

DAUGHTERS OF CAIN

By ETTA W. PIERCE

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Unstable as Water."

"Ah! ha!" laughed Cyril Vye, as he stepped suddenly into view from behind the shrubbery of the terrace, "I started you, eh? You thought I was a road-agent? A little joke, my dear uncle Gilbert, nothing more, I assure you. Why, how very pale you are!—a perfect specter, in fact!"

Cyril Vye had never been nearer death than he was at that moment. Murder, pure and simple, looked out of the gentleman's eyes, as he turned upon his nephew. He seemed about to leap at his throat; but Shirlaw made an involuntary movement to step between them, and by some supreme effort the older Vye recovered his composure.

"It is not always safe to startle a man in that way, nephew!" he said, with a ghastly smile. "It would serve you right to give you a wholesome choking for your impertinence. 'Ah!' mockingly, 'here comes the head of our old and honorable house,' as the figure of Philip Vye appeared in the walk below. 'If you will come down into the garden, Captain Shirlaw, beyond reach of further interruption, we will continue our conversation.'"

"Not tonight," answered Shirlaw, wildly; "pray excuse me!"

And waiting for nothing more, he sprang down the terrace and rushed off to the river.

He came upon Abel Lispenard in the garden of faded lilies—poor Lillian's garden. The dwarf was pacing back and forth there in the dubious light, his hat pulled over his eyes, his chin upon his breast.

"Stop a minute, Lispenard," cried Shirlaw, breathlessly; "I have something to tell you."

Lispenard paused.

"I cannot lift myself to your height, Victor, so you must bend down to me," he said.

Shirlaw did so, and was startled by the look on the other's face.

"By Jove! what has gone wrong with you, old chap?"

"I have tonight received tidings of that man—my sister's destroyer."

"The duke?"

"No, but never mind. Your hand shakes, Victor. You have something to tell me; what is it? Speak out."

And out he did speak—told his story, wildly, hurriedly.

"I saw the resemblance on the very night of his arrival at Rookwood," he groaned. "I tried to fight away the horrible suspicions; I tried to believe that I was laboring under an hallucination, that I had lost my wits—anything, everything, rather than the truth. Now, in God's name, Lispenard, tell me, what am I to do?"

Lispenard stood like a stone. His face was as dead as a mask. He answered, harshly.

"No, I shall leave that to his relatives. Cyril Vye knows as well as I do that his uncle, the cattle king, is no other than Black Dave, the western outlaw and road-agent. And Cyril means mischief—yes, mischief. Less than the destruction of the man!"

"But Mignon," cried Lispenard, impatiently; "you do not say anything about Mignon! How does this discovery affect your love for her?"

Shirlaw changed color.

"Heaven above! Lispenard, why ask such a question? Would you have me marry the daughter of a thief and cut-throat? Would you, in my place, do it?"

"In your place, I would marry Mignon. Yes, but her father were the prince of the bottomless pit!" panted Lispenard.

"Impossible! I cannot!" said Shirlaw, with a shudder. "My mother, my sisters! shall I show them no consideration? Would you have me bring disgrace and shame upon them? That man urged me tonight to marry Mignon immediately. He knows that exposure is nearly his, and he is ready to break over her shoulder. On his threshold a woman was standing, frowning with horror—a woman whose bloodless face and dilating eyes betrayed that she had overheard all. It was Elinor Vye."

a bull. Moreover, there is a limit to all things, and I can never again practice dissimulation to the extent of treating Gilbert Vye as though he were an honest man. My blood boils when I think of him here, mingling freely with these aristocratic Dale people. So I must go."

"Without explanations of any kind?"

"I have I—how can I make explanations, Lispenard?"

Lispenard stared blankly into the gray night.

"It is a bad business," he muttered; "a most distracting and complicated business!"

"True, and you must help me out of it, old chap."

The dwarf's pale, bitter face flushed painfully.

"Somebody at some future date, will have to tell Mignon. You must be that person. You love me, you know. You will not be too hard upon your unlucky kinsman. If there is a shadow of excuse for me in what I have done, you will give me the full benefit of it."

