



VOTING POWER OF THE SOUTH.

Mr. CHANDLER dwelt at some length upon the Election Laws, and claimed that the Southern end of the republic didn't want any safeguards put upon the purity of elections, because they would interfere with the operations of the Ku-Klux at the polls. Said Mr. CHANDLER, "Give them permission to perpetrate the same kind of fraud and violence in New York city and Cincinnati as has been perpetrated in the South, and those two cities, with the solid South, will give them the Presidency of the United States, and by fraud and violence they would hold it for a generation."

THE ROUGH IS READY.

THE SOUTHERN EPIDEMIC WILL SPREAD NORTH IF NOT CHECKED.

GEORGE CAULFIELD'S JOURNEY.

BY MISS BRADDON.

CHAPTER V.

"DELAY THIS MARRIAGE!"

MR. LEWORTHY went back to Kibble & Umpleby's, and asked if Mr. Umpleby was on the premises. No, Mr. Umpleby had left half an hour ago, to return to the bosom of his family in Tolkington Park.

Happily for the eager vicar, Tolkington Park was an adjoining suburb, where those well-to-do citizens of Grandchester who did not like the labor of daily railroad journeys contented themselves with a semi-urban retirement in villas of their own building, amidst shrubberies of their own planting, overlooking the town and most formal of public parks. It had long been a grief to the female Umplebys that, whereas other merchants' families of wealth and standing had Gothic mansions or Italian palaces set in richly wooded landscapes, remote from the smoke of the city, they had only the stereotyped surroundings of a thickly populated suburb, and were in no wise better off than their next-door neighbors.

A cab with a horse of his own choosing drove Mr. Leworthy to the utmost limit of Tolkington Park in less than half an hour. He found the Umpleby mansion, which was called Mount Lebanon, although the ground on which it stood was as flat as a pancake, and there was not a cedar within a mile. It was a substantial square house, with bay-windows, a broad flight of steps, grandiose iron railings, painted dark blue, and surrounded with gilded pineapples, and an all-pervading glare of plate-glass windows.

The hall was tessellated; the drawing-room was brilliant in color, and painfully new. Here Mr. Leworthy sat waiting for the master of the house, while a young lady in an adjacent chamber favored him with a self-giving exercise, which strained to the uttermost a somewhat acid voice.

"I wonder whether that is the bride singing," speculated the vicar, "and I wonder if she is very much attached to my gentleman? Rather hard lines for her if she is fond of him, poor child!"

At last Mr. Umpleby appeared, plethoric, rubicund, pompous.

"Happy to have the honor of making your acquaintance, vicar," he said. "I have long known you by repute."

"Every one in Grandchester does that," answered Leworthy, pleasantly; "I have been too often in hot water not to be pretty well known."

"Impossible to please every one," murmured Mr. Umpleby.

"Precisely; and the man who tries it ends by pleasing no one. I have taken my own course; and though I've made a good many enemies, thank God I've made twice as many friends. Now, Mr. Umpleby, I must ask you to receive me with all good nature, and to believe that I mean well with you and yours, although I have come on a most unpleasant business."

The merchant looked uneasy. Another great firm gone wrong, perhaps; a question of a big bad debt.

"Is it a business matter?" he faltered.

"No; it is a family matter."

"Oh!" he said, with an air of relief, as if this were of minor importance.

"You are going to marry your daughter to-morrow?" said the vicar.

"I am."

"To your clerk, Mr. Foy?"

"Yes, Sir. It is not the first time that a merchant's daughter has married her father's clerk, I believe, though it is out of the common course of things."

"I am here to beg you to postpone the marriage."

"On what grounds?"

"Before I tell you that, you must give me your promise to communicate nothing I tell you to Mr. Foy."

Mr. Umpleby hesitated.

"Mind, it is vital to you, as a father, to know what I have to tell."

Mr. Umpleby gave the required promise.

The vicar told his story, beginning with the scene at the railway station, ending with the story he had heard at Parminster.

"Were you aware that Foy had a sister?"

"I never heard him speak of one."

"Curious that, in your future son-in-law."

Mr. Umpleby sat and stared into space like a man bewildered. He wiped his large bald forehead with the biggest and most expensive thing in his handkerchief.

"This is a most frightful suspicion," he said; "a young woman poisoned, for you seem to think this young woman was poisoned. It is an awful position. Every arrangement has been made for the wedding, as you may suppose; guests invited—some of the best people in Grandchester. My wife and daughters have the highest opinion of young Foy. I may say they are infatuated about him. His conduct in business has been irreproachable. There must be some mistake—some ridiculous misunderstanding."

"I got Foy's address at your own office, and at that address I heard of a sister of whose existence you are absolutely unaware. Do you think that speaks well for your intended son-in-law?"

