

The Lost Will; OR, LOVE TRIUMPHS AT LAST!

CHAPTER IV.

Jack was silent for a moment or two, as he attempted to master the significance of the simply uttered announcement; then, very much flushed, and with a natural thumping of the heart, he said, in a low voice which he endeavored to keep steady:

"That's—that's a very extraordinary thing to do, sir. I mean—haven't you any relations, any one near to you—?"

"I told you before—no. I've no one in the wide world but you."

"No one at all with any claim on you?" said Jack with surprise, scarcely knowing what he was saying in the tumult of his feelings; for though no one could accuse Jack Chalfont of being mercenary, the prospect of an immense fortune, dropping, as it were, from the heavens, excited even him. But he was a just young man, though by no means perfect, and he felt constrained to repeat, "Is there no one who has any claim on you, sir?"

His question seemed to affect Mr. Chalfont strangely; he took the pipe from his mouth, his face grew red, the eyes which he bent on Jack were almost fierce.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded. "What do you mean by 'claim on me'?"

"I mean, is there no old friend?" answered Jack, surprised by his patron's sudden show of anger. "Nearly every man of your age has some friend, if not relation however distant."

"I've no friend," said Mr. Chalfont, his face clearing; "I've plenty of people who hang about me for what they can get in money or tips; and I've no relations that I know of. I've no one but you, Jack," he said, with a kind of rough, reluctant sentiment. "You say that, if I adopt you, in a regular, legal way, they wouldn't give you my title if I got one; but I can give you this money. Hold on; it's not a mere whim, and because I've taken a fancy to you. Here, let me explain! I'm giving it to you because I'm fond of you; I cottoned to you from the moment I saw you; but it's not because of that only; it's because, first of all, you know what to do with the money—which I don't."

Jack listened in a kind of stupor.

"You're a swell, one of the right sort; a Chalfont with the 'e.' He smiled grimly. "You'll be able to keep house here properly; to meet as an equal all these grandees that gad about here; ruffe it with the best of them. Yes; you're the sort of man that ought to have a fine place like this and plenty of money to keep it going. You can go into Parliament, get a baronetcy, a peerage; you'd make a good lord. You shall have your chance. I'm going to leave every penny, every stick and stone, to you, Jack; and all I ask is that while I'm alive you shall try and think yourself the son you can't be."

They went upstairs together; at Jack's door Mr. Chalfont put out his hand and gripped Jack's, and the two men parted without another word.

Most men in Jack's situation would have lain awake that night; but he slept soundly. At breakfast the two men met as if the momentous conversation had not taken place; it was Mr. Chalfont's way of treating the biggest things in his life; once they were done, there was no more to be said. He went up to London, and Jack busied himself about the alterations which, at his suggestion, were being made in the estate. If, during his overlooking, he reflected more than once that everything on which his eye rested would some day be his, it may be forgiven him. Mr. Chalfont returned just in time to dress for dinner, and Jack noticed that he looked rather tired and haggard.

"Had a hard day, sir?" he asked.

"So, so," replied Mr. Chalfont. "East Ocean; but I think I've broken the neck of it; it's a big thing. You'll be a rich man," he added, with a grim smile.

Jack winced. "You'll be, you mean, sir?"

"Same thing," returned Chalfont laconically.

After dinner—a meal which Jack made cheerful with an account of his day's doings; in which Chalfont showed a genuine interest—Chalfont went off to his den with some papers; and Jack went up to his room, which was just above the den, to change his coat, and, if the truth must be told, to smoke and think over his prospects. He had not been so occupied for half an hour when he heard a strange noise. It seemed like a cry. Jack took the pipe from his mouth and listened; the cry was not repeated, and he thought that it might have come from one of the numerous ovis

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Jack rose, lit his beloved briar, and puffed at it furiously for a full minute; then he said, a trifle hoarsely:

"Look here, sir; of course, I'm grateful to you; but I'm so staggered that I don't properly realize what it means; and yet I ought to; for, like you, I've been poor and wanted money. I'd just about thirty bob when I called on you that morning at Copt-hall Buildings; but I don't want you to do anything without thinking it well over."

"I never do anything suddenly; I never do anything without thinking it well over," returned Chalfont. "I've been thinking of it for the last week; and let me tell you a week's a long time for me to think over anything. In fact, I made up my mind three days ago. Horton has drawn out the will; it's in the safe here; it only wants signing. I'd sign it to-night if the servants hadn't gone to bed. I'll want witnesses to it."

Jack took out his silk handkerchief, and wiped his brow.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "It's staggered me. But, thank Heaven," he added, with a sudden air of relief, "you're strong and well; you'll live to be ninety."

"Maybe, maybe not," said Mr. Chalfont dryly. "If I do, you shall stand as my son from to-night; you shall have as much money as you want; you shall go into Parliament, do what you like; travel—no, not travel, you'll live to be ninety."

Jack laid his hand, which shook somewhat, on the broad, bent shoulder; but could find never a word. With his own rough hand Mr. Chalfont covered Jack's shapely paw, and patted it; then he rose and threw back his shoulders.

"That's off my chest, anyhow," he said, with a short laugh. "Now we can go on all straight. I'll sign that will to-morrow, first thing. Time for bed, eh, Jack? Have to be at the office early to-morrow; why, it's to-morrow already."

