

WRITTEN FOR "THE RIPLEY ADVERTISER."

The White Rose

MEMPHIS.

BY W. C. FALKNER.

CHAPTER XXII. Concluded.

"No, brother Harry, no one can shake my confidence in my Eddie; nothing shall ever make me doubt him."

"I tell you, sister Lottie, you must and shall cease to receive visits from that deceitful wretch, when I tell you he is a traitor to you; I only say that which I know of my own knowledge. I only inform you of what I beheld with my own eyes. This is no hear-say evidence; this is no report of a detective; but it is a fact I beheld myself."

"Dear brother, for God's sake, I beg you to hush; you are laboring under some unaccountable delusion; your trouble has been so great that it has clouded your judgment. You know that no sister ever loved a dear brother as I love you. I know that you would not tell a willful falsehood, under any circumstances; but I implore you to let this matter drop for the present. Wait until you have time for reflection. It is so easy to commit irreparable errors—so easy to do things that cannot be undone. Listen to your loving, devoted sister; won't you, Harry?"

"If you will drive that cowardly sneak from my sight I promise you to let the matter drop for the present; but if he remains here another moment, I cannot answer for the consequences."

"Please leave us now, Eddie," said Lottie as she laid her hand on my arm, and cast on me an imploring look, with her dear eyes swimming in tears.

I had never seen her manifest such emotion before. I had often been with her when she was in great distress, but nothing I had ever seen before had so disturbed her equanimity as the occurrences just mentioned. She whispered to me in a very low tone, as if she did not want her brother to hear it:

"Leave him with me until I can pacify him, and then I will send for you, when he will hear an explanation. You have not betrayed me, have you, Eddie?"

"Before high heaven, I answer, no!"

"I believe you, darling; and will always trust you."

"What are you whispering to that hypocrite for? Why don't you order him to leave here as I have directed? You had better not tax my patience too far."

I thought it best to leave him with Lottie, hoping that she would be able to keep him quiet until his better judgment should come to his assistance. As I made my way towards my office, I began to ponder over what had occurred, and you may be sure that my thoughts were anything but pleasant. My cheeks burned with indignation, when I thought of the blow I had received and I felt my self-respect leaving me. I began to feel like I had acted cowardly in submitting to such an insult. Lottie would believe me to be a coward. Had she not seen me receive a slap on the mouth, without resenting it? Who but an arrant coward would have quietly taken such an insult from mortal man? Then on the other hand I argued the case thus: How could I strike the brother of my darling, Lottie, when I knew how dearly she loves him? Did she not beg me not to return the blow? How could I do anything against her wish? Then I thought of his feeble health, and the great troubles he had endured; and finally satisfied myself that I had acted right in not punishing him. But the mystery, in which the whole affair was clothed, puzzled and perplexed me; and the more I discussed the matter in my mind, the greater grew my curiosity. Could it be possible that Harry was laboring under a mental hallucination or was some enemy of mine at work to undermine me? Could it be possible that Mr. Heartzell was at work in secret, to turn Lottie against me, in order to secure the prize himself? Those questions and a thousand others of a similar character came trooping across my mind, until my brain seemed to be on fire. The course that Lottie had pursued, had the effect to counterbalance the influence, that the other circumstances

were producing. She refused to distrust me and I believed that they never would be able to shake her confidence in me. I felt like I could endure any amount of misery as long as she was my friend and was true to me.

I must now tell you of an occurrence, that had transpired on the night before the rupture between Harry and myself—a thing about which I was not informed until a long time after it happened. It was not until after the great mischief had been done, that I was advised of its cause. If I had been informed at the proper time, irreparable misfortunes could have been prevented. But, perhaps, I had better proceed to tell what it was that had enraged Harry against me. Early on the morning of the day previous to that on which Harry had insulted and struck me, Mr. Heartzell called to see him, stating that he had some private communications to make to him. They went into the summer house, and took seats on the wooden bench—the very spot where Lottie first promised to be my wife.

"Mr. Wallingford," began Mr. Heartzell as soon as they were seated, "The communication that I propose to make, will not be pleasant for you to hear, yet I honestly believe it is my duty to tell you. Of course you are aware of the relations heretofore existing between myself and your charming sister. I loved her very devotedly, and as you know asked her to marry me, but she declined, very candidly, informing me that she loved Doctor Demar. The frank manner in which she answered my offer of marriage, and the courteous manner in which she treated me, rather increased my affection for her. To be more plain, I still love your sister and would make any sacrifice to secure her happiness. I had reconciled myself to my fate, and was willing to bear my disappointment with becoming fortitude so long as I had reason to hope that your sister would be happy. But when I became convinced that she was about to marry a man who is unworthy of her—a man who (to say the least) is a hypocritical scoundrel; I determined to make known to you what I had discovered. Edward Demar is either married to another woman, or he is living with her unlawfully."

