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The Lost Will;

OR,
LOVE TRIUMPHS
AT LAST.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE cabman drove Fleming to the nearest Rowton House; but the authorities at that excellent institution, founded and endowed by the exquisite, accomplished Montagu Corry, the secretary and devoted friend of Dierhall, do not admit men in a state of intoxication, and the porter advised the cabman to take his fare to a police-station; but a London cabman is nothing if not sympathetic with a man in Fleming's condition, and he compromised by conveying him to a common lodging-house where perfect sobriety is not an essential to admittance.

He woke at midday with a racking head and a brain too fevered for a time to permit of his recalling the incidents of the preceding night; but gradually and slowly they came back to him, and he realised how completely he had been duped and defooled by Maud.

At first he was puzzled to account for her duplicity. Why had she treated him with pretended friendliness, not to say affection, and as good as promised to marry him and go back to the farm with him? Then he remembered her questions about Chalfonte, and by degrees the truth stole in on him. She had given him drink, had played the part of a traitress, so that she might pump him and learn all she could about Chalfonte, especially his whereabouts. He rose and searched his pockets and discovered that the wages paper had been abstracted; she must have taken it when he had been overcome by the draughts of raw and cheap brandy. He sat on the edge of the miserable bed, shaking from head to foot and holding his burning head in his hands; and his heart burned with rage and jealousy more fiercely than his head; at that moment he hated the woman he had loved, with a hatred which consumed his body and soul. He was convinced that, having obtained the knowledge of Chalfonte's whereabouts, Maud would go to him at once; and Fleming was possessed of an insensate desire to follow her, confront her and Jack Chalfonte, and, somehow or other, to exact vengeance from both for her treachery.

The man was on the verge of delirium tremens, and the passion of his fury for a time threatened to drive him mad; but, after a while, he grew calmer, got his money from the keeper of the lodging-house, paid his scot, and staggered to the nearest public-house for a drink; then he started to fulfil his purpose. As he left the lodging-house a man, who looked like a clerk out of work, or a commercial traveller who had seen better days, who had been lounging against a lamp post, followed Stephen at a respectful distance. The man was the detective employed by Mr. Horton; he had been on the look-out for Stephen, and had come upon him by one of those accidents which are so useful to the detective.

Stephen headed for the City, and as they got into the more crowded thoroughfares, the detective lessened the distance between himself and his

quarry; then suddenly Stephen disappeared, but presently the detective saw him emerge from a public house and make for Fenchurch Street Station; the detective took a ticket and travelled by the same train, wondering whether his man was going and what his business was. Stephen alighted and made straight for the little public house on the mainland, tossed down a drink, and then, followed by the detective, went to the boat.

Stephen was not attired as a navy; he had turned up the collar of his jacket and drawn his felt hat well over his face, as if to protect it from the wind which was now blowing hard, and the boatman who took him over to the island did not recognize him.

On landing, Stephen turned to the left and dropped down into the hollow in which the farm-houses stood; all the men were at work at the other end of the island, and Stephen felt that he was safe, at any rate, for a time. He flung himself down on the sandy grass and lay with his burning head on his arm, nursing his thoughts of revenge and wishing until the men should have finished their work for the day and gone into the hut, leaving the coast clear for him. From the hollow the quay was hidden from him, and he did not see the arrival of Mrs. Feltham and Nora.

He did not know whether Chalfonte was dead or alive; but he still felt sure that Maud was either on the island already or was coming. A little after five o'clock he rose, ascended the hollow, and looked round him cautiously. The men had gone to the hut, the silence was unbroken; then presently he saw a tall figure come out of the smaller hut and walk slowly toward the beach. Stephen Fleming's heart leapt and the blood rushed to his head; for he saw that the figure was Chalfonte's, and he noted, with malignant satisfaction, Jack's drooping attitude, the weakness and lassitude of his gait.

He was alive; but, Stephen told himself, he should not escape this time. In his enfeebled condition it would be easy enough to dispose of him.

