

# Shadowed for Life,

A SOLDIER'S STORY.

BY GORDON STABLES, M. D., R. N.

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CHAPTER XXIII.—I BECOME A TEC IN EARNEST.

For many weeks I was too busy to think much of even the villain Jack, at whose door I felt certain I was justified in laying all the sorrow and misery my friend, Major Lloyd had come through. And heaven knows my hopes for his future were not bright as I could have wished them to be. The excitement inseparable from his new position, while it was new, but above all his reconciliation with his wife had, as far as I could see at present, completely counteracted the effects of the shock to his nervous system, caused by the discovery of that long check.

He had only once mentioned the unhappy affair to me. "I have forgiven my dear wife, Gord," he said. "I have been right, I think, in looking leniently on the whole affair. My God, Gord, think of the terrible position she had! Think of all that must have suffered in the hands of those fiendish, black-mailing tecs!"

"Besides," he added, "Ella is very innocent as regards money matters and as regards life in general. Poor, innocent Ella!"

I thought differently, but I said nothing. "Oh, Gord," said my friend, "Ella loves me, she told me so, she could not tell a lie. Again I thought differently, but my heart bled for this earnest, simple-minded soldier. Jack had been Ella's first love. She loved him still—this is how I argued—he looked a bold and resolute man, and handsome, too; just the one to captivate the heart of an impressionable young girl, and leave the stamp thereon for life. But I had been in the habit of reading the character in the eyes, and in the movements of the body, and judging from all I had seen that evening in the drawing-room, if my skill and judgment were not very much at fault then was Jack one of the most daringly unscrupulous men ever I had studied during my whole career."

"Ella loves me," she told me so. She could not tell a lie!"

I repeated these words to myself over and over again as I rode away from the Raven's Nest, home towards the tree-shaded lanes, in the gathering gloom of an early autumn night.

My misgivings concerning Ella's sincerity and her future behaviour centred in those very words "loves me" and "told me so." She was deceiving him, and with a purpose. I could not doubt this for a moment. But what was that purpose? I was willing to take the simplest view of the matter, and tried first to reason with myself thus, "She is wealthy now, or her husband is. Women love money and they love position. Ella has both. And Jocelyn told me he had settled a good allowance on her money on her marriage. This being the case, I asked myself, it is likely that she will keep up correspondence or court intimacy with a mere adventurer—a poverty-stricken adventurer like Jack. Would it not be more likely that she would gradually allow him to drop out of her life. She may even have the courage to cut the Gordian knot by giving him money to take him abroad."

For months to come, therefore, I should not look upon myself as an author, a journalist, or even a medical man, except in so far as these professions might aid my purpose. I would be a tec in the truest sense of the word.

Joss called on me one day, and seemed unusually happy and jolly. "Gord," he said, "I am going at last." "Going?" I queried. "Whither, mon ami, you don't look like a dying man."

"Dying he hanged, Gordon, who talks of dying? I am going straight away though to Bonnie Scotland to Knockieburn, my boy. My estate, you know. And Ella is going with me, and dear little Mary. The child is wild over it. I have already ordered my kilt and sgian dubh, whatever that is. I already feel the Scotch blood leaping in every vein. Oh, we shall have a high old time of it, never fear."

"Well, I wish you joy, Joss." "Wish me joy? But, my good fellow and friend, you are coming with me to share the joy. And don't imagine for a single moment you can get out of it."

I consider for a moment. Then: "See here, Joss," I said, holding up a bundle of unfinished manuscript, "as soon as I complete this I'll follow on. Perhaps in a week, or fortnight at the longest."

And so it was arranged. Jocelyn went away, telling me quietly just before he started that I was to ride over to the Raven's Nest just as often as I could spare the time, and see that things were moving straight.

Two days after Jocelyn left, I wired to his butler, "Coming over to dine tonight." I do not wish the servants to imagine I had desire to take them unawares or play the spy.

"Now, Lena, you go and watch. Come back to my room in an hour."