"He may have had some powerful reason for concealing her existence. She may be weak in her intellect. She may have gone wrong. As for your idea of slow poisoning, that is too absurd!"

"And you mean this young man to marry your daughter to-morrow morning?"

"What am I to do? I never cared about the match. I have been persuaded into giving my consent. My girl had a right to look higher. But to stop the marriage now would be—"

"Simply prudent. Investigate the case as I have put it before you. If I am deceived—if

Foy is not the man who took that dying girl to the railway station, if Foy's sister, or a woman who passed as his sister, is not lying dead at Milldale—I will make the blindest apology to you and Mr. Foy for my baseless suspicions. You must take your own course. I want to save your daughter from sorrow and disgrace. Remember, you have been warned. If Foy is the man I take him to be, the police will be digging his heels to-morrow morning when he goes into the church to marry your daughter. Good-afternoon. I have given you plain facts, and I have no time to spare for discussion."

Mr. Umpleby would fain have detained him, but the vicar was in a hurry. He drove back to Grandchester, and to the headquarters of the police, to whom he repeated his story. They had been at work all day, and had done very little. They had discovered a porter at the station who remembered the arrival of a gentleman and a sick lady in a plaid shawl. They had seen the woman who took charge of the ladies' waiting-room, second class—always more crowded than the first class—and from her they had heard again of a sick lady in a plaid shawl, accompanied by a very attentive gentleman, but she could give no account of the personal appearance of either. The lady's face was hidden by a veil, and there had been so many people rushing in and out just at the last that there had been no time for her to observe these two, who came in late. This much she knew, that the lady seemed in a kind of faint or stupor, and the gentleman had to carry her in his arms.

Once furnished with a clew, professional intelligence was quite equal to taking it up.

"This woman at Parminster must be taken to Milldale to identify the body," said the chief official in the detective line; "and we must watch this fellow Foy, so that he may not give us the slip."

"He is to be married to his employer's daughter to-morrow morning," said the vicar. "To leave Grandchester before to-morrow would be tantamount to a confession of his guilt. It would be throwing up the cards altogether."

"The symptoms you describe sound like arsenical poisoning," said the officer; and then he and his colleague whispered together for a minute or so.

"I don't think there is anything more I can do to-night," said the vicar.

"No, Sir. You may leave everything in our hands."

"Precisely. But remember, if you don't want this young scoundrel to be married to a respectable young woman at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, you'll have to look sharp."

The vicar went back to the bosom of his family at Freshmead, thinking that he had done a pretty good day's work.

Before ten o'clock that night two facts had been discovered in the biography of Mr. Foy—first, that exactly three years before, he had been married at a registrar's office to Jane Dawson, spinster, daughter of John Dawson, master mariner; and secondly, that he, or a man exactly answering to his description, had bought small quantities of tartar emetic and small portions of laudanum at divers times within the last two months, and at several chemists' shops in the obscure streets of the great, busy town.

These two discoveries the police communicated to Mr. Umpleby late on the vigil of his daughter's wedding.

The evidence of the marriage was indisputable. Much as Mr. Umpleby was inclined to discredit the charge brought against his intended son-in-law, he could not disbelieve the legal proof of the marriage before the registrar; and, convicted of having concealed a prior marriage, Mr. Foy's character appeared in a new and doubtful light.

"I'll put off the wedding," cried Umpleby, who had spent the evening marching about his house and garden in a state of suppressed agitation. "I won't have my daughter married to a liar and a trickster. There must be something wrong—no smoke without fire."

He sat down directly the detective had left him, and wrote with his own hand to those Grandchester magnates who had been bidden to the wedding.

"Let these letters be delivered by hand before eight o'clock to-morrow morning," he said to the respectable man-of-all-work, who had been yawning dismally in a pantry at the back of the hall; "and let that letter be taken to Mr. Foy at the Crown Hotel."

Foy was to stop at a hotel in Grandchester on the eve of his wedding, in order to be on the ground early.

Mr. Umpleby felt a happier man after he had done this deed. He went up to bed more at ease with himself, but he did not awaken his slumbering wife to tell her the unpleasant news. There would be a scene in the morning, of course, with all these women—hysterics, fainting fits, reprimand, in which he, the husband and father, would get the worst of it.

Mrs. Umpleby's lavender *mairé* antique, her brand-new Honiton shawl, were lying in state upon the sofa. Would any woman forgive a husband for upsetting the festival at which those splendors were to be worn? There had been fuss enough about the gown, about the breakfast, about every one of the wedding arrangements, and now, lo and behold! the fuss had been all for nothing!

"I never liked him," mused Mr. Umpleby. "It was the woman who talked me over. To begin with the man's half a foreigner, and I want no *parlez-vous* in my family."

