

Happiness Secured

A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER XXIV.
IT WAS NOT TO BE.

And three days later the news is brought to Deepdene that Mr. Warden has quitted Hanbury for good.

"Gone away—nobody knows where—and without so much as a word of good-by to any of us!" Len exclaims, with a little uneasy glance at Addie. "What is ails, Adelaide? Have you and Ernest quarrelled?" he asks, in a tone of surprise and perplexity. "Won't you tell me what has happened? What is the trouble between you two?"

"I cannot, Len!" she replies, turning away her face to hide the anguish in her eyes—"I cannot, indeed! Only that we have parted forever, and that if you love me you will never mention his name to me any more!"

But, apart from this, she takes it very quietly.

Her womanly pride keeps her silent. Not even to me does she utter a word of complaint; but I can see that her heart is bleeding inwardly.

There is a beseeching pathos in her sad eyes—a white, stricken look in her face that frightens me; and as the days wear on, Len, all unconscious as he is of the real nature of her trouble, grows so anxious about her that he insists upon calling in medical aid.

Almost immediately upon Ernest Warden's departure she goes back to her desk and tries to write; but the task is evidently beyond her strength.

And as these days on, sleep and appetite both fall her so utterly that she begins to look more like a wan specter of her former self than anything.

If she could but sleep she might, perhaps, learn to forget in time. I think, as I find her, night after night, lying awake, absorbed in that silent, tearless grief that is eating away her life. But, alas! to quote the fussy little country surgeon, who comes over nearly every day from Hanbury to see her, "insomnia is the most difficult feature of the case!"

Landanum, morphia, and chloral are alike powerless to lull the aching brain to repose; and, finding at last that his patient's symptoms will yield to neither tonic nor opiate, the doctor begins to talk of change of air and scene.

"As if one place were not the same as another to me, Lesley!" she exclaims, almost instantly, when I strive to rouse her into something like interest in the subject. "Only let me alone, dear! I should be better if I could but write; work is the great anodyne for suffering; but I begin to think sometimes that I never shall again."

"Things can't go on like this, Lesley," Leonard remarks in confidence to me one morning. "That poor little soul is simply dying before our eyes! I tell you what it is, dear, I've lost all faith in that Hanbury man, and I've made up my mind that I'll write to Doctor Fuller this very day, and see if he can spare time to run down and see her. It is a strange thing; but I have a strong presentiment that if any one can do anything for her, Doctor Fuller is that man."

DOCTOR COULD NOT HELP HER

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So it is arranged, and Len sends away an urgent appeal, which brings a prompt reply from the doctor, saying he will be with us to-morrow.

CHAPTER XXV.
WHEN LOVE COMES KNOCKING.

NEARLY eight weeks have gone since Ernest Warden quitted Hanbury, and, so far, we have heard nothing of him from any one.

It is September now. Everywhere the blackberries are ripening on the hedges, while the sharp crack of the sportsman's gun rings out over the stubby fields, from which the harvest has been gathered in; and, although to all outward seeming, things are going on much as usual at Deepdene, a very perceptible change has come over us all in the interim.

For one thing, Miss Clitheroe is a very much less frequent visitor to Deepdene than formerly. While poor Len, looking pale and miserable, shuts himself up in his studio, and works away at his painting with such a desperation of industry as he has not displayed for months.

Something is wrong between them. I see it all too plainly; and I am afraid I can only too easily divine what it is. I make no mention of the subject to Len; but I cannot help suspecting that it is certain significant little rumors concerning the beautiful Miss Clitheroe and the wealthy owner of the Priory that are troubling him.

Once or twice while walking alone with Mr. Denton, who has got into the habit of constituting himself my very frequent escort of late, I have caught sight of Gwendolen Clitheroe's beautiful blond face in the Priory carriage, as, accompanied by her father, to whom Mr. Erroll is reported to have become wondrously polite of late, she was being driven over to the great house for some quiet little dinner or luncheon, to which no one save the Clitheroes are ever invited.

One thing is clear: A wonderful intimacy has sprung up of late between the master of the Priory and the inmates of Fynton Rectory; and taking the fair face of the rector's daughter, and Mr. Erroll's very significant attentions in consideration, people are beginning to draw their own inferences.

Mistress of the Priory is a position few women would disdain to occupy; and, as the Hanbury gossip very openly asserts, Miss Clitheroe, with her extravagant habits and lack of dowry, is certainly not one of those few.

At Ivy Cottage, so far as I am able to judge, things are going on much as usual. Mrs. Lennox, as the poor, demented creature who occupies it is called, still remains there with her solitary attendant, Mrs. Martin, who no longer comes to Deepdene.

Our most frequent visitor since Ernest Warden's departure is Mr. Denton. Week after week he stays on at his old quarters at the Red Lion; and very few days pass without bringing him over on one pretext or another to Deepdene.

