

**"War-Time Cookery"**

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**A Heavy Cost!**

CHAPTER XXVII  
A ROOTED SORROW.

"What do you mean?" he asks, in his brusque way. "Please explain!" "I cannot explain if I would," I reply. "It is a secret, Doctor Fuller, and the secret is not mine!" Immediately after breakfast on the following morning, Doctor Fuller walks over for a last look at his patient at Ivy Cottage, of whom he makes no other mention than that she is doing well, and then goes back to London by an early train, leaving us very little relieved in mind about Adelaide.

"It is evidently some mental trouble that is killing the woman—some great sorrow, rather than disease that is eating away her life like a slow poison," he remarks in confidence to Leonard and me. "And, unless this can be removed, I am afraid very little can be done for her. It is not in the power of medicine to minister to a mind diseased, or pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow." If you can discover the cause of your sister's grief, remove it if possible. You would do more for her in that case than the whole College of Surgeons and Physicians rolled into one could do.

"It must be that quarrel, or whatever it is, between her and Warden that is troubling her," Len says, with a puzzled, despondent air. "I think you know something about it, Lesley. She would be more likely to confide in you than me, naturally. What is it all about?"

"It is Addie's secret, Len, and I have promised never to betray it! They have parted forever; but I am not at liberty to tell you why."

"Parted forever! And she is breaking her heart for him, poor little soul! It is only too easy to see that. One moment, Lesley," he adds, forcibly detaining me as I am about to turn away, his face darkening dangerously as he speaks. "You must tell me one thing, for I will know it. Is it through any fault of his? Has he wronged her in any way? Because no man living shall trifle with my sister's happiness with impunity while I live to prevent it."

"Stop, dear!" I reply, "don't be hard on Ernest, poor fellow! He is almost as much to be pitied as Addie. They are both in great trouble."

"But something can be done to set things straight, surely?"

"No—not anything," I sadly respond. "They love each other passionately, but there is a sorrowful secret in Ernest Warden's past life that renders it utterly impossible for them ever to be more to each other than they are now."

"A secret!" he returns, in amazement. "What, another? Upon my word, Lesley, it seems to me that we are living in an atmosphere of secrets, past histories, and dramatic situations of late. I shall begin to think, very soon, that I must be a man of mystery myself. Even the doctor, master of fact as we think him, has got his story, it seems. Lesley, do you remember what Addie said about Doctor Fuller that day we were discussing him in London?"

"That there was a buried romance in his past, and not a happy one, she feared," I reply.

"Something like that, I believe, and unfortunately, she was only too near the truth, it seems. He is not much

disposed to talk of himself in a general way; but impelled, I suppose, by the natural craving for sympathy that comes to the most reticent at times, he told me the story of his past life last night as we sat chatting together over our pipes. He never seemed to me like a man to whom the world had been very kind; but I hardly thought it had used him so roughly as it has."

"Is that the reason why he has never married?" I ask, more interested in the subject than Len can guess.

"Never married!" he repeats. "Ah, Lesley, that's his trouble, poor old fellow! He is married, and has been for years. When still a young man he married one of those women who seem born for the sole purpose of bringing ruin and misery into a good man's life. There are plenty of bad women in the world, but from what he told me, this woman must have been one of the worst of her sex. Poor Fuller! His story is a sad one, Lesley."

"I should like to know it," I reply, with a dull, little pain at my heart, a sudden confusion in my brain. "Is it a secret, Len? Do you think Doctor Fuller would object to my knowing his story?"

"I hardly know. He imposed no conditions of secrecy upon me, at all events," is the reply. "Indeed, I don't know why he should object to the whole world knowing his story. There is nothing for him to be ashamed of, certainly."

"Then, why did he make such a secret of it at all?" I ask, a little resentfully, as I think of the interest which, in spite of my better judgment, I have come to feel in that sombre man with his lonely life and secret sorrow—an interest that might so easily have deepened into something deeper and stronger than sympathy.

"From the natural shrinking which most men feel about having an old wound opened afresh, I suppose," Len replies. "Few of us care to have our hurts probed for the gratification of others. I will tell you the story one of these days, Lesley, but not now."

"And with this promise I am obliged to rest content—for the present at least."

"Have you heard the news, Lesley—the wonderful news that all the gossips in Hanbury are wagging their tongues over?"

"It is Charlie who asks the question, one evening about a fortnight after Doctor Fuller's visit to Deepdene; and there is a look in his face that makes me glance at him in surprise."

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As, pushing my workbasket aside, he takes a seat on the table in front of me.

"Not a word," I reply. "What sort of news is it? Good, bad, or indifferent?"

"Vastly depends upon the point of view from which you regard it, I should say," he replies, picking up my scissors and snipping abstractedly away at a scrap of cambric lying on the table. "It is about Miss Clitheroe, Lesley."

