WILL YOU?

You cannot make sure in the morning When you go to your work in the town That the chair that sits by the fireside

In its great arms, black or brown, Will take you again at nightfall When the work of the day is o'er. It may wait in vain to be filled again By your weary form once more.

You cannot make sure that the kisses Your children now struggle to share, When your threshold is past; may not be

the last They shall have from your glad lips

And the loving smile of their mother As she looks on tenderly, You cannot make sure-whether rich or

But it may be the last you'll see!

But you may make sure that their sorrow, If sorrow to them must come-Shall be grief's own tears, unalloyed by

Of hunger, and loss of home! If you will your love may yet shield them From dread of the long, dark way

They are trusting to shield them to-

A. STEVENS, in Ass'ce Agt's Chronicle.

A Waif's Gratitude.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOUSE AND THE LION

"Well, good-night, my darling! for you're not quite strong yet from your illness; and I, of all men, must take care of you, both as lover and physician; and only a fortnight to our marriage."

A lover to be proud of too, a tall, handsome fellow of five or six and thirty, and as clever and daring as he was handsome; whilst she was a pretty, slender creature, scarcely over twenty, who had refused a young and very rich suitor for the love of Ernest Aubrey. Thereby the rejected man was transformed intota deadly enemy and had even vowed his rival should never have Rose Morland-which threat the doctor, with a reckless and contemptuous laugh, had stigmatized as "melodramatic rubbish," and anyhow, would find he (Aubrey) was a buccaneer enough fellow to deal with, as he hadn't knocked about the world for nothing-which was true. The doctor, tall and strong, and daring, was an ugly customer to an enemy, though tender as a woman to suffering or weakness.

"But you will be a little careful, Ernnest," the girl whispered, as he kissed her again and again; "Leicester said it so fiercely-he meant mischief, and you are so reckless."

"My dearest! he is a contemptible sneak, and you mustn't be anxious for me; but of course I'll be reasonably careful, for your precious sake. One more kiss, my rose without a thorn."

Which meant half a dozen or he would not have been a lover. Then he took leave of Mrs. Morland, and went away. His own house being only in the next street, he soon reached his doorstep, latchkey in hand.

"Hullo! what's this?" he exclaimed suddenly, as a small figure started up from the depth of the portico; "why, by Jove! -a City Arab! What's the matter, little chap?" asked Dr. Aubrey, kindly, as the emall urchin clutched his left hand convulsively, with a sob of excitement.

"Oh, you've come at last, sir," almost sobbed the boy; "and it is yerself what was so good to me when I got runned over last year, and -- and that's why I've been a watchin' for yer, sir, to stop them chaps from murderin' of yer."

"Stop a minute, my lad," said the doctor, quickly, opening the door so that the full light from the hall-lamp should fall on the boy. "What does all this mean? Run over?-Oh, yes; I do believe it's the same face. I remember. So you are Robin, and you wanted to see me, eh?" "Yes, sir," with intense eagerness;

"'cause you was good to me and---" "Never mind that, my boy. Come in-

side, and tell me what you want to say." Yes, Ernest Aubrey remembered now, that a year ago, just as he neared his own door, a little unkempt City Arab was knocked over by a pair of horses in a break, and must have been cruelly it jured but that he himself had leaped forward, caught the restive animals' bridles, and then carried the child into his house, dressed his cut head, and kept him for a few days till he was well; and then got him a place as errand boy in Islington, where the lad's mother lived. Since then he had lost sight of Robin-and now here he was, with an ugly word on his lips-

murder! Aubrey led the boy into the library. turned up the gas, and stirred the fire, to

which he pulled up a cane chair "Sit down there, Robin," he said, in the old kind way the child evidently remembered with such singularly vivid gratitude. "Now tell me why you waited outside for me, and what you mean by 'they,' and 'murder.' Where's your mother, though?"

'She's gone away, please, sir," said Robin, his intelligent eyes full of wonder, gazing over the room, a palace to him "She used to beat me, so it's no matter. I runned away. I goes of errands, and 'olds hosses, and sich like; and a cove in our court lets me doss down somewheers about his place, so as I runs errands for bis missus an' hisself. That's Paradise Court, sir, near 'Olborn, yer know."

doctor; "and a regular thieves' den it is, Robin. I'm very sorry you've got into such bad company, my lad."

"I ain't a prig, sir!" cried Robin, eagerly; "'deed I ain't, though they wants me to but I wouldn', never, 'cos-'cos you was good to me. And when yer got me that there place at old Jerry's, sir, I promised yer, out an' out, I'd be honest. An' I 'ave, though yer would't b'lieve the likes o' me, in course."