To-day it is a tempting little basket of fruit for Addie; to-morrow a new book for me; or some choice cigars, that need to be talked over with Len; and just how and when it first began to be an understood thing that Mr. Denton comes to Deepdene in the character of my lover I can hardly tell. That such a state of things has come to pass it would be mere affectionation on my part to attempt to disguise; and, whether the knowledge gives me more pleasure or pain, is a question I am really at a loss to answer.

Of his feelings for me he does not leave me in much doubt; but of mine for him I am not so clear.

Young, handsome, rich, devoted to me, what more can any girl desire in the hero of that sweet dream of love, and a husband sitting somewhere in

the shadowy future for me as for every girl that breathes? And yet there are times when I am half inclined to wish that handsome Charles Denton and I had never met.

"And so that is your medical friend from London, eh?" he remarks, on the afternoon of Doctor Fuller's arrival at Deepdene, following me into the garden, where, taking a seat on the bench of the old summer house, he watches me while I fill my basket with flowers for the vases. "What a grim-looking customer, to be sure! Did he ever indulge in any such weakness as a smile or laugh, do you suppose? Uplift me ever I saw, by Jove!"

"He is plain," I reply, with a laugh, as I remember my own first impressions of the doctor. "But it's a plainness all his own, though. You would not find another man like Doctor Fuller if you searched all London over; and it is astonishing how you grow to like him as you come to know him."

"Humph!" he replies, with a suspicious little glance at me, "never saw a man who realized my inner notions of Mephistopheles more thoroughly! Does he always take refuge in such a brilliant flash of silence as that to which he treated me to-day, when I enjoyed the inestimable pleasure of basking in the light of his distinguished presence?"

"He is rather stern in his manner, I'm afraid," I admit, with a glance at the handsome face under the cool shade of Charley Denton's careless straw hat. "But we, of all people in the world, cannot afford to criticize him very severely." I add, snipping off a spray of prettily tinted leaves, with a very vivid contrast in my mind, presented by Doctor Fuller's stern, hard face and rather stiff manners, to the handsome Charley Denton's free-and-easy fascinations. "We owe him a debt of gratitude which nothing can ever pay! But for him we might have lost poor Len in that terrible illness of his; and friends like that are not so common that we can afford to despise them. So whatever your personal impressions of Doctor Fuller may be, Mr. Denton, I beg you will remember that I am not at liberty to listen to one single disrespectful word against him," I conclude, rather icily.

"Hang Doctor Fuller!" is the impatient reply. "I hate him! I believe you would quarrel with me for his sake!"

"I would quarrel with any one who spoke disrespectful of my friends," I return, with as much dignity as I can muster. "Doctor Fuller has done us a great service."

"Good Heavens, Lesley!" he exclaims, "do you suppose that there is nobody in the world ready and willing to do you a service but that surly old sawbones—that there is anything I would not do—any sacrifice I would not make—that I would not be proud and happy to share my last dry crust with you?" he adds dramatically.

"Thanks, very much," I reply, with a demure little glance into the earnest, gray eyes that are searching my face, as if they would read, my thoughts, "but I'm afraid I am not particularly fond of dry crusts."

"No, nor of anything else I can offer you, I believe," is the bitter reply. "Oh, Lesley, why cannot you be a little nice to me? Why cannot you be as pleased to see me as Doctor Fuller?"

"You are very ungrateful," I reply, looking up from a careful inspection of the contents of my basket. "I'm sure I'm always very pleased to see you."

"Are you, indeed? I'm glad you have told me, for I'm sure I should never have suspected it," he returns. "You see I always thought that when people were glad to see their friends,

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they were in the habit of according them a cordial welcome."

"Which I have always given you," I return.

"Have you, really? Then I must have been laboring under a strange delusion. My impression of the matter is that it is remarkably cool at times. I did my best to believe it the reverse, but not being a person of strong imagination, I have not succeeded very well. Lesley," he adds, as he strides toward me and takes my hand in a grasp that makes me wince, "what do you suppose I have been dawdling away my time in such a quintessence of dullness and drowsiness as this dead-and-alive little Devonshire village for all the summer? What do you suppose has chained me here week after week like a dog in a string?"

"I'm not good at guessing riddles; never was," I reply. "If you are bent upon asking what the children call hard questions, I hope you will answer them."

"There is little need for me to answer that question. You know, you must know, that I love you, Lesley! Oh, my dear, don't torment me—what is to be my answer? Will you be my wife?"

It has come at last! The very crisis that, half unconsciously to myself, I have been dreading and struggling to keep off as long as possible.

