



This last thrust roused the woman by the wall, who drew herself together and made as though she were going to speak. She clutched her hands and gazed with impotent anger at the man who had thus unveiled the story of her crime, but instead of speaking she uttered a piercing scream and fell in a huddled mass on the floor.  
 They picked her up and carried her, still unconscious, from the room. Mr. Gifford and Inspector Berdham following her, the latter looking anything but pleased at the turn matters had taken.

**CHAPTER XXVII.**  
**AFTER THE STORM.**  
 "Thank God for his mercy in this!" exclaimed Sir Jafray in a deep voice of intense emotion as the door closed behind Inspector Berdham and his unconscious prisoner. "Thank God for his mercy!"

Beryl first threw her arms round Lora in the excitement of the removal of the strain, and then, sitting still, gave full vent to her tears of pleasure.  
 Lora was the least moved of the three. The baronet went to her and took both her hands in his and tried to draw her to him to embrace her.  
 But she held aloof.  
 "I did right to come back, Jafray," she said calmly, "right to break my vow, for I had vowed never willingly to look upon your face again, but I could not bear that the world should think of you as married to a murderer. So I broke the vow."  
 "I should have found you, Lora. I would have searched the world through and ended my life before I had given up my search," he said vehemently.  
 "Well, we shall see," she replied earnestly. "That wretched woman! What a villain has that man been through all!"  
 "I don't understand it all now," said Beryl, "but I do not want you to understand more than that you are cleared. Curiosity will come when I am not too agitated to think."  
 "I think I can give another clue," said Lora slowly. She had drawn away from Sir Jafray. She was sitting again by Beryl, hand in hand. Beryl, when Pierre was talking to me in the library the morning you came and found him there, he rushed to the door once suddenly, protesting he had heard some one eavesdropping. I have no doubt this woman had been listening and had heard him say that he would claim me as his wife. He had probably deceived her, as he had every one through-out his life, and she had tried to work a double revenge on him by taking his life and on me by taking mine. I had done it. But for Mr. Gifford she might probably have succeeded. The man's life was one long course of crime, infecting all who came in contact with him."  
 "Mr. Gifford has done splendidly," said Beryl enthusiastically.  
 "He has saved us all," said Lora, and she shuddered at the thought of how narrowly she had missed the shame and trouble of a public trial. "I can hardly realize now that but for him I should have stood tomorrow in the dock."  
 "Don't, Lora!" exclaimed Sir Jafray. "Don't let us think of it."  
 "I have been through worse trouble than that," she said quietly. "I am absolutely confident that the truth would be known, and the knowledge that the result would be to lift that load of shame from you strengthened me to face anything. I would not have been listening if I could as easily lift the rest!" She stopped and sighed, and then, after a pause, added, "But even that may come with time."  
 She kissed Beryl, rose from the sofa, and going to Sir Jafray, held out her hand.  
 He looked at her in astonishment.  
 "What do you mean?"  
 "I will not go away twice without saying good-by. I am going now. Good-by, I have done what I came back to do."  
 While they stood for a moment looking at one another in silence and battling with the feelings which affected both in common some one knocked at the door, and when it was opened Mr. Gifford came in.  
 "May I come in, Sir Jafray?" he asked rather hesitantly.  
 "Well, what is it, Mr. Gifford?" said the baronet a little sharply, in consequence of the interruption coming at such a moment, but the detective's glance of reproach struck at most a reception recalled Sir Jafray to himself, and he made haste to add: "Come in? Of course you can. You have done us the greatest service that any one could have rendered, and we all want to thank you. I didn't like to let you understand your methods, mind you," he said, holding out his hand, "but you've made me your friend for life."  
 "And me," said Lora, shaking hands with him as well, "and without any reservation as to your methods. I don't know how you did it and don't care. The result is enough for me."  
 "As for the methods," answered Mr. Gifford, with a smile, "we can't always please everybody, and this case looked very puzzling. I saw nothing for it but to go my own road. I couldn't even let you know what I was doing, Sir Jafray. That is a sharp young woman, and she spoiled everything and scared her. But I didn't come in to talk about myself. I came to say that she's given up the whole thing. She's better a bit, though the doctor who's been looking her over to fetch her out of that fainting fit says her head ain't worth a pinch of snuff, and she's told the whole story. It ain't a pretty one. That fellow was a rare scoundrel. He'd been carrying on with this girl under the pretense that he meant to marry her and had had all her savings out of her and had ruined her in that sense as well as in a far worse way, and she overheard him talking to you, Lady Walcot?" — he turned to Lora and hesitated just a moment as to what to call her. "When she was killing Sir Jafray and then claiming you as his wife. She only half understood what was said, but it drove her mad, and she set her wicked little wits to concoct the devilish scheme of revenge which we know now."  
 "How did she arrange a meeting with the Frenchman?"  
 "He arranged it with her, unfortunately for him. He wrote her the letter which I found. I expect that as a matter of fact he didn't know what to make of her and what she'd do. He wanted a few days in which to mature his plan, but he could make after he'd had to leave the house, and he wrote that letter to make the appointment before he had seen Lady Walcot, of course. His object was no doubt to keep the girl from blabbing anything, seeing that he had been kind out of the place under such circumstances. When they met, the girl says he tried to persuade her to let him into the manor that night so that he could have his revenge on you, Sir Jafray, and that when she refused the whole thing came out, and in the row which followed she says she struck him the blow which killed him in self defense. I don't believe that part of the story myself. I believe she went out resolved to murder him, and that she lured him into a false sense of se-

til, after an exciting drive, he deposited his fare at his destination in the morning. He had not before he had damaged a passing vehicle in his mad career. The baillie, on alighting, handed him his fare, with the addition of a substantial tip, and then, to the man's astonishment, pressed 80 shillings into his hand, at the same time saying: "Here's 80 shillings, my man. You will be brought before me tomorrow for furious driving, and I shall fine you that amount."