His letter to Foy had been of the briefest:

"Look round the first thing to-morrow morning; I want to talk to you."

The father was up betimes, too agitated to eat his breakfast. He carried his cup of tea to the study at the back of the dining-room, and peered that snug apartment from Mr. Foy. Up stairs there was wild excitement among the few

inmate part of the household, rushings and hurrying from room to room—spectral figures in long white raiment and flowing hair, cowering, phantoms, looking and crying. Here on the ground-floor there was an awful quietude.

Presently Gaston Foy came in. He, who was usually so pale, had this morning a hectic spot on each cheek. He too shared in the general excitement. Looking at him closely, Mr. Umpleby saw that his lips were dry and white.

"Nothing wrong with Bella, I hope?" he asked, nervously.

Bella was the bride.

"No, there is nothing the matter with Bella at present. It is about yourself I want to talk. I think, when we first knew you, you told me that you stood quite alone in the world—that you were an orphan—had fought your own way in life—had not a living soul belonging to you?"

"All that is quite true," answered Gaston Foy, looking straight at the questioner, with a face that showed no trace of emotion or surprise. "Why discuss the matter this morning? It is not a cheerful subject."

"You have deceived me," said Mr. Umpleby.

"I am told you have a sister."

"This time the young man was palpably moved. Strong as he was in dissimulation, his self-control failed him. For the moment he stood staring blankly at his accuser—wordless. Then he suddenly recovered himself, and looked at Mr. Umpleby pleadingly, with a deprecating smile.

"You have found out my secret," he said, mournfully. "It is a sorrowful one. Yes, I have a sister; yes, I have kept her existence a secret from you, and from all I love in this house. Poor girl, her life has been—is—a burden to herself and others. An invalid, almost an imbecile, my afflicted sister shrank from the world as the world would have shrunk from her. Had you seen her, you might have been prejudiced, you might have regarded her as an obstacle to my marriage."

"You ought to have told me the truth," answered Umpleby, sternly. "I learn that a few days ago this girl was living with you at Parminster. You removed her from there in a weak state of health. Where is she now?"

"At the sea-side."

"Where?"

"At Howcomb."

He named a place at least fifty miles from Grandchester.

"Alone?"

"No; with friends of mine."

Mr. Umpleby took a telegram form from one of the drawers in his desk, and laid it on the blotting-pad.

"Write a telegram to your Howcomb friends at my dictation, to inquire about your sister's present condition. A few words will do. Thus: 'I am anxious about my sister—please let me know how she is this morning. Answer paid.' The reply can come here. Why do you hesitate?"

"Because your request implies suspicion. I shall send no such telegram. Why should you drag my poor suffering sister into this day's business? I have told you the truth about her. I have told you why I have hitherto concealed her existence from you and yours. Can you not allow me to forget her, at least for to-day?"

"No, Mr. Foy. I want to have positive proof that your account of this young woman is a true one. I want to know that she is—alive, and in safe hands. When we have settled that question, I shall have to ask you another."

The hectic spots had intensified on the young man's cheeks, leaving the rest of his face livid. He wiped his ashy lips with his handkerchief.

"What question?"

"I shall have to ask you about your wife, and when and how you became a widower. What have you done with the young woman, Jane Dawson, whom you married three years ago at the registry office in St. Swithin Street? Was she an imbecile too? Were you compelled to conceal her existence?"

"There is some mistake," said Foy, recovering his resolute tone, but not his natural color. "I was never married in my life."

"I have been shown a copy of the registry of your marriage, or the marriage of a man calling himself Gaston Foy, clerk, of Grandchester. The name is not a common one. Come, Mr. Foy, we need not prolong this argument. I never liked the notion of your marrying my daughter, though I submitted to it to please my women-kind; but last night I made up my mind you should not marry her; and now, my young friend, there's the door. I wish you a very good morning."

"This is strange treatment, Mr. Umpleby."

"Not so strange as your own conduct."

Gaston Foy took up his hat from the table, and left the room without a word. He was meditating what he should do with himself in the next hour. He was speculating whether he should have one hour free in which to extricate himself from a desperate predicament—whether he was not so hemmed round and beset with danger as to make all movement on his part full of peril.

He walked slowly out of the house, down the broad flight of steps, and just outside the iron gate of the garden a hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"I arrest you on suspicion of murder," said a voice, and Gaston Foy knew that his course was run.

CHAPTER VI.

BROUGHT TO A FOCUS.