I confess that as I stole away along the dark passage towards Mrs. Lloyd's boudoir, I felt as burglars must feel, when they are still but juniors in their profession. I was not at all sure of my powers of reasoning to convince me that I was not committing a heinous sin. But the face of poor Jocelyn, so loving and trusting, rose up before me, as I stood there in the boudoir keys in hand; and I thought too of that interview between him and Jack in the drawing-room. Then I no longer hesitated, but I went.

Yet my heart would keep palpitating, and the slightest noise outside made me start and listen. There always are strange mysterious noises about old houses, but as at another time, and under other circumstances I question if I should have heard them.

Yes, there stood Ella's writing-desk. It was a huge one, a strong one, with a peculiar lock. "It did not appear as if it were open," I said to myself at once, however I sank into a chair, and once again I thought the whole matter over. I was hoping against hope that there might be some way out of my difficulty. Some other way of finding this man, other than that to which I was about to resort. I could find none.

I hesitated no longer. I opened the desk. I drew the lamp nearer, so that its light might shine upon the contents of the box. It was a large one, a strong one, with a peculiar lock. The box was not open as I found it. I opened it, and found it empty. I looked at the bottom of it, and found it empty. I touched a spring, and the centre portion of this opened with ease, almost sprang up indeed.

Here were letters in plenty. One bundle in particular was tied with a somewhat faded blue ribbon. I lifted it gently up. Beneath the packet lay faded flowers, each one of them perhaps told a tale to Ella, or brought back to her fond memories of the past.

I opened the letters. Love epistles, every one of them, and all from him. I am bound to say, however, and I may add that I am glad to say, I found no evidence in any single one of them of sin, of breach of trust, or of anything that would bring me into disrepute with my friends.

"What was that?" I asked myself. "I do not wish the servants to imagine I had desire to take them unawares or play the spy."

"I do not wish the servants to imagine I had desire to take them unawares or play the spy."

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poor, and there seemed for us no hope. But in an evil hour he who is now your husband met you and proposed to you marriage. Over and over again you told me you preferred poverty, a garret, and a crust with true love, to wealth and union with a man you despised. I saw, or thought I saw, things in different light. I was working then as a humble apprentice in a chemist's shop in E—, and I fear I was too often under the influence of the baneful drug, opium. It spread a glamour over me, and through it I saw life in probably its most unattractive form. I advised you to marry Lloyd, and all unwilling, you consented. How easy, I thought, it would be to get up a case against the man, and to divorce him. In Italy, in France, in America, by the help of private detectives, such things are done every day or week end. I advised you to divorce him for a time seemed to favor us, when Lily Foster crossed our path. Our action should centre around her. But the private detectives we employed dalled and delayed, and blackmailed both you and me. During these long years my career has been a chequered one. I do not hesitate to say that I have been guilty of robbery. O, forgive me, sweet Ella mine, 'twas all for love of you."

This part of the letter was blotched and blotted as it were had fallen on it, but I was able to read the rest. I could not tell. I think they were Ella's tears. "Things would have gone well, things were ripe for a divorce, when—O, the irony of fate—there came the business of our bank, and put us in your husband's power instead of leaving him in ours. Divorce is now out of the question, unless I can secure that cheque and thus destroy all evidence of that society would consider a crime. That Gordon, I have reason to believe, carries it constantly on his person. So might 'twixt your home and his I may wrench it from him, even if I wrench his windpipe out with it."

"Thank you, Jack," I said to myself, smiling. "Forewarned is forearmed. There was a good deal more in the letter than this, but I need not quote. Then I continued, as follows: "We have often wished him in a better world. Ella mine, neither you nor I would dream of the assassin's knife. No, no. Well, divorce would have left you free, and with enough to live on. We could not help wondering how a lady so clever and discriminating as Ella should have risked keeping these letters at all, even in a husband's character well. He was the soul of honor, and had she even left the box unlocked, I question whether he would have opened it."