For the moment I do not answer him—for the simple reason that I cannot. That I like him well enough for a friend, a companion for a moonlight stroll, a sentimental little chat, or a harmless little flirtation, even, I very well know; but, whether there is anything in him to satisfy the ceaseless craving of my woman's heart, I am not so certain. Whether I like him well enough for the companion of my life—my husband—is another matter.

"What am I to understand, Lesley?" he asks, impatient of my silence. "Do you love me?"

"I am afraid not," I reply, my eyes still fixed on the ground. "Not as I have always thought I should like to love my husband if I ever have one—not as your wife ought to love you."

He drops my hand, and, with a look of pain, turns away without speaking. "Oh, Mr. Denton!" I continue, my heart smiting me for the disappointment I am making him feel, "why cannot we remain as we are? Of all the friends I ever had, I believe that I like you best. Won't you be content to be my friend still?"

"No!" is the response. "I'll have all or nothing! If you cannot give me your love, you may bestow your friendship where you please for me. I'll have none of it, thank! There may be people in the world who, having lost the diamond their heart was set on, find consolation in a piece of glass that looks like it; but I'm sorry to say I am not one of them, Lesley," he adds, with an intensity of tone and manner almost startling in gay, debonaire Charley Denton. "Will you answer me one question: is there any one else? Have I a rival? Tell me the name of the man you love best?"

"Well," I reply, half frightened, half amused at his tragic air, "if it be any consolation to you, I don't mind telling you that I think it's Leonard. I doubt if there is a man in the world I love better than my dear old brother Len."

"Then I'll win you yet, dear!" he exclaims, his face lighting up with a look of radiant happiness; and, gathering me into his arms, he presses a kiss on my lips. "I'll be very patient, dear," he adds, as I turn away, my face suffused with such blushes as I did not think Charley Denton could ever have called to it. "I will not tease you any more about it now; but Heaven helping me, I will win you yet!"

"And such a prize as you'll have when I am won—if ever!" I laugh, with a touch of mischief I cannot control. "Do you know that I haven't a penny in the world, and not the remotest expectation of ever getting one? Oh, Charley, you would never be such a simpleton as to want to marry a girl who is as poor as Job, and has hardly a decent dress belonging to her, would you?"

"Would I not?" he exclaims, catching me once more in his arms and striving to obtain another kiss, which I make no very strenuous effort to evade.

(To be Continued.)

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CABLE NEWS.

STILL HAMMERING THE HUN

WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE, Aug. 23. (By the A.P.)—Victorious on a battlefield of 23 miles extending from the Cojeul River on north across the Ancre and Somme Rivers, almost to Liéons, the Third and Fourth British armies under General Byng and Rawlinson at mid-afternoon were vigorously following up their successes of to-day, which apparently have been one of the most disastrous days ever experienced by the Germans. The enemy has lost wide stretches of ground, numerous towns, thousands of men and large quantities of material and guns. He also again has had heavy casualties. Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, commander, has thrown his men in before the advancing British armies in an effort to stave off the inevitable, but only to have them mowed down again and again by storms of metal poured from the British guns. One entire enemy battalion was annihilated during the fighting. Dead Germans in great numbers are scattered everywhere over the battlefield. As an example four hundred enemy dead were observed this morning on one small piece of ground over which the battle had swept. With all this fierce fighting and notwithstanding the fact that the British at many places have fought over open ground against an enemy protected in pot holes and strong points of other kinds, the British losses everywhere seem to have been extraordinary light. This is probably due to the confusion which the Germans find reigning behind their lines, as they are fighting a losing battle which for them hourly grows more disastrous. Crown Prince Rupprecht to-day had strengthened his lines at many places, but this instead of stopping the British simply meant that the Germans suffered bigger losses. During the night and this morning the front upon which the battle was being fought yesterday, was widened appreciably both in the north and the south, while the ground in the middle between Albert and Beaumont-sur-Ancre, which heretofore had been fairly quiet suddenly was drawn into the whirl. New attacks from the River Cojeul and in the south carried the British across the Albert-Arras railroad embankment. The British apparently hold Boiselle-Boquerelle and Bowelles, and have passed beyond the Arras-Bapaume road. The troops just to the south who for two days have been fighting for and afterwards from the embankment stormed forward and reached Hamelincourt and are pushing on toward Ervillers, St. Leger and Croisilles. Airplanes reported that British tanks had crossed the road between Ervillers and St. Leger, while some infantry was reported to be less than a thousand yards west of Ervillers some hours ago. At about that time an airplane reported that the Germans had disappeared from their positions northwest of St. Leger and between that town and Hamelincourt, and that the fighting British found time in the midst of their task to cheer heartily. Apparently the hard pressed Germans rather than suffer more here where they have met with some of their heaviest losses, decided to get out of this locality which was one of the worst where the Germans had doubtless their strength. The fighting to the south of this region began in the

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