

Chick Literature.

One Life Only.

CHAPTER XL.

A summer evening, fair and sweet as that which beneath the strange Australian stars, had witnessed the death of Maurice Atherstone's ill-fated son, saw Humphrey, last survivor of that lordly race, and now the true undoubted possessor of all their rich estates, crossing once more the threshold of his ancestral home. He had been welcomed with enthusiastic delight by his servants and his tenants; for although none of them had known the real reason of his absence from England, there had been many sinister rumours afloat, and mysterious hints were dropped among the people to the effect that it was very doubtful whether their beloved master would ever set foot on the broad lands of Atherstone again; but all this was at an end, and he felt like a man in a dream, as he sat in his accustomed place in the old library that same evening, with Thorpe lingering lovingly near him, arranging and re-arranging the books on the table, that he might have an excuse for remaining in presence of him to whom his allegiance had been given for so many years of faithful service. Yes, humbly, Atherstone was installed again in the home of his ancestors, and none would dispute his possession with him evermore. The incense that had weighed upon him from the hour of his uncle's death was finally lifted off—his doubts and perplexities, his trouble of conscience, his attempted compromise by the sacrifice of personal happiness, his struggle with the love that mastered him—all these had rolled away from him like fetters from a liberated slave, and even their very memory seemed buried in the graves that lay so far beyond the ocean, in the distant land from whence he came. But how was it to be with him in the future of the free new life on which he was entering that day? Was he to dwell for ever alone in the home for which he had suffered so much? No scruple need hinder him now from brightening his fair inheritance with the sunshine of happy love, but he felt, with a mournful intensity of conviction, that except he could win Una Dysart back to his heart, he could never set any other woman in the place he had destined for her. If she had indeed given him up because the discovery of his error had turned her esteem and love to scorn, he well knew that his restoration to his true position as lord of Atherstone would make not a shadow of difference in her determination; but it was only two years since that night when her father had died beneath his roof, and as Humphrey remembered how the sweet eyes turned to him in her sorrow, with the dumb appealing look which told that all her heart and hopes were henceforth fixed on him alone, he could not quite despair, although no communication of any sort had passed between them since the day when Miss Atherstone's letter had reached him from her hand. He felt a longing desire to hear at least the sound of her name, to know if she were still at Vale House, and if any particulars concerning her were known in the neighbourhood, and little as he was accustomed generally to ask news from his servants, he could not resist trying if his faithful old butler could give him any information.

"You must tell me what has been doing at Valehead and Atherstone since I left home, Thorpe; have there been any changes?"

"Well, there have been, sir," said the old man, eagerly, as if he had only been waiting an opportunity, "but none as yet that you would care to hear; what troubles me is the changes as it is to be."

"And what are they?" asked Humphrey, with a tremor at his heart for which he could scarce account.

"First and foremost, sir, Mr. Trafford is going away, and he'll be a bitter loss to all the country round."

"Ah! that he will indeed; no one will miss him more than I shall; but after all it is only what we had to expect. I believe Mr. Onchton always intended to return after a year or two's absence."

"No doubt, sir; and it's not justly Mr. Trafford's going away as upsets me. I should not worry myself if he were going away alone, as he came."

"And is he not who is going with him?" asked Atherstone.

The old man moved uneasily from side to side of the table where he stood, seeming greatly occupied in placing the cover straight, and with a look of pain and anxiety upon his face, till Humphrey repeated his question with great impatience, and then he answered slowly, "Well, sir, they do say as he is going to be married to Miss Dysart, and that he'll take her away with him."

"Una!" the word dropped from Atherstone's lips unconsciously, and his head fell back upon the chair as if he had received a physical blow. Thorpe carefully avoided looking at him, and went on hurriedly, "It's a terrible trouble to me, for she was the sweetest lady ever I set eyes on, and I built such hopes on her! Sir, excuse me, I have known you since you was a four-year-old boy, and I set you on your pony the first ride you ever took, and I did want to see you happy now. I thought she was the one would have made the Abbey like it was of old, when your lady mother ruled in Squire Maurice's time. And the people in our village worship Miss Dysart; she has been about among the sick and poor, early and late, doing all she could for them with a kind word and a pretty smile for every one; but there has just been the mischief of it. Mr. Trafford was always out in the parish as much as she was, and they helped each other in all they did, he could not choose but see that she was just the one to suit him in his work, and it's no great wonder if he grew to love her, and she him, too, for that matter, good kind man."

