MY HALF SISTER

By ELTON HARRIS

CHAPTER VIII. (Continued.)

"Look here, Mollie, will you—won't you? I love you awfully. I have just run over on the chance of seeing you, because I could not stay away any longer. And I hate to think of you here with these people. Won't you look at me? Do!"

A most persuasive voice was Reggie's; but Mollie's eyes were fixed on the point of her shoe, and she put her hands behind her when he attempted to take them.

"Give me time to think," she whispered in a subdued tone. "I can hardly believe that you are here. How did you find me?"

"Saw the Dubois in town, but they did not see me. Rode straight on and met the little kiddie, who brought me here. Told her that I wanted to speak to you very particularly alone, and she flew off and promised to keep watch for the return of the enemy," said Reggie briefly.

"Dear little Kitty!"

"Won't you say 'Dear Reggie,' too, Mollie?" he suggested, eyeing her wistfully. "I have come all the way from Ireland to ask you." Then, as she flashed a quick half smiling glance at him, he added [illegible]

[illegible]

"Oh, Reggie, Madame Dubois," exclaimed the girl at length. "She will never, never consent [illegible]

[illegible]

Henri, against whom [illegible] ments were far [illegible] that it mattered [illegible] would take refuge at the [illegible] whither his [illegible] week's time. And then Kate came running back to announce her [illegible] return.

"Oh, Reggie!" ejaculated Mollie, rising, and turning very pink.

"Sit down, child," he said calmly, dragging her back to his side, and taking Kate on his knee. "Let them come."

Kate pushed back her curls and regarded him with a frown. She was very fond of Reggie, but [illegible]. He understood the look, read the dawning jealousy of any one coming between Mollie and herself, in those sharp hazel eyes, which had already discovered the truth; and as this tall, merry young officer's heart was as tender as a girl's towards those he cared for, he hastened to dissipate it.

"You are going to be my sister, kiddling," he said gently.

"I know," she answered, with trembling lips. "You will take her away."

"But she tells me she cannot be happy without you, so we shall have to manage for you to come, too," he continued. "Now if you think that will be jolly, and we shall be the best brother and sister going, never jealous of each other, signify the same in the usual manner by a kiss." And he was more touched than he liked to show when the little girl threw her arms round his neck in a transport of relief, happily unconscious of the obstacles that might come in their way.

It was this group that madame, followed by her son, came in sight of, and great was her wrath. Nor was it in any way mollified when Mr. Anstruther advanced politely, and, after the usual greetings, informed her that Miss L'Estrange had promised to be his wife, and he trusted that he should have her consent; he was sure of that of the trustees, who were old friends of his father's. Madame was very suave at first, though Mollie knew the effort it must have cost her. She understood the firmly-shut mouth, the half-opened eyes; but, suave or not, she managed to convey plainly her decision. She not only could not sanction the engagement, but Miss L'Estrange must be considered quite free.

"I don't wish to be free," said Mollie boldly, over his shoulder. "I have given Mr. Anstruther my word, and will not break it."

"My sweet child, you are young, you do not know your own mind. Mr. Anstruther has taken advantage of finding you alone in my absence—"

"I naturally wished to find Miss L'Estrange alone," answered Reggie, haughtily.

"Oh, yes!" sneered Heri, who had been standing biting his nails gloomily, in direful dismay. "It is well to pay court to the heiress, but she has protection. I—"

He paused [illegible] Reggie had only stooped to pick up the riding whip which he had dropped, and then looked at him. But it was enough; he said no more, while madame, going a shade paler as she watched the two young men, hastened to close the interview.

When Reggie left things were only what he had expected. Madame absolutely refused her consent, and declined to see him at Chalfont again, so far losing her temper as to utter innuendoes and insults, which she could say with impunity as a woman, but which would certainly have brought Reggie's whip across the shoulders of her adored son.

Reggie, for his part, courteously repeated that the engagement was a fact, and would be known all over Reverton; he was sorry for her decision, but it would alter nothing, only cause a little delay. Then, after a few words with Mollie, he reluctantly tore himself away [illegible]

[illegible]

CHAPTER IX.