The day had seemed long to the prisoner in Milldale jail, although he was cheered by the society of his mother, who spent all the time the authorities allowed in her son's gloomy apartment. It was a sight to see the brave-hearted old lady sitting opposite her son, knitting a *couverpied* of soft Shetland wool, and pretending to be as comfortable and as much at her ease as if she

were in her pretty drawing-room at South Kensington. Not by so much as a quiver of her lip would she allow herself to betray her anxiety. Her heart was as heavy as lead, yet she contrived to smile, and kept up a cheerful flow of small talk about the past and the future—church affairs, the schools, the choir.

But even with this consoling company the dark winter day had seemed long to George Caulfield. He was feverishly expectant of news from Grandchester, and when none came he fancied that his friend, his lawyer, and the police had all failed in their efforts to let in light upon the mystery of that nameless girl's death.

And if the day seemed long, what of the dreary winter night, when imagination, excited by strange circumstances and strange surroundings, conjured up the horrors of a criminal trial—the crowded court, every creature in it believing him, George Caulfield, the murderer of a helpless girl? He saw the chain of circumstantial evidence lengthening out link by link, and he could have no power to sunder those links. His lips would be sealed. And then involuntarily there broke from his lips a cry of anguish:

"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

He had spent a feverish night, given half to wakefulness, half to appalling dreams. He had risen and dressed himself as soon as it was light, and now he sat waiting wearily for some sign from the outer world, some cheering message, some word of hope. It was only two days since the vicar of Freshmead had left him, yet it seemed ages.

Hark! was not that the cheery voice he knew so well, the full vibration of tones that came from powerful lungs, the clear utterance of a man accustomed to address multitudes? Yes, it was Leworthy's voice, assuredly, and that cheerful tone should belong to the bringer of good tidings.

He sat with his hands clutching the edge of his pallet, profoundly agitated, while the grating key turned in the lock, and the heavy cell door moved slowly back. Then the vicar rushed into the cell, and grasped his hands, and laid his hand upon his forehead in loving benediction.

"God bless you, my dear boy! You will not have long to stay in this wretched hole. The man who brought that poor creature to the station is arrested; he came here by the train I travelled in. He is now in this jail. There will be a *post-mortem* to-day, the inquest will be re-opened on Monday instead of on Wednesday next, and the evidence then produced will prove his guilt and your innocence."

"Thank God!" ejaculated George Caulfield, and then he fell on his knees beside the prison bed, and poured out the rapture of his soul in prayer and thanksgiving.

When he had finished that voiceless prayer, he sat down quietly beside his friend to hear how the vicar had done his work, and how completely he had succeeded.

"Up to last night the evidence against my gentleman was only speculative," he said, when he had described all that had happened in Briergate and at Parminster, "but last night the police contrived to bring matters to a focus. Once having got a clew, they worked marvellously well. They got hold of half a dozen photographs of this Mr. Foy, who had been vain enough to get himself photographed at different times by all the leading photographers of Grandchester. Provided with these, they went the round of the chemists' shops, and found where my gentleman had bought poison. They traced him from lodging to lodging, till they found him two years ago living in the outskirts of Grandchester with a weakly, nervous wife, whose description corresponded exactly with that of the weakly, nervous sister at Parminster. They obtained a photograph of this young woman, which had been given by her as a parting souvenir to the landlady, and this portrait Mrs. Moff, the Parminster char-woman, identified as a likeness of the so-called sister. This was bringing things to a focus, wasn't it?" inquired the vicar, giving his young friend a ferocious dig in the ribs.

"Decidedly."

"They were brought still closer this morning, thanks to my advertisement for a missing young woman in a Rob Roy shawl. This morning an elderly female appears at Messrs. Brockbanks', solicitors—your solicitors, you know—and tells them that she keeps a small public-house in Water Lane, a narrow street leading to the river, and within five hundred yards of the railway station, and to her house came a young man with an ailing young woman in a plaid shawl—Rob Roy pattern. They stayed there two days and two nights, and while they were there the young woman got worse, and was so ill that she had to be carried to the station, when the young man, who owned to being her husband, took her away. He was taking her to the sea-side, he told his landlady, the doctor having said sea air would bring her round. The landlady's son, who was in the iron trade, helped to carry the poor young woman to the station. It was quite dark, and no one took much notice of them. This is why the police could get no information from cabmen or cabmasters, you see. Now this good woman, the landlady, has been brought to Milldale this morning. She will see the corpse, and she will see Mr. Foy, and I hope she may be able to identify both. She has seen Foy's photograph, and recognized it, already. So the long and the short of it is, my dear fellow, that I think you're pretty comfortably out of this mess, and I hope you'll never do such a thing again."

The vicar affected facetiousness, perhaps, to hide the depth of his feeling. He loved his friend almost as well as he loved his own sons, and that is much, for the man's heart overflowed with love.

The inquest was re-opened on Monday, and the evidence against Gaston Foy was so complete in