in his... profession. All this happened in the... last century, the song having been... written in 1758. Strangely enough, its... prototype, "Eileen Aroon," was also... the outcome of very romantic circum-... stances, the tradition being that it was... written by Carol O'Daly, after his... sweetheart, Eileen, had been compelled... by her family to marry his rival.—Troy... Times.

The Stamp Drawer.

I once talked with a man who had... served a term in prison for embezzle-... ment. He said that the first step in his... downfall was the stamp drawer. The... clerks in that store, as in many, if not... in most stores, helped themselves to... stamps from this drawer for their... private letters, using the firm's stationery... also. What more natural than that... they should take a few more stamps... if they were ordering some trifle by... mail? Having made the start and see-... ing no trouble therefrom, how easy it... was to take a larger amount when a... more expensive article was wanted! The... step from the dollar's worth of stamps... to the dollar itself was not a very... long one, and then to larger... amounts, followed at length by discov-... ery and prison! This was the man's... story, and it set me to thinking.—Har-... vard.

Admirals and Generals.

Admirals and generals are of equal... rank, but the former takes the prece-... dence in cases where two officers be-... longing to each grade meet together, the... navy being considered the more dis-... tinguished service.