Lispenard drew his breath sharply.

"Let us go up to the house," he said. "Jarvis has just brought in the evening mail."

They went in silence. Two letters had arrived for Shirlaw—one from his mother, the other an official document which he tore open and devoured eagerly.

"I am ordered to rejoin my command immediately!" he cried, in a tone of infinite relief. "Was ever anything more fortunate? I have just time to make a flying visit to my mother and sisters, and then, off for the frontier again! I hope to Heaven I shall some day have the pleasure of encountering our so-distant cattle king there!"

"Do not tempt fate by rash wishes," replied Lispenard, gloomily. "Far better that you should never see him more."

"His chances of returning to his old exploits are small, unless he can manage to propitiate his nephew. By Jove! it is shameful that he should return, to resume his nefarious business, is it not?"

Lispenard made no reply. In silence he watched Shirlaw's preparations for hurried departure. Why should he detain him? He no longer loved Mignon. He could neither assist nor comfort her in the approaching crisis. Verily, it was better that he should go.

Over the river, at Rookwood, Philip Vye and his son were standing alone beside the library fire.

"My dear father," said Cyril, grimly, "long ago, when you told that story about Martin, did you think I had not wits enough to put one and two together, and see through the whole affair? According to tradition, we have had great men in our family. It remained for us to produce a scoundrel, also, whose career, thus far, has been unprecedented."

The thin, gray face of the elder man grew grayer yet.

"In Heaven's name, Cyril, keep your suspicions to yourself! For Mignon's sake, say nothing, even to me!"

"He laughed, wickedly.

"For Mignon's sake? Oh, but I owe her one, you know! It is really quite too gratifying to think of her in connection with this business! At last I shall have my revenge!"

"He is your uncle and my brother—he is our guest. Whatever we may suspect, we have no positive knowledge of anything wrong. Your revenge? Nonsense! You talk like a stage villain. Well-bred people do not mention such things nowadays. What do you mean to do?"

"Let me ask the same question, my dear father. What do you mean to do? Allow Gilbert Vye to return to his old haunts and resume the name of Black Dave, and the occupation of robbing, murdering and train-wrecking? Will you be his accomplice to that extent. Ah, you wince! True, he is your brother; but I think I had some idea of that. Mignon's father will receive no mercy at my hands."

"Cyril, the family honor of all the Vyes, living and dead, is at stake!"

"Family honor be damned, as it surely must be, some day, in the person of my Uncle Gilbert! I swear to you that no consideration of that sort shall tempt me to spare either him or his daughter."

A faint sobbing cry startled the two men. Both turned quickly, and saw the library-door had been noiselessly opened. On its threshold a woman was standing, frowning with horror—a woman whose bloodless face and dilating eyes betrayed that she had overheard all. It was Elinor Vye.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A Pair of Spurs.

Abel Lispenard went to a window opening on the river, and looked across the gloomy current to the old mansion standing so stately on the opposite bank.

Shirlaw had gone without one parting word to his betrothed—gone never to return. Now, what could he, Abel Lispenard, do to help Mignon—to save her from the vile plots of her cousin, and the tempter who had been ready to break over her shoulder? He was the soul of integrity and honor. No man could regard crime with greater abhorrence, or visit sterner censure on the criminal, and yet, at this moment, Lispenard was not thinking of Gilbert Vye, his two-fold life, and his outrageous deeds perpetrated under other names, but only of Mignon—Mignon, utterly ignorant of the true character of her father, alone, defenseless, deserted by her lover—how could he help Mignon?

He started at last, shook his huge shoulders, hesitated; then went straight to a cabinet of teak wood in a corner, and took out—what? A pair of antique gold spurs. These he sealed in

a tiny box; then stepped forward and rang the bell.

"Jarvis," said Abel Lispenard, quietly, "can I trust you?"

"I think you can, sir," answered the man.

"Then go immediately to Rookwood, and give this, privately, to Gilbert Vye—remember, privately!"

"Yes, sir."