"Yes, Thorpe, I understand it all," said Humphrey, faintly, "but I think you must leave me now."

"I'll go no offence, sir, you'll excuse my making so free; I have had you in my arms many a time."

"I know, I know, I could not be offended with you; only I must be alone—you can come again later;" and the old man

went out at his bidding. Atherstone had need in truth to be alone, that he might master the agony which was curling at his heart. He had lost her then! It seemed no more than probable that the old servant's tale was true. Doubtless Trafford had learnt to love her; how could he help it? and she—in the bitter revulsion of feeling which she must have experienced as regarded herself, it was natural that the love of a good and noble man should come to her with unusual attraction. They were well fitted to each other—they would be happy; but he had lost her! his first, his last, his only love! and in the anguish of his desolation Humphrey first learnt how much hope had remained with him till that hour; he could not rest; he rose and paced the room with hurried steps, then he went to the window, drew aside the curtain, and looked out. It was a bright moonlight night, not yet very late, and the sudden impulse seized him to go to Trafford himself, and try to ascertain if in very certainty this man was blessed with Una's love, and his own heart and home left desolate for ever. He knew the clergyman was accessible to any one who might come to him night or day; and soon Nightshade, so long neglected, was bounding gleefully along under the well-known touch of his master's hand, and the good horse bore him with fleet steps to the rectory door.

Trafford welcomed Atherstone with unmistakable pleasure, and congratulated him heartily on his return to his home, and on the freedom of mind and conscience with which he could now enjoy it. "Yes," said Humphrey, somewhat bitterly, "but I cannot forget that my stepping stones to this inheritance have been the graves of those I wronged; I have learnt how far easier it is to commit an error than to repair it."

"True, it is one of the sternest lessons this life can teach us; but you have the comfort of knowing that in will and intention your reparation was perfect; doubt not that it has been accepted; and now cast it all behind you, Atherstone; life is too short for any part of it to be wasted in unavailing regrets for the past; the future is all before you; go on with courage and hopefulness; make it holy and blessed."

"You are wise not to bid me make it happy," said Humphrey, with a sad smile. Trafford looked keenly at him; he had not the least idea who it was that Atherstone had loved so deeply, but he remembered how he had spoken of her, and he could not doubt that he was now referring in some way to her loss; he had, however, far too much delicacy to say a word on any subject which had not been fully confided to him, and he turned the conversation to other matters, giving some account of the manner in which he had fulfilled the trust Humphrey had reposed in him, in the care of his estates. Atherstone listened abstractedly, scarcely answering, and at last rose to go; he had not yet found courage to frame the question he wished to ask. Trafford came with him to the outer door, and as they stood on the door in the moonlight Humphrey forced him out at last to speak.

"Trafford, I hear a sad rumour that you are going away; is it true?"

"Quite true; there is going to be a great change in my position; but I am afraid you must not ask me any questions on the subject, as I have been bound over to keep the matter secret for the present."

"A secret shared by others, however," Humphrey said, with slight sarcasm in his tone.

"By one person only—at least in this neighbourhood—and she is not likely to divulge it."

"You mean Miss Dysart," said Humphrey, the blood rushing to his forehead.

Trafford looked surprised. "You are quite right, though I cannot imagine how you learnt it; however, it will soon be known to every one; it is not my doing that there is any concealment; I dislike mysteries excessively."

"Doubtless, others find it convenient to keep the secret for the present," said Atherstone, bitterly. "Well, I need not seek to penetrate it further. Good-night, Trafford; I must not keep you any longer."