"This," I said to myself, "all proves how great is the love he bore for that anarchist and villain. She could not prevail upon herself to destroy or burn a single letter or paper that his hands had touched. How great a thing is a woman's love, and yet how terrible a force it may become if wrongly directed!"

I seated myself by the table with the letters—the more recent ones before me. I carefully scanned them, and conformed them one by one.

Like the others they were typed. Like the others they were written in Italian, but I knew the handwriting. I had seen it many times. To read them was to read the heart of a man who had been in the same position as before, and without a clue to the whereabouts of the man I wished to run to earth.

Every epistle was couched in more or less degrading terms than another, so to speak, and I was about to put back the letters and relock the desk, when it occurred to me to examine it further. There might be a secret recess I had not yet found.

a bottle of spirits were brought to me. I should drain it to the very bottom. My sleeplessness, my bellish dreams, and my sufferings have been almost more than mortal man can bear. It has been the inferno on earth. Give me a soothing draught, dear Gord, or I shall not be long to make it. Not if it should put me to sleep for ever and for aye."

"I will do all in my power for you, if you will but promise to remain in bed for a time," I replied. "You will see things in a far different light before long."

"Now as to Jocelyn's case, although he has been a moderate drinker, and had probably more than once been heary, I had never seen him anything like this before. And I thanked goodness I had come in time to save him."

"But—and it is a big BUT—I felt certain in my own mind that it was the shock to his nervous system, caused by the cause of his delinquency that had worked the change in the brain cells, which had led to his loss of all will power, and his thus falling a victim to fiendish intoxication."

"I sought out his wife and told her his dangerous condition as well as the cause of it. She wept a little—cannon-like tears I know they were—she wrung her hands. 'What is to be done?' she cried. 'O, will he die?' Will he die?"

I watched her narrowly, though I pretended not to. How anxiously she hung on my reply! "No, Mrs. Lloyd. Assuredly he will get well, and I shall have him day nor night until he is clothed and in his right mind," as the Scripture hath it.

"Thank you, oh thank you, doctor. What should we do without you—"

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THE PROFESSOR'S ERRORS.

Some Humorous Incidents That Are the Result of His Oversight.

No newspaper worker has to contend against greater obstacles than does the proofreader, and when everything is taken into consideration the average excellence of his work is little less than marvellous. His errors of omission may easily be pardoned. Whenever the type calls a lovely young bride a "bird" the offense may be lightly overlooked, since the meaning is not entirely obscured. But the proofreader's errors of commission belong in a different category. Whenever he attempts to straighten out the tangled meaning of something he doesn't understand, the result often is something to make the judicious grieve.

At the conclusion of the Li Hung Chang festivities in New York, and just before the distinguished Celestial left for China by the Canadian route, I wrote a paragraph, saying: "Before Li Hung Chang goes back to China he ought to see the United States." It came out in cold type: "Li Hung Chang is visiting the United States before going back to China." Simultaneously I found on my desk a note from the proofreader. It said: "You'll have to keep a little closer. That Chinnan has been in New York a week. Don't you read the papers?"

W. W. Naughton, the San Francisco sporting writer, once included in his sporting notes for the Examiner an item saying that "the young salmon are beginning to run." It appeared in print: "The young salmon are beginning to swim."

When Mr. Naughton asked for an explanation the proofreader cheerfully remarked: "That's all right, Billy. You had that mixed up with your turf stuff, but I straightened it out for you."

"But why didn't you let it go as I wrote it?" persisted Naughton. "I couldn't," was the reply. "Who ever heard of a fish running?"—Chicago Times Herald.

Hints For The Household.

Browned flour is almost as necessary to keep on hand in the store closet as white flour. To brown flour put a thick layer of flour into a baking pan and place it in a hot oven. Watch it and stir with a spoon until the flour is well browned all through. When it becomes cold put it into empty preserve jars cover them closely. It will then be ready to use in making gravies and sauces or whatever it is needed for.

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