"Mr. Heartzell I would not believe such a story if you were to bring a dozen men to swear it. I have known Ed Demar from boyhood to this day, and if he is not an honest man, I must confess that there is none."

"Mr. Wallingford, I did not expect you to believe it; for, to be candid with you, I would not have believed it myself, had I not seen it with my own eyes. I can readily understand the fact, that such confidence as you have placed in Demar is very hard to shake, but you can see for yourself if you think enough of your sister's happiness, to induce you to do it."

"How do you mean, that I may see for myself?"

"Ed Demar brought a beautiful woman with him from Philadelphia, and as I have already told you, she is his wife or his mistress—I don't know which. He has her hid in that old brick house, just over yonder, in that flat. She has lately been moved in that house; he had her concealed in another part of the city, but he has lately moved her to that old building. I think they are making arrangements to elope—as I have over-heard some of their conversations. He is to visit her to-night at ten o'clock; and if you wish to satisfy yourself of the truth of my statements, I will go with you to a spot where you can see with your own eyes."

"Heartzell," said Harry, as he rose from his seat—his eyes flashing with anger, "If you have slandered Demar, I will take your life, and if he has betrayed my sister I'll kill him."

"Very good; you may take my life and welcome, if you find my statement false. Will you go with me to-night, so as to make the test as to who is to be killed."

"Yes, I will; but I deavise to play the spy or eavesdropper."

"So do I—so does any gentleman; but how can you catch a traitor without doing it?"

"True, true! we must fight Satan by strategy; but where shall we meet to-night?"

"Here, at this very spot; meet me here at nine-thirty, and you shall be convinced. By-the-by, let us

compare our time, so as to make no mistake."

After the two witches were compared and set with each other, Heartzell took his leave, while Harry sat immovable and silent, with a mind full of gloomy thoughts. Could it be true that Edward Demar was the treacherous hypocrite Heartzell represented him to be? Such a thought caused the cold chills to steal along his spine, and made his heart swell with uneasiness. When he thought of the effect such a blow would have on Lottie, his heart fluttered, and leaped with emotions of anger. Harry loved Lottie with all his heart, and was he to be the man who dared to betray her. The condition of his mind at that time was not such as to make him feel at all comfortable; and he thought that ninety-three was a long time coming; but of course it did come at last. Harry was at the rendezvous promptly, and had only been there a few minutes when he saw Heartzell approaching.

"How long have you been here Wallingford?" enquired Heartzell as he approached.

"Only a moment," was the whispered reply.

"Speak low, Heartzell, my sister is in the garden, and I don't want her to know any thing about this business."

"Alas, Wallingford, she will hear it soon enough heaven knows!"

"Yes, and it will be a fearful blow to her indeed; for she loves Demar devotedly, but I can not believe he is the treacherous scoundrel you think he is."

"I did not believe it either until I was forced to; but come, it is time we were going."

"I feel ashamed of myself, Heartzell."

"Why?"

"Because this is the first time I ever did any thing on the sly—I think we are engaged in a very small business."

"If you love your sister, how can you consider it a small business, to take steps to rescue her from the clutches of an unworthy villain?"

"Of course not, but these steps ought to be taken openly, and not in the dark."

"True enough; but don't they always employ detectives to catch the thief?"

"Yes; and the best detectives are the shrewdest thieves."

While this conversation was progressing, Harry and his companion were walking quietly towards the gloomy old house—their arms locked in each other. The moon was struggling through the clouds, that were moving briskly from South towards the North; ever now and then coming out between them and spreading a temporary light over the earth.

"This is a most favorable night for our business, Wallingford," observed Heartzell, as the moon darted out between two dark clouds, lighting up the road nearly as bright as day.

"Why so, Heartzell?"

"Because we will be able to see all we wish to see."

"What do you mean Heartzell? You talk as if it would afford you pleasure to witness the downfall of Demar."

"Pshaw, Wallingford, you don't know me; I merely meant to say that it was a favorable night to detect this rascal in his treachery. I assure you I should be gratified to find it was all a mistake."

"It seems to me impossible, for it to be any thing else but a mistake; and I feel my cheeks burning with shame—I feel degraded at the underhanded sneaking course we are pursuing."

"I don't doubt it; I can readily understand the reason, you thought your friend Demar was honest, and that his pretended love for your sister was all reality; but wait a while and see if you don't change your opinion of him. By the way here we are; that is the house. We had better turn off to the right, and take up our position in rear of the building. By standing on the bluff there we can observe what transpires within, for there are several glasses broken out of the rear windows and this will enable us to get a full view of the interior. Come this way, Wallingford; we'll hide ourselves behind this tree, where we will be on a level with the second story, and in hearing distance of the room. By the way, there she is now; she is watching for him; speak very low else she will hear us, she is remark-

(CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE.)

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