"And keep your eyes open, in case you see anybody anything that seems strange to you over yonder, and report in full to me."

"That I will, sir."

Jarvis departed on his errand. He was gone exactly an hour by the clock. Lispenard paced the room and waited. By-and-by he heard the man's step outside. Jarvis entered, with an important air.

"I saw him, sir!"

Lispenard motioned for him to close the door, and then he turned, and said, "Tell me everything!" he commanded.

"Well, sir," said Jarvis, "when I reached Rookwood, Mr. Gilbert Vye was just coming out of the stable—going on one of his long rides. I went up to him and said:

"Wait a bit, sir, here's something for you."

"I gave him the box. He struck a match, took out the cover and turned pale—pale as a spook—the lucifer was falling on his face and I could see it plain."

"Who sent this?" says he.

"My master, Mr. Lispenard," says I. "Ah!" says he, drawing his breath hard, then he put a hand in his pocket and gave me this, sir."

Jarvis showed a five-dollar bank-note. A shudder shook Abel Lispenard. A shudder shook Abel Lispenard. He pointed straight to the fire burning under the tall mantel.

"Throw it there, Jarvis!"

Jarvis obeyed, meekly. A little spurt of flame and he resumed his narrative. "He slipped from his saddle, sir. He seemed scared, or bewildered, or something."

"I'll go up to the house," I heard him mutter, "and bid Mignon good-bye!"

"Well, he started for the house and I went with him, for you told me to look after anything that might be strange at Rookwood. Well, sir, we hadn't gone far, when we both saw some tall, black shapes moving along the terrace—two men, sir, and then a door flew open, letting out a streak of light, and Mr. Cyril Vye ran down the steps to meet the pair."

"Ha! Here you are, sheriff! I heard him say, in a guarded voice—Mr. Gilbert and I had stopped short in the shelter of the shrubbery. 'So my telegram found you safe here. The news from New York this morning was explicit enough, was it not? I should have requested you to meet me in Boston on the arrival of the train, but there was a lady in the way, who might have made an awkward scene.'"

"Is he likely to give us the slip?" says the person who had been called sheriff.

"More than likely," answered Mr. Cyril, "if once he suspects mischief. Speed is the one thing necessary in this case. First of all, you had better set a watch at the station."

"We have done that already," says the man.

"Then they seemed to stand and whisper together, after which they went softly into the house. I turned to look for Gilbert Vye, but he had disappeared, sir—I didn't see him again. I went back to the landing-place, but my boat was gone, too, and I had to walk round by the bridge. Yet the skiff is now down at the jetty, moored all right. How it got there I am sure I don't know, sir."

"You may go, Jarvis," said Lispenard, as the servant finished his story.

Jarvis went his way. His master stood pondering the things he had heard.

Officers of the law at Rookwood! A watch already set at the railway station, and perhaps at other avenues of escape also! Cyril Vye had lost no time. He had determined on the utter destruction of his uncle. Family considerations were of no importance to him now. It was plain that he would stop at nothing. How long would Mignon remain in ignorance of all that was passing about her?

Abel Lispenard could not rest—he could scarcely breathe. The night seemed charged with dynamite. An explosion was close at hand. He wondered what the dwellers of the Dale would say when the real character of the man whom they had feted and admired was made known to them.

At last he seized his hat and went down into his dark, still garden, followed by a long-nosed Livonian hound. The hour was growing late, but there was no rest for Lispenard tonight. He seemed raked up in red-hot coals.

It was fear, then, that made him tremble. This bold desperado had turned coward at sight of his kindred arrayed against him. No foes so pitiless none so much to be dreaded, as those of a man's own household! Abel Lispenard recoiled from the so-called cattleman with a haughty, forbidding gesture.

"What would you have me do?" he said, sternly.

"That you be resolved to run me down," gasped Gilbert Vye; "he's blocked my way to the station. I started down the river in your servant's boat; but I found another craft watching yonder. They halted me, and I put back to your landing place. He's hummed me in, you see. Hide me, or I must hang."

