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A Child of Sorrow.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A week later, Robert Broseley was pacing up and down the verandah in the early morning. The sun was shining brightly enough, but the air was comparatively cool; three of the "hands" were walking up and down three superb horses; two of them had side-saddles on; for Robert was going to take Maida and Carrie for a ride. A great change had come over Robert since the night he had ridden home dusty and travel-stained, rough-mannered in appearance, and profane in speech. He had got a pack of new clothes from Melbourne, and, in a coarse way, looked something like a dandy as he paced up and down striking his leg with his whip, and casting a glance now at the horses and now towards the window from which he expected the two girls to emerge. He had not altered in appearance, but in manner; he was gentler with his mother and swore less at the "hands"—at any rate, while he was within hearing of the girls—and to his mother's amazement and delight he had displayed an unwonted politeness when in their company; on the other hand, when alone he was pre-occupied and moody, given to long fits of abstraction, alternating with savage outbursts of temper which he was careful not to exhibit, or checked suddenly at the appearance of the Miss Carringtons. He hovered about them all day, and, to his mother's deep satisfaction, spent the evening, not in the kitchen or common living-room as heretofore, smoking and drinking with the "hands," but in the parlor, talking to Carrie of London life or listening to Maida singing or reciting; but whatever he was doing his small black eyes continually sought Maida's face, sometimes covertly, at others with an eager, hungry admiration and wistfulness. She was in his thoughts all day; when he was riding after the cattle or superintending the "hands," she haunted him at night when he often lay awake tossing to and fro feverishly recalling every word she had spoken to him during the day; her exquisite voice ringing in his ears and torturing him with the desire of possession. The love, the passion, of such a man as Robert Broseley is a terrible thing; he was like the man possessed with the seven devils, or rather of one with all the attributes of the rest; and his passion was

working like madness in his brain; for he knew that Maida was not only indifferent to, but absolutely unconscious of his admiration. It was as if he were wasting his strength and manhood, hurling himself against a mass of ice which barred his way to happiness. She was always courteous and gentle of speech and manner to him—but the ice was there; and sometimes it chilled him to the marrow. It was as if, though her exquisite form was near him—so near that he was often tempted to stretch out his huge hand and seize her arm and drag her to him—her spirit, her soul, were far away. A thousand times he asked himself of what she was thinking as she sat with her hands folded loosely in her lap, her violet eyes fixed on vacancy. Was it of some other man? The thought sent the blood in a rush to his heart and made the small, black eyes gleam savagely. At times, when unwittingly, she had been more than usually gentle with him, had perhaps been interested in some story of his adventures, he had cherished some hope of winning her; she was poor, he would be very rich; he would be a good match for her; he was big and straight, not bad looking; other women had been ready to smile on him, why not she? He was asking himself this, trying to lay the flattering unctious of hope to his soul as he paced up and down moodily; but his face cleared and his eyes lit up as the two girls came out. A woman looks at her best in her riding habit, and Maida's beauty and grace made his heart throb fiercely. "Sorry to keep you waiting," said Carrie. "It was all my fault; Maida's been dressed half an hour; but I couldn't find one riding-boot; I forgot that I threw it at a mouse the other night, and that, of course! it crawled under the bed; the boot, I mean; it always does; so does everything else you lose. I think it would be a good plan to have a piece of wire netting round the bed." "It doesn't matter," he said, quite pleasantly—if it had been anyone else who had kept him waiting, there would have been black looks and very probably an oath. "I don't mind. I don't want you ever to hurry; my time's yours." "I've put a loose curb on her," he said to Maida as he put her into the saddle with the ease of a strong man who could have lifted her above his head if he chose, "you won't have so much trouble in holding her. I hope you'll like her, now that you've grown used to her; I don't fancy there's a better in the country." "She is a beautiful creature," said Maida, "and I have grown fond of her already." "You are fond of animals general-

ly, aren't you?" he said, as two colts jumped at her, begging for a word. "I notice that all the dogs come running up to you as if they'd known you for years. Get down, you brute!" he broke off, roughly, making to kick them; for he was jealous even of them. "Oh, don't send them away," said Maida. "These two are my favorites." "They'll tear your habit, if they don't look out," he growled.

She spoke a word to the dogs, and they drew back obediently, eyeing her and wagging their tails lovingly; and when the horses had started they followed close behind Maida. Robert rode between the two girls, but his eyes were upon Maida and his talk to her. "I'm having a new buggy built for you," he said. "There! I meant it for a surprise; but I've blurted it out now. I don't seem as if I can keep anything from you, even a simple thing like that. I hope you'll like it. I've got a couple of horses to put to it that you couldn't match this side of the herring-pond, and you and I—and Miss Carrie—will have some fine drives."

"That is very good of you," said Maida; "but Mrs. Broseley's carriage is very comfortable. I am sorry that you should have taken the trouble, gone to the expense." "Oh, that!" he responded, contemptuously. "As to the trouble and expense, it's no trouble, and the expense won't matter. We could afford a new buggy, I should hope. Besides, the other old thing isn't fit for you. I don't like to see you driving in it. There's nothing too good for you—and Miss Carrie," he added, hastily, as he caught the dawn of a faint surprise in Maida's dreamy eyes.

"Oh, we're very easily satisfied, Mr. Robert," said Carrie; "at least, I am; the best of everything is good enough for me."

He laughed the short laugh which had become strangely subdued during this last week. "And the best of everything you shall have, Miss Carrie," he said. They rode on at a fair pace, for the girls had been quick to take advantage of his apt tuition; and he glanced admiringly from the corners of his eyes at Maida's graceful figure as she sat her horse as if she had been riding for years, instead of a week. He thought of what it would mean to him if he could have her to ride, to walk to sit beside him for the rest of his life—his own, his wife! And, for a time, he was so absorbed and moved by the thought that he was silent, looking straight before him at the picture of his imagination.