He mounted his horse, and without another word dashed down the road at its swiftest pace, while Trafford looked after him thoughtfully. Humphrey doubted no longer; Una would soon be the wife of a better man than he was; only this much of consideration she had for him, he thought, that she meant to keep the proposed marriage secret as long as she could, in order to save herself and him from the gossip of the neighbourhood where their former attachment had been so well known. Of course, he thought, she was not aware that the truth had oozed out already; but she need not fear his molesting her in any way; he would neither see her nor write to her; she must be content without his congratulations; only this he must do—he would cause her at least to know the truth of his past history, and how he had tried, by the surrender of herself and Atherstone Abbey and all he held most dear, to make reparation for the wrong whereby she had been led to abandon him; he would go next day to Mr. and Mrs. Northcote, make a full statement to them of the whole circumstances, and formally request them to clear his character in the county from the dark suspicions which had blackened it so long, and especially to remove any unfavourable impressions which they might themselves have conveyed to those who had been his friends. They would know that Una Dysart and her aunt Lady Elizabeth stood first in the list. Such were some of the reflections that passed through Humphrey's mind during the sleepless night that followed his return to the Abbey; but, truth to tell, his thoughts were bitter enough, for he had been stung to the quick by the news of Una's faithlessness to himself.

He felt for his own part that happen what might, he could love no other woman, even to his life's end, and though his eyes might never rest upon her face again, they still would long for that sweet vision, dear as ever, when they were closing in the night of death; and thus to know that he must bear the burden of a hopeless constancy, while she, in cruel contrast, had so speedily transferred her allegiance to another man, was sharp as the very death-pang to his heart. When he believed that she had

given up him simply because she would not take part with him in error, he had suffered deeply, certainly, but there had been no sting in his anguish; he had thought of her only with a mournful approving tenderness, and he had restrained, as we have seen, more hope than he had been aware of. It was very different now, all seemed hard, cruel, and intolerable; perhaps indeed it was so, but what love or Trafford which made him and him Miss Atherstone's letter as an excuse to bid him; why else had she kept it so long before she forwarded it to him? So Atherstone tortured himself all night long, but his strong spirit was yet unsubdued, and when he rose next morning, even more cheerful, as pride could give him cause to be.

He rode out on his coat black horse, to go to Northcote Manor, with as calm and haughty a bearing as ever man wore, and when, in presence of the old friends of his family, the equine and his wife, he told his tale from first to last, there was a noble courage and an unshaking yet unexaggerated self-conviction which called out their highest admiration, and fairly won their affection. The hearts of both had been softened by the defection of their own beloved son, and now that his repentance had brought him back to them, changed into all they had ever hoped to see him, they were only too thankful to condone the far lighter error of which Atherstone had been guilty, and to acknowledge that they had done him serious injustice by their suspicions, at the time when they were ignorant of the truth. Even Mrs. Northcote, cold and hard as she had been in former days, was melted to tears as she took Humphrey's hand and told him how very greatly she respected him for his upright conduct, in having endeavoured to give up his estates to such an unworthy possessor as his cousin, and how deeply she regretted the harshness with which she had spread her own uncharitable surmises far and near in the neighbourhood.

"Most especially I regret having spoken to Lady Elizabeth Molyneux as I did," she said, "I fear I may have done irreparable mischief; but, anyhow, all in that house shall know the truth at once. I will go to them this very day."

"Yes, it is the least you can do," said the squire; "but I fear—I fear it is too late," and he shook his head sadly. Atherstone perfectly understood that they were both alluding to their belief that Una was engaged to Trafford, and he turned his face away for a moment, to hide the pang it gave him to receive this further confirmation of his misery.

Then, with an effort, he mastered his pain, and, changing the subject of conversation, he asked after their daughter. They told him that she was to be married to Hervey Onchton the following week, and would then start on her way to India with her husband.

"We shall miss her less than we should otherwise have done," said Mrs. Northcote, "because of our dear Rupert's kindness to us; he lives with us entirely, and helps his father in his affairs, and is the very treasure of our lives."

"I am indeed delighted to hear it!" said Atherstone, as he rose to take leave; "and I wish your charming daughter every happiness."