Heaven knew that he deserved hanging over and over again. With longing, unexpressed, Abel Lispenard surveyed the man; then he turned, and again looked across the river to Rookwood. A tempest of passion shook him like a reed.

"Follow me!" he said, sharply, hurriedly.

Abel Lispenard plunged into a path dark with trees, passed Lillian's garden, crossed a lawn, and avoiding the main entrance of the house, came to a side door, which was locked. He drew a key from his pocket, and leaving the dog Cossack outside as a sentinel, he darted into the house, and Gilbert Vye with him.

"What I do is not for your sake, but for your daughter's," he said. "My servants must not see us. For your life make no sound!"

He snatched a silver lamp from the hand of a figure in bronze that stood just inside the door, and with more rapidity than might have been expected to his short legs, mounted a tufted stair, entered a handsome corridor, and at last paused, with the fugitive, before that holiest of holies, the long-closed rooms of Lillian Lispenard. Was there no struggle in his heart as he unlocked that sacred door? Ah, verily! But he went in, and Gilbert Vye after him.

"Shelter me, Mr. Lispenard," said the outlaw, "till the hue and cry at Rookwood is over, and I will give you no further trouble."

"If I do that," answered Lispenard, sternly, as he put the silver lamp down on the table, and turned to the hunted, haggard man, the degenerate son of an ancient race, pursued now by his own kin, you must swear by every thing you hold dear to quit your old life; to abandon, from this hour, both the name and the character of Black Dave; to repent of your past misdeeds, and become again an honest man."

Over the back of a chair in the centre of the floor trailed a priceless Indian shawl. Gilbert Vye, without hesitating in his rich folds, then recovered himself, and smiled down at the dwarf in a ghastly way.

"My dear sir, you think, doubtless, that you are asking an easy thing. However, I have no choice. Yes, I will swear to do all that, and as much more as you please!"

"Understand me!" said Lispenard; "I know your crimes, Gilbert Vye, and I abhor them! You justly deserve the fate that threatens you. Nevertheless, I say, that if you will do me the favor that I ask, I will do my utmost to save you from your nephew, not that I feel the slightest sympathy for you, not that I wish to shield you from punishment; but solely for the sake of another person, who will suffer if you receive your just deserts."

"Up went Gilbert Vye's shoulders. "Greatly obliged, Mr. Lispenard, I'm sure! You have me at an immense disadvantage just now, so I shall take care not to be angry with you. It is a pity that I made a bad move when I came east. How unfortunate, too, that my daughter's lover should possess so good a master! I hope to Heaven he will not know that I am hiding here!"

"Captain Shirlaw has left the Dale," answered Lispenard, shortly.

"Ha!"

"And this room is never visited by any member of my household—I alone have the key to it."

In a sort of stern wonder, not unmixed with positive aversion, Lispenard recoiled from his guest.

"You are by birth a Vye," he said, "and by breeding a gentleman. How could you fall so low!—how could you become the creature you now are?"

"It is a long story," answered Gilbert Vye, with perfect indifference. "I had lost everything, and I needed money. I should have money, so I took it, in some ceremony. Remember, I had two young daughters to provide for, and 'pon my soul! I meant to give up the business when they should be settled in life, and return east and become the most respectable of all the respectable Vyes. But my plans have miscarried." His eyes fell suddenly on the wonderful portrait of Lillian Lispenard hanging above him on the wall.

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Miscellaneous Reading.

STORIES OF SENATOR PETTUS.

Romance of His Love For a Neighbor's Daughter—Other Incidents. Many entertaining anecdotes are told of Senator Pettus. He told this one of himself:

"When I was a boy down in Alabama the hunting and fishing were still prime and I was very fond of my rod, my dog and my gun—much fonder of them than of my books. I didn't like going to school and played hooky frequently to go fishing or hunting. When I was about 17 I fell deeply in love with the daughter of a neighbor. One day I went to her house and found her on the gallery watering violets. Her sunbonnet was hanging by its strings down her back, the sunlight fell on her pretty face and shining hair and she looked very lovely. I stood and looked up at her all day just couldn't help plumbing right out the question, 'Mary,' I said, 'will you marry me?'"