Fleming crouched down and stole after Jack; then he paused. Would it not be better to wait until he had got them both together, the man, his rival hated, and the girl who had tricked and deceived him? But his passion was too strong to admit of delay, and, still crouching, he followed Jack across the waste to the edge of the water. Jack seated himself on the bank and, with his head on his hands, looked thoughtfully across the channel; and Fleming would have stolen on him unawares, as he had done before, but Jack heard a slight sound behind him, looked round, and sprang



Private Ross

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to his feet. The sight of the man who had attacked him in so cowardly a fashion drove all the lethargy out of Jack, and, with the cry of anger which had reached the women in the hut, he sprang on him.

On this occasion Fleming had no spade to help him, and, weak, as Jack was, his opponent, rendered unfit by drink, found him anything but an easy prey. One moment they were locked together, the next they were raining blows on each other; but Jack was giving way, and Fleming had got him down to the ground, and with one hand was feeling for a stone with which to finish the fight, when he heard a scream from behind them, and, looking over his shoulder, saw Nora and Maud Delman flying towards them.

Fleming released his grip on Jack's throat, sprang to his feet, and, with the stone in his hand, ran towards Nora; but he pushed her aside and went on to Maud. There was murder in his eyes as he gripped her arm and raised his hand with the stone in it; but Jack was on him before he could strike, and Fleming turned to his man again. The cries of the two girls had reached the ears of the men in the hut, and a dozen burly forms now came running towards the spot. Fleming saw his danger; with the strength of a madman he freed himself from Jack's grasp, and ran in the direction of the quay.

At that psychological moment the detective came up the beach, stared with amazement at the group above him, then made for Fleming, who fled him promptly and ran down to the boat. The man who had brought the detective over had gone on to the hut for a drink, and Fleming jumped into the boat, cast it off, and picked up the oars.

This was only the second time in which he had been in a boat; there was a heavy sea, and he found it difficult to manage the oars. Presently, as the waves lifted the boat on one side, one of the oars slipped from the pins and he lost it; he could see another boat putting off from the island, and he sprang with an oath and leant over the gunwale in an attempt to recover the oar; in doing so he stumbled and fell with all his weight, a wave caught the boat broadside, and overturned it instantly.

The excited watchers on the shore saw Fleming disappear. When he came up again the boat had blown some distance from him; and with horror they saw that the wretched man was making no attempt to reach it—that he could not swim. The man in the pursuing boat rowed with might and main; but before he could reach the drowning man, Fleming had gone down again. Other boats had put off from the landing by this time, and were rowing down stream; for they knew the point to which the body would be washed; the navvies, who had stood in a group, ran in the same direction, and Jack and the two women were left standing alone. As yet they had not exchanged a word; white and trembling, Nora and Maud had watched Fleming's tragic end, and Jack, still panting with the struggle, was essaying to stop the bleeding of a wound on his forehead. It was Maud who spoke first.

"There's an end of him, thank Heaven!" she said, between her clenched teeth.

Then she turned to Nora with a kind of sullen triumph.

"Now I suppose you know why I came? I didn't come after Mr. Chalfonte, as you thought. Oh, I could read your face easily enough! No, I didn't come after him, but because I knew Stephen Fleming would come here and try to do him an injury, to finish his work—You're not badly hurt, are you?" she asked, almost fiercely, turning to Jack.

"No," said Jack; and he took her hand and pressed it. "No, Maud; thanks to you. You're a brave little girl and—I'm grateful."

Nora stood by, listening; and, strange to say, Jack's words did not rouse any jealousy in her; for, though they were warm enough, it was with the warmth of gratitude, and not love. She drew a long sigh of relief, of remorse.

"Yes, very, very brave," she said in a low voice, and holding out her hand to Maud. "I am sorry that I have misjudged you, Miss Delman. I beg you to forgive me."

"Oh, I can forgive you easily enough," said Maud coldly. "I didn't know you were here, or I shouldn't have come. Yes, I should; I couldn't have kept away, knowing what Stephen Fleming had done, intended doing. I'm going now. I shall be in time for the theatre, after all." She laughed with a touch of bitterness.