"Miss Clitheroe!" I respond. "Dear me! What can all the gossips in Hanbury possibly have to say of Miss Clitheroe?"

"That she is going to be married," is the laconic response, a look of trouble coming into his eyes.

"Indeed; and, pray, have you any particular objection to Miss Clitheroe's getting married?" I ask, with an odd, little thrill of jealousy as I glance into the handsome, gray eyes that fall for once to meet my own with their natural candor.

"A very strong one," is the reply, "to her marrying the man she is about to marry, at all events," he adds, in a tone of suppressed bitterness.

"The man she is about to marry?" I repeat. "Why, is it not Len?"

"No," he replies, an expression on his handsome, debonaire face that makes me look at him in surprise. "It is Mr. Erroll, Lesley."

"Poor Len! It will break his heart!" I exclaim, my hands dropping listlessly into my lap.

"Not quite so bad as that, I hope," is the quiet reply. "Len has had a fortunate escape from a heartless, designing woman! He's an uncommonly lucky fellow, if he could only see it!"

"Ah, but I'm afraid he won't be able to see it!" I reply, a mist of unshed tears in my eyes as I think of the bitter disappointment in store for my brother. "You see, he loved her so dearly—no one could help seeing that; and, false and cruel as she has proved herself, it will make him wretched to lose her."

"And it would have made him ten times more wretched to have won her; so it is about an even thing, you see," is the grim reply. "Such a woman as that, who could lead a man on until he is ready to give his life for her, and then throw him over, to marry another old enough to be her grandfather, for the sake of his money, never yet made any man happy, and never will!"

"Alas, what a miserable affair it is altogether, this falling in love!" I return, with a sigh. "If people only would be content to live and die and go to their graves without it, what a wonderful saving of misery it would be, to be sure!"

"And what a loss of happiness," he replies, bending over me until his mustache almost touches my cheek. "Ah, Lesley, little sweetheart, do you think I would forego the sweet pain and pleasure of loving you for the sake of all the humdrum ease and comfort life can offer?"

"Not even though I should never come to care for you in return, I suppose?" I ask, a little incredulously.

"No; not even in such a case as that!" he replies, with a grave and tender earnestness that touches me in spite of myself. "I believe with the poet that

"'Tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all!"

"But you will care for me some day, Lesley," he murmurs, stealing my hand and pressing it to his lips. "I could not live without that sweet hope to comfort me!"

"Poor foolish boy!" I reply, struggling with something in my throat that seems to choke me. "If you only knew how little I deserve your love! But what can I say to poor Len? How shall I comfort him? How shall I tell him?" I ask, in despair.

"There is no need to tell him," he replies. "Len knows all about it, poor old fellow! But don't be alarmed, Lesley. He was hard hit; but he'll get over it. He takes it better already than I expected. I have half persuaded him to run over to the Continent with me for a few months, until the first smart of the wound is over. The change will help to distract his thoughts, and divert his attention from his troubles; and then, too, he will be better out of the way until after the wedding is over, you know. Len is an artist as well as a lover," the speaker pursues, "and he will find plenty of interest in the little tour I've sketched out for us! I mean to drag him off to the South; and we will do the Italian lakes like a couple of bohemians, as we are; making a detour as far as Gênes, then on through the Mont Cenis tunnel as far as Florence. We will try what a few weeks in the Tyrol, and a visit to Venice, the beautiful—with her moonlit nights, her marble palaces, and dreamy canals, mirroring floating gondolas under the fiery stars in a sapphire heaven—can do to banish the memory of Miss Gwendolen Clitheroe's fair, false face from poor Len's mind."

"You are very good," I reply, wondering how I can ever thank him for all the kindness he has shown us; "and, oh, Mr. Denton, if you could only succeed in bringing poor Len back cured, I should be eternally grateful to you."

"I will do my best, for your sake, Lesley," he exclaims. "It shall be no fault of mine if I do not succeed in bringing your brother back a happy man, and that, too, in time to finish his picture for the 'opening' of the Royal Academy. I would give a good deal to see the dear old fellow distinguish himself, as he deserves, were it only for the sake of showing that abominable little jilt what manner of man she has thrown away."

"And that, too, for the sake of the very wealth that ought to have been Len's," I reply. "Sorely there is a cruel irony in the fate that permits the master of the Priory to be his rival," I add, remembering how this man, who, in his old age, has come between my brother and the woman he loves, one came between my mother and the home that should have been hers. "For poor mamma's sake I have always hated all who bear the name of Erroll; henceforth I shall hate them doubly," I conclude.

(To be continued.)

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The Pattern is cut in 7 sizes. 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. Size 38 requires 7 yards of 36-inch material. The dress measures about 2 1/2 yards at the foot.

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