"You go 'long,' she answered, 'Who'd marry anyone as ignorant as you are? You won't go to school, but spend all your time hunting and fishing. I was ashamed and heartbroken. The senator continued, 'and I answered not a word. I knew Mary was right. I didn't miss another day from school, and the next fall I went away to Clinton college, up in Tennessee, where I spent four years. All this time I kept away from my sweetheart. But when I returned from college I knew a little Greek and Latin and other things and this encouraged me to go to see Mary again. I found her again on the gallery and I stood as I stood before, looking up at the dear girl, the dear Mary, she said, 'I've been to school and I'm not as ignorant as I used to be.' Well, Mary didn't just say she would marry me, but I knew it was all right. We were married the next year."

They lived together in the greatest affection and happiness until the death of Mrs. Pettus less than a year ago.

After the war he and another young lawyer settled down to practice law at Selma. They were miserably poor and a fire had been adopted by the business experts, involve the washing of the earth from about the roots with soft, warm water, leaving them wholly exposed and suspended upon the wires which had been forced through the earth. It becomes easy then to lift the cage, with its plaster of Paris roof, holding the desired plants, to such a place as desired for study. Care is taken to dig the surrounding trench deep enough in the beginning to avoid the possibility of the roots being still connected with the earth below.

The root experimenters have met considerable difficulties. For one thing the fine thread-like portions of the roots are destroyed at their extremities by the warm water washing. The threads, however, at the points where they ended, have been analyzed, and it has been found that even at this early stage of the progress of the nourishment upward, the great chemical work, the taking from the soil of lime, soda, nitrogen and the like had been completed by the tiny filament. Somewhere, a little further on in the soil which had been washed away, the work had been going on. It is the understanding of this process which is now desired, and which is still apparently as far off as ever.

Nevertheless, some valuable results have already been attained. Naturally, the investigations so far have concerned the plants most valuable to man, such as wheat and corn, potatoes, beans and the like.

The "Roots" observed one of the bureau's investigators, "seem to possess actual sentience in regard to their search for water. One of the interesting and valuable results of this investigation is that now science can determine which of the plants are deep feeding, and hence which are most suitable to dry, insufficiently watered soils. For instance, a species of wheat six feet in its seed for food and moisture, would be better adapted to the dry regions of the west than one that could dig but four. There are certain species of wheat which do splendidly in naturally soft, sandy soils, but whose roots are too weak to dig through heavy soils. This cannot be determined by simply pulling up a stalk. It requires such an investigation as this which the government has undertaken to make."

Another thing which has been proved by the investigation of root development is why land laid down to grass is made better. It has long been known that when the wild prairie is first broken the soil is mellow, moist and rich, producing abundant crops. After a few years of continuous cultivation the physical condition of the soil changes. The soil grains become finer, and the soil becomes heavier to handle; it makes an awkward partner to use; it bakes worse and often turns over in hard clods when ploughed. This compact texture makes it difficult for the young roots of plants to develop properly. It also causes an insufficient supply of air in the soil and makes it sticky when wet, dusty when dry, so that when loosened by the plough it is easily blown away. This is because it lacks roots of the right sort—stout, hardy, deep-reaching roots.

A little table of soil conditions is being prepared for regions in which root investigations will prove of especial value—which will prove interesting and suggestive, seeing that it may be modified to suit almost any region. It contains the fact that an acre of soil to the depth of one foot is estimated to weigh 3,225,000 pounds and then tabulates the facts, namely, that in the first foot of soil there is found 6,722 pounds of phosphoric acid, 32,897 pounds of potash, 47,007 pounds of lime. Thus within the reach of nearly every plant is found four times this sum per acre, for nearly all plants reach four feet downward with their roots.

"It is figured out that this means enough phosphoric acid to supply the wants of 1,400 annual wheat crops and of the other constituents even more. The relation of this to the root investigations lies in the fact that no root should be deprived of lack of ample ploughing of free search among these chemicals for what it needs."