"Then, as Mr. Northcote shook hands with him he said, 'Oh this be certain, Atherstone, the whole neighbourhood shall know forthwith that you stand with unstained honour now before God and man.'"

CHAPTER XL.

A few days had passed since Humphrey's visit to the Northcotes, and during that interval he had seen nothing of Una Dysart. He had not called at Vale House, although he knew she must have been perfectly aware of his return to the Abbey. Even if Mrs. Northcote's explanation to Lady Elizabeth Molyneux had removed the interdiction which had been placed on his entrance to that house, he did not feel that he had sufficient power of endurance to meet his lost love as the future wife of Stephen Trafford; he believed that she could not fail to understand his motive in avoiding her, and that she would probably be very grateful to him for sparing her the pain of seeing him; nevertheless, his longing to look once more on her beloved face was almost more than he could bear; and he tried to stifle the hunger of his heart by going about among his people and doing all he could to benefit them; unhappily, however, it was always of Miss Dysart that they spoke to him—far and near he heard how good she had been to the poor during the past winter, which had been exceptionally severe, and how late and early, her little feet had carried her from door to door, where her bright winning ways, as well as her more substantial benefits, never failed to bring sunshine and comfort. If anything could intensify the regret he felt at having lost her, it was the assurance given him by these statements, of the blessing she would have been to his people no less than to himself.

One afternoon, when he was feeling this very deeply, his courage failed him to continue listening to her praises, and he turned away from the cottages he had been visiting, and strolled along the road to Valehead. He was not very far from the village when, as he turned round a corner, he suddenly saw two persons at a few paces distant from him in earnest conversation. The one nearest to him was Trafford, but there was no mistaking the light graceful figure of the lady to whom he was talking. It was Una Dysart who stood there, looking up with her soft hazel eyes into the clergyman's face, while he, with a smile half playful, half tender, bent down his head from his stately height to hear and answer her.

The sight was simply maddening to Atherstone; it roused all the fire of his passionate nature; but the pride of his race and his own stern will enabled him to curb at least any outward manifestation of his feelings; without altering his pace or turning from the direction in which he was going, he walked steadily on towards them. As he did so, he saw that Una gave a violent start when she perceived him, and she blushed so vividly that the crimson glow mounted to her very temples.

"She may well blush when the man she once loved sees her with the man she is

about to marry," thought Atherstone, bitterly; but not a muscle of his face moved as he quietly passed them, lifting his hat gravely to Una, but with so rigid and unbending an aspect that even Trafford made no attempt to speak to him; a few steps more carried him out of their sight, and then he walked on rapidly till he got clear of the village, and left both Vale House and the rectory far behind him. When he was certain that there was no chance of his meeting them again, he slackened his pace and gave himself time to think over what had happened.

He could not help feeling that it would cause a great deal of misery and pain both to himself and Una, if they were to be exposed to the risk of many such meetings before her marriage, and deeply as she had wounded him, the unquenchable tenderness he felt for her prompted him to spare her any annoyance he possibly could; as to himself, he felt it would be utterly intolerable to have his heart lacerated by the sight of her, as day after day brought her nearer to the time when she was to give herself to Trafford "till death should them part," and he made up his mind that he would leave Atherstone's Abbey at once, and remain absent till their wedding was over, and Una gone out of the neighbourhood altogether with her husband; moreover, he determined that he would relieve her mind from all dread of further encounters, by taking measures to let his intended absence be made known to her as speedily as possible. He had not far to go in order to find the means of accomplishing this with any personal communication from himself; he knew that Dr. Burton visited Lady Elizabeth Molyneux every day, in order to supply the faithful invalid with the small amount of excitement she was able to find in detailing the imaginary symptoms of every four-and-twenty hours, and the good old doctor never failed to make his visits as agreeable as he could, by collecting all the news of the neighbourhood wherewith to amuse his patient. He would be certain to retail such a piece of information as Atherstone's intended absence, if he heard of it, and as his house was within a stone's throw, and he was likely to be at home at that hour, Humphrey, with his usual energy, went thither at once to put his plan into execution.