They were going to one of the huts erected in various parts of the run for the use of the keepers and cattlemen; they were to rest there and have a cup of tea, and then ride back for the early luncheon, so that the girls might spend the remainder of the heat of the day dreaming under the verandah. For miles they rode across the long-stretching grass-land, then the scenery grew wilder and more broken, and they neared a range of hills and saw in the distance the bed of what, in the rainy season, would be a huge and roaring river, but was now a dry and parched water-course, through which trickled lazily and languidly but a tiny stream. Maida had been silent for some time, and Carrie and Robert Broseley had been talking; but suddenly he turned to Maida.

"This is more like some parts of your England, isn't it?" he said. Maida woke from her dream and looked round. "Yes. It is very beautiful; it is like"—she paused, and her lips twitched: the valley just beyond Heroncourt had risen before her and awakened the old pain, the old, aching longing—"it is like some places I know."

He watched her covertly. "I suppose you are always thinking of them, always longing for them?" "Not always," she said, with her sweet gravity, which seemed to always keep him just at arm's length, to maintain the barrier between them. "But why do you say 'your' England? It is yours also, is it not? Do not you Colonials always speak of it as 'home'?" "Yes, mostly," he said. "And I've often had a fancy for going there. I



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don't mean on a visit like some of them; but to settle there. I suppose I could get a fine place in England—one of those places you read about in the novels and stories?"

"Oh, yes!" said Maida, as she thought of the Towers which her father had bought.

"I'd do it," he said, "if anything happened to the governor, or if he'd find the needful. That is—I suppose a man ought to be married."

He shot a glance at her, but Maida was scarcely listening; certainly she attached no importance to his words. "Yes; I suppose it would be better," she said. "Of course, a bachelor could live in a large place. Plenty of them do."

"I daresay I shouldn't have much difficulty in finding a wife," he said, with an uneasy laugh.

"I should imagine not," said Carrie, who had overheard him. "There were several unmarried women in England when we left. But it's too beautiful a morning to talk of such a sad subject—What is that down by the stream, Mr. Robert?"

"That is the hut," he said. It looks pretty near, doesn't it? But it will take us a good hour and a half to reach it; the air's so fine that you can see a great distance. I've lived in that hut, by myself, mind you, for a fortnight at a time, with just a ride home now and again; for I couldn't leave the cattle for long; it isn't particularly lively, and you get pretty sick of it after the first week, having no one to talk to."

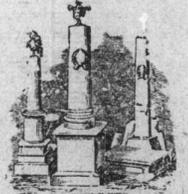
"And no one to quarrel with, that would be the worst of it for me," remarked Carrie. "It's quarrelling that makes life just bearable; and I often wonder how Maida can live without it."

He nodded and laughed appreciatively.

"I know what you mean, Miss Carrie. Yes, I like a good quarrel now and again, and a stiff stand-up fight, especially when it means life or death." He drew a long breath and set his shoulders back, and his eyes gleamed.

(To be Continued.)

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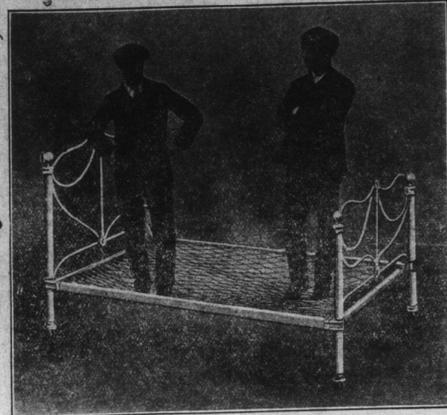
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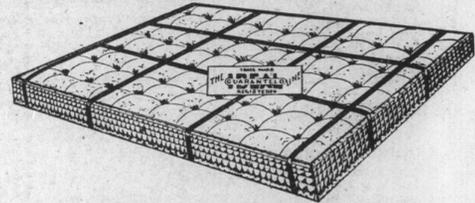
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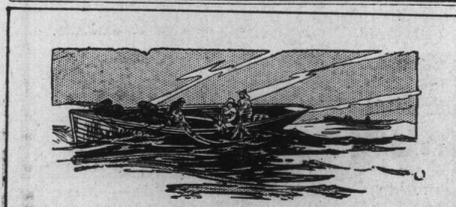
IN THE HILLS.
I write this rhyme 'mid scenes sublime, in far-famed Colorado, where hills so high they scrape the sky throw out a—c—o—l—i—n—g shadow. Long's Peak uplifts its shining drifts of snow that knows no melting; I'm cool as far, while, where you are, heat rays are fiercely pelting. The crystal rills that seam the hills attract my fat attention, and aspen quake by lonely lake too beautiful to

mention. Here Nature spent her last red cent, to make a scene enthralling, with crags and woods and other goods, and mountain torrents brawling. And tourists roam, far, far from home, upon this scene elysian, they're swarming o'er the rocky floor, and jar my startled vision. For they're attired in a garb all-fired, in garments plainly dippy; in sideshow rags they scale the crags and toil up pathways slippery. It seems too shames that men and dames, when they go for an outing must cause distress by wearing dress so loud it's fairly shouting. The mountains blush when tourists rush along the pathways ratty, in rags that scare the wolf and bear, and drive the woodchucks nutty.

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ISAAC E. MANN,
Metapedia, P.Q.
Aug. 31st, 1908.

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