Paris eats 450,000,000 eggs yearly.

A MAN OF NERVE.

The Remarkable Career of General D. J. Cook.

"Whenever you hear that a man is going to get you, go after him. Hunt him up. If necessary get him first. But generally, when the man is found, he will not be ready. A talk and an understanding will remove causes of difficulty."

"Give a desperado no opportunity to draw a pistol. My motto has always been: 'It is better to kill two men than to have one kill you.'"

These two principles faithfully lived up to through forty-five years of active life on the frontier as a peace officer were what made General David J. Cook known and feared by "bad men" through the whole Rocky Mountain region from the Canadian to the Mexican borders, says the San Francisco Chronicle. As a brigadier general in the army, Indian scout, United States marshal, chief of police of Denver in the lawless days, sheriff of Arapaho county, and member of that California Detective agency, he created a name that was a terror to the bad men of the border. Though he was seventy-one years old when he died in his Denver home last week, there are still men living in the west who heaved a sigh of relief when they heard the name of the peace officer who had followed the guide across the range. General Cook had little respect for the professional "bad man," and members of that class knew it. In 1871 he had arrested more than 3,000 of them, beginning with his career in Denver in 1859. Among them were between fifty and seventy-five murderers, all gun fighters and professional terrors on the frontier, who boasted of the notches on their gun barrels.

Through so many dangers General Cook escaped unharmed to an advanced age. He explained the good fortune through the curious fact that he was left-handed in handling weapons. Time and again the desperate bordermen, waiting for first chance had watched Cook's right hand while preparing to get the drop. Then suddenly Cook's unguarded left flashed out with a forty-four on a bewildered prisoner.

Cook did more to drive outlaws from Colorado and keep the peace than any other man in the western country. An Indian by the name of La Porte, whose some of his relatives still live, he early entered on the adventurous career to which a love of peril attracted him. He came to Denver and was in the ordinance department until 1863.

One of his exploits was the extermination of the Reynolds guerrillas during the war. Captain James Reynolds, a Texan, with a courageous band of riders, came north toward the state of Colorado, intending to take and destroy Denver. On the way they burned a number of New Mexican and Colorado villages of pro-Union sympathizers. They were met by Cook and his rangers thirty miles south of Denver, near Elk creek, and a pitched battle ensued. The Texans were routed with a loss of nearly all their forces, and five of their captives were shot. One escaped, however, and told a story that has led to a never-ending hunt for buried treasure.

It seemed that the guerrillas on their way north, had attacked and captured a Mexican treasure train, from which they secured \$70,000, buried in greenbacks. These they mortally wounded in a locality on Elk creek, intending to return and secure the treasure after they had destroyed Denver. The extermination of the band lost the secret, and because the only survivor was never able to describe the place where the fortune was buried, it remains safe to this day. Cook hunted for the treasure often, and every summer parties spent weeks seeking it.

One of General Cook's most notable exploits was the quelling of the Chinese riots in Denver in 1880. Feeling against the Chinese who then lived here in great numbers, grew to such a pitch that infuriated mobs captured Chinese on the streets and strung them up to telegraph poles. The lawless mob displayed an extent that the sheriff and the police were powerless, and the Chinese quarter, with its population of 3,000 was threatened with burning. In desperation the county and state officials appealed to General Cook for assistance. He swore in twenty-five picked deputies, all dead shots and fearless men like himself. They were known to the rioters as "mob destroyers" and they advanced without bloodshed peace and order in a few hours and many arrests of leaders were made.

It was about this time that Cook performed a feat as famous in the west as the ride of Sheridan in war annals. One of the banks at Leadville, then a camp just bursting into fame, was threatened with a disastrous run. There was a telegraph, but no railroad. The bank officials wired to Denver to a correspondent for aid, and this bank employee, Cook, to ride 139 miles over the mountains to Leadville, through an outlaw country, to carry \$50,000 to the outlast bank.

Cook undertook alone the dangerous mission, and heavily armed started with the fortune in his saddle bags. Wherever the telegraph wire