The doctor was delighted to see him, and welcomed him back to the neighbourhood very cordially, and Atherstone was soon able to introduce the subject of his intention of going immediately to London for a few weeks. The doctor was surprised.

"What! going away again when you have just arrived, and to London too, at this unfashionable season? why, you will find it quite a desert!"

"All the better for me," said Atherstone, grimly.

"Ah, you have business to transact, no doubt; and when do you go, my dear sir?"

"Next Monday I think."

"And when may we expect to see you amongst us again?"

"Not for some weeks certainly, but the time of my return is uncertain at present," and after a little more conversation on other subjects, Atherstone took his leave, satisfied that he had effected his purpose. Nor was he mistaken. That same evening, Dr. Burton paid his usual visit at Vale House, and when he had assured her ladyship that her pulse was not at all weaker than it had been the day before, and told her that she should endeavour to keep her mind amused, he proceeded to carry out his own prescription by retelling all that Atherstone had said to him that day. The Abbey was to lose its master again, the doctor said; he would only be there another day at present, as he was to start for London on Monday, and this was Saturday, and then Dr. Burton feared it would be some time before he returned. He regretted it very much; the county required all its resident landlords to keep up its society, and Mr. Atherstone was one of the best men they had. The doctor thought he was a good deal out of health; he seemed thin and careworn, though he was very much bronzed by the Australian sun.

To all this Una listened, sitting white and silent behind her aunt's sofa, and Lady Elizabeth heard it also with a good deal of uneasiness.

(To be continued.)

NINE ladies have recently left England as missionaries to the women of India.

In France, if a Protestant pastor preaches in a private house to more than twenty persons he is liable to prosecution. It was only last fall that a pastor of the Reformed Church, which is an established church, was sentenced by the Court of Bourges for an offence of this kind. He preached in a private house, because the congregation was too poor to have a church. The French Assembly is reasonably asked to make such a case as this impossible by passing a bill establishing full liberty of worship.

The Rev. John Cumming, of London, has had many near approaches in the last thirty years to the end of the world in his pulpit and his publications, though in his worldly business he acted very much as other people do. Just now he expresses the belief "that the world and Europe is, especially at this moment, upon the eve of the greatest catastrophe which has ever happened in the history of mankind."

It is stated that the Catholic bishops of Germany are indignant with the Pope for pursuing a different policy in Italy from what he laid down for Prussia. In Italy the bishops have been permitted to obtain the royal *exequatur*; but the German bishops were instructed to refuse all such relations with the state. The Pope is now in correspondence with the Prussian bishops in reference to the course to be pursued in the future.

The Edinburgh *Daily Review*, which has had so many editors since it came into existence in 1861, has again changed hands to-day. It has been repurchased a Free Church organ hitherto, but the three brothers, Messrs. Mackie, who now conduct it, are all members of the United Presbyterian Church, and their opening article to-day shows that they mean to go in strongly for disestablishment. They have, in other respects, made a good start. Their first number gives evidence of enterprise and journalistic experience.

Scientific and Useful.

FRESH MEAT ON DRESS.

Chop bits of fresh meat and cold meat, season with pepper and salt, make a gridle batter, put a spoonful on a well buttered iron, then a spoonful of the chopped meat, and on this another spoonful of batter. When cooked on one side, turn—when done, send to the table hot. They are very nice for breakfast or lunch.

FRIED POTATOES.

The French method of cooking potatoes afford a most agreeable dish. The potatoes are peeled, wiped and cut into thin slices, and thrown into a frying pan containing an abundance of hot lard. As soon as they become hot and crisp, they are thrown into a colander to drain them, then sprinkled with salt and served hot.

PUFF PASTE WITH BEEF CURE.

Where you cannot obtain good butter for making paste, the following is an excellent substitute: Slice and chop one pound of kidney beef cut very fine, put it into a mortar, and pound it well, moistening with a little oil, until becoming as it were one piece, and about the consistency of butter; proceed exactly as in puff paste, using it instead of butter.