**A PRISON BREAK.**

In the early days of its existence the Nevada state prison was so constructed as to be a very formidable little institution. The warden's apartments, the guards' quarters and the convicts' cells and dining room were all under one roof, and the whole constituted a long two story stone building, which in itself formed the front wall of the stone quarry and workyard. This circumstance, together with the comparatively small number of prisoners, many of them personal acquaintances of the prison guards, tended to induce a sort of family feeling and made prison life, as I have remarked, a very sociable affair. As may be readily imagined, discipline was not so rigid as it has been known to be in other institutions of the kind, and "breaks" were frequent and often successful. The favorite method was to escape through the top of the cellroom, creep along between the ceiling and the roof until over the apartments of the warden and break through into those. This occurred, no barrier lay between the convicts and liberty save the guards, always few in number.  
 It was with one of these "breaks" that the most famous and successful of these escapes was accomplished. One Sunday evening in September, when the twilight shadows outside were deepened to darkness inside the gloomy cellroom where the prisoners were congregated, the captain of the guard went to lock the cells in the cells for the night. As soon as he was fairly within the iron door one of the prisoners struck him over the head with a bottle, and almost at the same instant a deafening "bang" was followed by a sledgehammer blow which struck the door and hurled it back upon its hinges. The warden, who was in the room to complete the work of death, when one of the conspirators, a small but powerful man, seized him and threw him into the nearest cell and closed the door upon him, thus saving his life. All this was the work of ten seconds and was accomplished in utter silence without alarming any one on the outside. It was the work of only a few moments more to climb to the top of the upper tier of cells and through the wall separating them from the other part of the building.  
 The first intimation that any of the guards had of their escape was when they saw the warden and his men rushing through with a crash and 30 convicts men dropped into the room occupied by the ladies of the warden's family. Every one of them was armed with a sledgehammer and a few with knives of their own manufacture. The warden rushed to the scene, pistol in hand, but was instantly scolded by the warden's men. The convicts then rushed on him, seized his pistol and commenced shooting at him as he lay. The warden himself was killed in the process, and his men were scattered. One of the convicts was killed in the process of his escape, but few of the guards were on duty or even about the premises. These few stood by their posts and fought like heroes till they fell, disabled with wounds. The way to freedom was now open for 30 as desperate men as ever escaped from bondage. Some of them were severely wounded, but their comrades carried them along, and the band marched off in a body, two abreast, and disappeared over the sagebrush, covered hills into the thickening dusk. They took with them two heavy rifles, four double barreled shotguns, five six shooters and nearly 8,000 cartridges. That they were incumbered with iron afforded the only hope of their recapture, but these they evidently got rid of during the night. One squad of six appeared that evening at a solitary blacksmith shop a few miles distant and compelled the smith to remove their irons, but the remainder did not apply for aid.  
 The alarm of the community may be better imagined than described. There were mustering and arming in haste, the militia was called out, and the telegraph wires clicked the night long, sending news of the escape to all parts of the country. Messengers and aid-de-camp rode to and fro, and by night an organized posse was mounted and off. For four days the country was searched, and the result was a solitary captive, who was wounded in the leg. Plenty of people saw the fugitives, but they kept together, were known to be well armed and were not to be molested with impunity. Most of them, however, were recaptured during the next few months, as cold and hunger or in some instances wounds forced them to seek for succor. Some few made their escape for good and all, and still others were hunted down after the lapse of several years.  
 It is with one of the latter that we have to do. Jack Sessions was his name, aged 20, in for 20 years for highway robbery. He was supposed to be badly wounded when he made his escape, and as time went on and he was not heard of many believed that his lifeless body was lying in some damp hole in some hole where he had crawled to die. He was one of a noted gang of four who had committed many highway robberies and bullion thefts before they were brought to justice. One of his partners, the warden distinguished himself on this occasion by fighting bravely in defense of law and authority and earned his pardon thereby. He was killed not long after while attempting to rob a stage in eastern Nevada. But to return to Sessions. What adventures were his in effecting his escape and where he found refuge until his wound was healed we have no means of knowing. How or where he passed the greater part of the five years which elapsed before his recapture we know only from rumor, and in this instance for once the same speaks uniformly to the credit of her subject.  
 At the end of five years Sessions was found in Oregon, leading a respectable life, in fairly prosperous circumstances, and recently married. It was said, to a young lady of good family. He was brought back to Carson and incarcerated. He took it very hard, as was to be expected, and said some bitter things about his being useless for a man to try to live a decent life. When the circumstances became known, the demand for his pardon was universal. People generally expressed the opinion that those who had been the cause of returning him to prison were over officious in their zeal for justice and had much better leave well enough alone. In due time the pardoning board met. Sessions' friends felt confident of his release; but to make assurance doubly sure, his young wife had followed him from Oregon, and established herself at a hotel in Carson the week before. He, besieged the powers that be with appeals for mercy. She was a pretty, trim little body, modest in appearance, and always plainly though handsomely and becomingly attired.  
 She was overwhelmed with grief and anxiety for her husband, but clung to

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