"I am not at all sure of that, my little man," said Dr. Aubrey, gravely, curiously touched, his keen, dark eyes covertly added Mr. Hawkins, glancing at the boy, watching the child's eager intelligent face the whole time, noting every change of expression, studying this specimen of humanity.

And few men knew human nature and the world better than the doctor did; he knew that in nearly all beings, especially in youth, there is some measure of good, fore armed." however much crusted over, if only the They must walk alone when the arm is right touch be found to reach it; and that ous, sir. Plot to murder; do you know one with the masses must always be, more | who?" or less, an individual touch, a personal influence. Here, plainly, a strong feeling of gratitude to himself still held sway in the waif's heart, though how long that hold would last against a continuance of very adverse influences, was, doubtless, a measurable tether.

> "Yes, Robin, I believe you," was the doctor's ultimatum; and the child's whole, thin little face lighted up with joy. "And now tell me your story-why you found your way out here to me so late, and so forth."

but they sez you was out, but they'd send if it was a bad case, if not, would I come ag'in. I sez yes, but I only watched till yer comed back, d'ye see, 'cos I was bound to tell yer to-night, sir, else them black- lighted official. guards 'd murder yer to-morrer night."

"Ah, not an easy job, I reckon," remarked the buccaneer doctor, an odd suspicion flashing into his mind. "Well,

The little Arab, who small though he was, was about fourteen, told his story now to a deeply attentive and silent lis-

At present, he said, Paradise Court was the headcentre of a gang of whom a certain Red Jem and Bill Sayers, known as Snapdragon, were the leaders. About a fortnight ago Robin had seen these two "sneak into the crib" with a third person, roughly dressed, closely muffled up, and despite disguise, "I twigged he was a gentry-cove, sir," Robin put it. Being curious, he crept down and listened. He tleman." could catch that the gentry-cove was armurder someone. The gentleman was to tance. take a furnished house in London, go there with Jem and Snapdragon, one spector said : evening to be settled, and send a telegram for the victim-elect. All three men were to be masked with crape and armed. The victim was to be shown to a bedroom to the supposed invalid, and then despatched, the body was to be carried to a deep cellar and buried in quicklime. The "cove" was to pay £1,000 down for the job.

"I watched every night, sir, to find out more," continued the shrewd boy, "'cos the p'lice would ha' said that was gammon, p'raps. Yesterday, Jem, he sez to me, would I earn a sov, by taking of a letter to a 'ouse in a few days. 'You says." bet,' says I, twigging at once; 'where is it, Jem?' I says. But he said as how he didn't know till this evenin', and he'd give me the letter in time to leave it. In course, sir, I watched close, till I see the same chap come after dark, then I creeps and listens; he pays them down two hundred sovs, sure as sure, then he says, 'The place I've took is 6, Dahlia Grove, Chelsea, and the letter is to be sent at 10 30 to Dr. E. Aubrey, at the address on the letter. Then I slipped off and runned here to stop yer going. Oh, yer won't go, sir, will yer?" cried the boy, almost frantically; "they'll murder you, they will!"

"Ry Heaven, but they won't though, my lad!" said the doctor, getting up, his black eyes flashing. "I know who the scoundrel is, and, thanks to you, his game is up. Look here, Robin, you have saved my life, and I shall make you my charge for the future; you are a good, grateful child, and deserve reward."

He paused a minute to regain self mastery; then went to the sideboard and brought out bread and cheese, bidding Robin come and eat, for he looked hun- whether of danger from a bullet, or infec-

Needless to say that Robin obeyed to the full, and then Aubrey said, quietly:

"Now we are going in a cab to Scotland Yard, as I intend to arrange for me to go to-morrow and catch all the rascals redhanded. No, don't be frightened for me, my boy, I shall be safe enough. I've knocked about no end, and go armed at all points. Come along."

He lowered the gas, took the child's hand, and went out once more into the street. A bansom soon transported the oddly-matched couple to Scotland Yard, where the doctor asked for the chief at present in charge.

The constable he asked went to inquire, but soon returned with a message that



"H'm, yes, I know of it," returned the Mr. - was engaged, but Inspector; Hawkins would see the gentleman.

"That will do as well," answered the doctor, and he and his little charge were conducted to an official-looking room, where the inspector named rose to receive the visitors.