[illegible]

Kate sat up in bed, looking as [illegible] and Mollie slipped off [illegible]

It was Easter eve [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the ghost of Mr. [illegible] walked in his haunts [illegible]

Drawing back against the heavy plush curtains in the hall, she watched with beating heart as it came glimmering nearer, not exactly frightened, but with a curious awe and dread, a feeling that something was going to happen. A moment later, and madame, a lamp in her hand, a strange dazed glitter in her great black eyes, swept noiselessly past her and went straight to the study.

The girl's first thought was to steal up stairs again [illegible] across the dark hall after madame and look in at the half-open door [illegible] that she never forgot. [illegible] followed her first impulse and gone upstairs, neither she nor Kate would have been alive when daylight dawned that Easter day. On such slight things as this do great events hang!

Madame put the lamp on a table close by, and then stole with cat-like step to the back of the chair before the writing table, where the detectives said that Mr. Berlowe must have been sitting asleep at the time of the attack. Suddenly she raised her arms, holding them as if she had some heavy weapon in them, and went through the motion twice of bringing it down with terrific force on the back of some one's head!

It was awful to see her face as she stood there, wild, fierce, watchful, her features working convulsively as she eyed the empty chair as if it were occupied, her dark hair streaming down the light dressing gown she wore, her breath coming in heavy gasps. After a minute she began muttering to herself, and leaned over as if to examine what was in the chair, then she went to the table and turned over the papers in a strange troubled manner, her eyes ever returning to that empty chair.

"It is only what you deserve—what you deserve!" she muttered in a harsh, strained voice, addressing the chair. "You are a hard, bad man. I begged to you for mercy for my child, my son, my beloved, and you only laughed. What if he did forge your name? It was not for much. You are rolling in wealth—your wretched wife's money—and we are poor, and Henri is young and extravagant. But you shall not punish him. I helped you in the past, but the [illegible] nothing with such as you. You have only yourself to blame that I have taken the law into my own hands. I would die a thousand times rather than that you should expose my boy. Now you cannot say a word, and I take the proofs of his guilt and burn them!"

She went through the motions phantomwise, yet strangely real, of taking papers and thrusting them into the grate [illegible] them down with the weapon she thought she held, doing it all in a strange, dull calm, which her twitching face belied. For some minutes she crouched over the empty grate moaning and wringing her hands; then, when she evidently thought the papers and weapons destroyed, she rose, appeared to drag what was on the chair to the window, which she threw wide open, and, before Mollie could move, she came swiftly out of the room, and, lamp in hand, went towards the kitchen.

[illegible] the feelings of the horror-stricken girl watching her would be impossible [illegible] drama was played out before her; she felt powerless to move, almost to think. All her senses were bound up in the effort to keep her trembling knees from giving way under her, for well she knew that to make the least sound might cost her her life! No need to ask again who killed Leonard Barlowe? She had seen how it was done; she had seen everything. Knew it was by his own sister's hand that the blow was struck.

Yet frightened as she was, Mollie's courage did not desert her. She determined to see what took the wretched woman, whom she felt persuaded was mad, to the kitchen, so with chattering teeth she gathered her skirts [illegible]

[illegible]

THE LAWS.

EVERYTHING DONE AT THE LAST SPECIAL SESSION.

AN ACT

[illegible]

DISPOSAL OF IDIOTS.

[illegible]

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[illegible]

Eggs and Fruit in Storage.

If eggs kept in cold storage are in the vicinity of apples or fruit they will taste of spoiled fruit because the shell of the egg [illegible] rapidly.

One good action is worth more than a hundred good intentions.

[illegible]

E. V. CHILSON,

[illegible] Senate.

WISE OR OTHERWISE.

Many a married man is a silent hero.

Hope is the froth on a man's imagination.

The man who has no aim in life is still a child.

A pessimist is a person who believes in a hoodoo.

[illegible] is the worst kind [illegible]

[illegible] and weather predictions [illegible]

[illegible] is always in a hurry, but the [illegible] is willing to wait.

What a witness has seen depends upon the cross-examiner.

Your neighbor is any one for whom you can do a good turn.

The greater the difficulty the more glory there is in surmounting it.

The man never lived who was able to appreciate the short end of a joke.

In the race for wealth too much money seems to be an impossible quantity.

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[illegible]

Professor Becomes Pastor.

[illegible]

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