HOW TO COOK CORNED BEEF.

The Boston *Journal of Chemistry* says: Don't boil it, for corned beef should never be boiled. It should only simmer, being placed on a part of the range or stove where the process may go on uninterruptedly from four to six hours, according to the size of the piece. It is to be served, let the meat remain in the liquor until cold. Tough meat can be made tender by letting it remain in the liquor until the next day, and then bringing it to the boiling point just before serving.

GROW MORE CURRANTS.

We have often alluded to the healthfulness of the currant, and urged its more extensive and careful cultivation. Almost every farm-house, to be sure, has a few old bushes, but they are, as a general rule, neglected and far less productive than they ought to be. During the sultry days of August, when the appetite fails for the ordinary articles of food, the currant, with its peculiar acid, toned down by a little sugar, becomes very agreeable to the palate. It is valuable, because it can be used in so many ways, and it lasts so long on the bushes. No fruit will give better returns for the labor bestowed on its cultivation.

KEEPING THE HANDS SMOOTH.

A writer in the *American Grocer* says that glycerine is not used in the right way. She says that to preserve the smoothness and softness of the hands, you should keep a small bottle of glycerine near the place where you habitually wash them, and whenever you have finished washing them and before wiping them, put one or two drops of the glycerine on the palm, and rub the hands thoroughly with it, as if it were soap, then dry lightly with a towel. Household work and bad weather will not prevent your skin from being smooth and soft, if this plan of using glycerine is followed.

TO MAKE BOOTS DURABLE.

The durability of the soles of boots and shoes may be greatly increased by coating them with gum copal varnish, which also has the effect of making them water proof. Four or five coats should be given, allowing each coat of varnish to dry before the succeeding one is applied. Soles thus treated possess twice the usual durability, and generally outlast the best uppers. The leather uppers of boots and shoes may be rendered soft and water-proof by rubbing into them while warm, before the fire, a mixture composed of four ounces of hog's fat and one of resin.

EXTRACTING GREASE.

If a silk or a cotton dress has been stained with grease, a very excellent method of removing the stains, without taking out the colour, is to grate raw potatoes to a pulp, in clear water, and pass the liquid through a coarse sieve into another vessel of water. Let the mixture stand till the fine white particles have fallen to the bottom; then pour the liquid off clear, and bottle it for use. Dip a sponge in the liquid and apply it to the spot till it disappears; then wash it in clean water several times. Two medium-sized potatoes will be enough for a pint of water. Be very careful not to wet more of the dress than is necessary, as some delicate colors will look marked even with clean water.

AN EATABLE INDIAN PUDDING.

To make a boiled Indian pudding that any one can eat and digest, take three cups of sweet milk (skimmed is just as good), one and one-half cups of coarsely chopped sweet apple, two spoonfuls of molasses, and about three and one-half cups of Indian meal; put in a covered tin pudding dish, or if one has none, a tin pail answers the same purpose, and set in a kettle of boiling water; boil three hours, keeping the water as near the top of the dish as possible without its boiling into it; this, if not mixed so thick as to be dry, makes, eaten with cream and sugar, a very good pudding. A good rule for making Indian puddings is, to use nine tablespoonfuls of meal to two quart of milk; scald part of it and stir in the meal, which, of course, should be wet up with the remainder of the milk, and sufficient molasses to sweeten as desired; some chopped sweet apple is a great improvement and a capital substitute for the beef suet so many are in the habit of putting in, as it gives a rich flavor without being rich and heavy.—*New England Farmer*.

The Reformed Episcopalians of New York and vicinity now count nine churches and rejoice in signs of steady growth. They have just taken steps for the erection of a "Synod of New York," and will probably elect Mr. Sabine to the bishopric.

Doct. HARRISON, in response to an inquiry in the House of Commons, recently said that the Government of India adopted a resolution last year to reduce Church establishments not only in Madras, but throughout India; but that such "establishments" did not mean the salaries of clergymen, but simply salaries in connection with the churches.