"Ah," he said, with a smile of recognition, "what can I do for you, Dr. Au-

"Case of 'Tom Pool,' eh?" said the doctor, amused. "Know me, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir, very well, indeed, by sight and name. Is it a case of robbery, sir?" who stood by the doctor's chair clinging fast to his hand—the little Arab was not quite happy in Scotland Yark.

"Why, no; a plot to murder me," returned Aubrey, coolly. "But thanks to this little lad's gratitude for a trifling matter a year ago, I am fore-warned, and so

"Whew!" went the officer; "that's seri-

"Oh, yes. The priincipal rascal is young gentleman named Leicester; the subordinates hired by him to aid him are two burglars, known, Robin here tells me, as Red Jem and Bill the Snapdragon."

"Those two fellows!" exclaimed the inspector. "Why, they are wanted this six months, for desperate burglaries. They're about the worst of a gang. I'd give a good deal to have my grip on that pair "

"All right, my friend," answered Aubrey; "you can have your wish, then, tomorrow night, and I mine. We can catch "Please, sir, it wor ten when I comed, the two like rats in a trap, which is my intention as much as yours. I'll tell you the plot shortly, and we can arrange our plans."

"I am all attention, sir," said the de-

Dr. Aubrey explained the position simply and shortly. "No new tale," he added; "and the plot was none so very odd, either, in this nineteenth century." Then he told how, on his return to his house, he had found this lad, Robin Lear, whose story he repeated in substance.

"Sounds like truth, certainly, sir," said Hawkins, meditatively, with another sharp look at Robin. "You think he's genuine, I suppose?"

"Sure of it," answered Dr. Aubrey. "I'm not very easily deceived."

"No, I shouldn't think you was, sir," said the officer, significantly. "Look here, voungster"-this to Robin-"see that door? Go into the inner room there till I call you. I want to speak to this gen-

Robin obeyed at once, though he reranging with the two ruffians to decoy and leased his protector's hand with reluc-

When that inner door was shut, the in-

"It's best not to let him hear our plans, sir, as he'll have to go back to Paradise Court, and we can't trust what the lad might let out by chance, or get pumped, especially if those rascals got the least suspicion he has peached."

"And you doubt his fidelity, too?"

"No, I don't, sir; one does sometimes find these odd cases; and the poor little beggar, from your account, don't seem to be a thief, nor of actual criminal parentage. Nor can I see any motive, exactly, for his coming to you, except the one he

"Nor I. Well, of course, he'll have to go back to his old crib to-night, be seen as usual to-morrow, and bring me the let-

"Yes, sir; and then, undoubtedly, the safest course for you is to stop at home.'

"Not if I know it," said the other, with a flash in the handsome black eyes. "There would be no evidence to convict that fellow, Leicester, unless I do go and get in. He shall be taken red-handed, by Heaven! I can't feel my future wife's life to be safe, if he is at large, after the

malignant revenge now betrayed." "It's what I expected you would say, sir," said the inspector, smiling; "but still, though I should find my job much more sure-there's a terrible risk of your getting a shot, even as we follow you. in the moment the door is opened."

"Oh, hang risk! I'll chance that," said the other, recklessly. "I've seen too much

of bullets to mind them-" "But Miss Morland, sir-"

"She has to be a doctor's wife, my friend; so she mustn't be timid for metion. Nor will she. Of this, of course, she won't know anything till it's over."

"Very well, sir. Then I and four of my men will be concealed by eleven, near No. 6, Dahlia Grove (I know the place well), and you stop your cab at the corner. I'll join you. Directly they open the house door to your ring. I and my men will rush in with you, and capture the whole three."

They then arranged a few more details, and then Robin was recalled, to receive full instructions. Then Dr. Aubrey bade the inspector "good-night," and went away with his small friend.

"By Jove!" said Hawkins to himself; "what a dare-devil that Dr. Aubrey is."

CHAPTER II.

"PLAYED OUT." So the arrangements for "trapping the rats" were made to the entire satisfaction of both parties, and the next day Dr. Aubrey went about his work as cool and unconcerned as if no such thing as jealousy,

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revenge and murder existed at all, and waited for him that night; only the hours went too slowly-the man's blood was up, and as to risk and danger to himself, the dare-devil spirit absolutely sprang to

(Concluded next week.)

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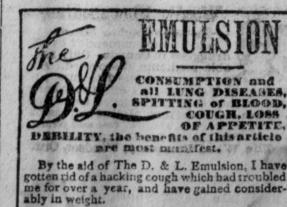
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