"Oh, you needn't come with me," she said to Jack; but he walked beside her down the beach to the quay. They were silent until he had helped her into the boat; then he said, in a low voice:

"I shall never forget, Maud—" "Oh, yes, you will," she broke in, forcing a smile and nodding at him confidently. "You'll forget everything now. And—I'm going to try to forget also. What's the use of remembering? I've got my life to live; and, take it altogether, it's not a bad life. And I owe it to you, Mr. Chalfonte. It's you who helped me to make a start; but for you, I should still be stitching gloves and eating my heart out in a dreary little village. Besides—" she turned her head away—"I know now—I've got my pride, like other people, and— Oh, it's all over, Mr. Chalfonte, believe me!"

"Well, we're more than quits now, Maud," he said. "Good-bye, and good luck to you."

"Good-bye, Mr. Chalfonte," she returned, smiling bravely, though her lips quivered. "I needn't wish you good luck; it's wishing for you there up above." She nodded towards the bank on which Nora was sitting. "Oh, I know!" she added, as Jack looked at her as if he did not understand. "If I didn't come after you, she did. If you don't believe me, go and ask her."

The boat started, and Jack stood with knitted brows looking after it for a moment; then he turned and went up the bank to where Nora was waiting for him.

"Are you all right?" he asked anxiously. "This is a terrible sight for you, Miss Norton." He sank on the block beside her. "I can't understand why you are here. It's just as if you had dropped from the heavens. How did you come; why?"

"We heard that you were here, and ill," said Nora.

"But how?" he demanded.

"From the young woman who nursed you. She—she came to Chertson this morning. She is the new parish nurse; you remember that we decided to have one?"

"Nurse Ruth! Talk of coincidences! So that's how you heard! But why did you come? And so quickly?"

"We heard that you were dangerously ill, and, of course—Mabel was anxious. She would not come alone, without me—"

(To be Continued.)

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2369—This is a season for straight lines and simple styles. The model here shown is lovely for velvet, serge or satin. It may also be made of velour, gabardine or voile. The dress is loose fitting, and closes at the left side of the front under the collar. The Pattern is cut in 3 sizes: 16, 18 and 20 years. Size 16 requires 4 1/2 yards of 36-inch material. The skirt measures about 2 yards at the lower edge. A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

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YESTERDAY'S PEARLS

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Important Advan
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REPORT ARMISTICE SIGNED.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7. Many censors reported to-day that an official message came through from abroad announcing that the Germans have signed the armistice terms. It was given for the statement of the public while it added to the air of expectancy everywhere, officials said nothing except an official despatch could be believed.

DELEGATION NOT CROSSED THE FRENCH LINE.

LONDON, Nov. 7. The British Foreign Office this evening stated, according to the Exchange Telegraph Co., that the rumor that an armistice with Germany has been signed was unfounded. Up to 6.30 this evening no news had been received in London that the German delegation had crossed the French line.

FOREIGN OFFICE NO NEWS.

NEW YORK, Nov. 7. The New York News Bureau which communicated with the Central News, got out a despatch on its financial ticker this afternoon under a London date, reading as follows: "At 10 o'clock this afternoon, the Foreign Office announced that it had no confirmation of the report that Germany had accepted the armistice conditions."

FOCH'S NOTIFICATION.

LONDON, Nov. 7. Marshal Foch, the Allied command-in-chief, has notified the German command that if the German armistice delegation wishes to meet him he will advance to the French lines along the Chimay, Fournies, LaCapelle and Guise roads. From the French outposts the plenipotentiaries will be conducted to the place designated for the interview. The official part of the note from Marshal Foch, reads as follows: "To the German plenipotentiaries. To the German plenipotentiaries who meet Marshal Foch to ask him for the armistice, they are to advance to the French outposts along the Chimay, Fournies, LaCapelle and Guise roads. They have been given that they are to be received and conducted to the place named for the interview."

NOT SIGNED.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7. It was officially announced at the State Department at 2.15 o'clock this afternoon that the Germans had not signed the armistice terms. Secretary and Chief of Staff had received the notification that the German armistice delegation had not been received by Marshal Foch.

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