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which lived in the park and flew about the house at night.

Mr. Chalfont took off his coat as usual, got into his uncomfortable chair, and, with his blackened clay in his lips, began to work at his papers. He was immersed deeply in them, when suddenly he heard a tap at the window—a window with doors opening to the ground. He gave no attention to it; it was repeated twice, thrice; then, thinking that some bird, probably wounded, had flown against the window, he rose, drew back the curtain, and opened the window. A man stood outside, so near, that Mr. Chalfont instinctively drew back; the man entered and, stepping into the light cast by the lamp, stood and looked at Chalfont. Chalfont returned the gaze confusedly for a moment; then he fell back and reaching wildly for his chair, sank into it and uttered the cry which Jack had heard.

CHAPTER V.

THE two men continued to regard each other in silence; Chalfont half-collapsed in his chair, clutching the arms so tightly that the veins on his hands stood out thickly; there were drops of sweat on his brow, and in his eyes that look which comes into those of a hunted animal when the dread thing from which it has been flying has overtaken it at last and brought death with it.

Strangely enough, in the eyes of the man who stood regarding him there was neither the fire of malignant passion nor overwhelming triumph; indeed, there was something, not only in the expression of Norton's face, but in his attitude, which was almost pagan in its calmness and immobility; it seemed as if he had been looking forward to this hour for so long, had been visualising it so vividly in his imagination, that now the actual moment had come its quinquity was dulled by oft anticipation. He looked down at the man in the chair almost as the executioner might regard the victim kneeling at the block, as if he, the executioner, were but the agent of justice and had no personal feeling in the matter in hand.

At last Chalfont found his voice, of the semblance of a voice. "Norton" his lips formed rather than pronounced.

"Yes, it's me," said the other old man, the avenger, and his voice was as passionless as his face; in fact, it was rather a weary and dragging voice. "I've been looking for you a long time, Bradshaw. I saw you coming out of the swell hotel the other night. I knew I should find you sooner or later; I didn't believe in that newspaper story of your death, it was the kind of blind you'd put up, naturally enough, and it didn't take me in. Somehow, I felt as you was alive and that the day 'ud come when you and I would reckon up our accounts."

When he had finished this statement, made with a curious kind of simplicity, as if it were a pronouncement of fate, he sank into a chair and, leaning forward slightly, with his hands on his knees—a trick of Mr. Chalfont's; the two men were strangely alike in voice and manner and bearing—he watched Chalfont's face, which had settled now into a kind of livid greyness. Chalfont rose, mechanically unlocked the window, drew the curtain; then, with his hands gripping the back of the chair, he looked down at Norton and said, in a curiously thin and hollow voice:

"Well, now you've got me, what are you going to do? Mind though you may think you've surprised me, you haven't. I always knew you'd run me down; always felt that this hour would come. I've been expecting you for years, Norton, and here you are; and what are you going to do?"

"I dunno," said Norton quietly, regarding him contemplatively. "Back alone I'd made up my mind that, when I come up with you, I'd shoot you on sight; but that was years ago, and I've changed my mind, many times, since then. Sometimes I thought that I'd give you over to the police, give evidence against you, stand outside the prison and wait—till the black flag ran up."

Chalfont moistened his white lips and his eyes blinked, as if the horror of the scene were visible to him.

"But there, again," said Norton, his tones and language becoming more like a rough miner's every moment, as if his contact with this other miner were carrying him back to the past. "I've thought so much over the idea that I've got somehow tired of it; it's got stale. But mind you!"—with a sudden gleam of ferocity in his eyes—



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"I'm not saying that I won't do it yet. It all depends."

"On what?" demanded Chalfont, curtly and hoarsely.

With every moment he was regaining something of his composure, the business man's mentality was beginning to assert itself. He saw that his deadly foe was prematurely aged, feeble of frame, and, but for his awful knowledge of the past, nothing so very terrible.

"See here, Norton, you and I aren't strangers; we know and understand each other. You know I'm not a man to be driven—"

"I could drive you to the gallus," interjected Norton, with a quietude which was horribly impressive.

"Maybe. No, nothing could drive me there," retorted Chalfont, as quietly; "not while I've got a shot in my revolver or there's cyanide to be purchased. But don't let's bluff each other. You've got me covered, and I throw up my hands." He actually made the familiar gesture, and, as his hands fell to his side again, he went on:

"Let's come to business. What do you want? Of course, you mean blackmail!"

"I dunno," said Norton again, with a hollow cough. "That's what I've meant for many a year past, but if it was myself only that was concerned, I dunno that I shouldn't refuse to touch a penny of your money. I've been watching you through the chink of the curtain, and while I was doing it, it seemed to me that the worst punishment I could land you would be to let you go on as you've been doing—waiting, waiting, for me to pounce on you. I've been watching your face, Bradshaw, and if ever a living man dwelt in purgatory, it's you."

"That's true enough," said Chalfont, with a Business man's acceptance of an obvious truth, even though it was presented by a foe. "I've been in purgatory, as you say."

Norton nodded twice. "Yes; you, with all your money—you, the great Mr. Chalfont—Oh, I've heard all about you; why, I've read about you in the papers for years past. Little thinking it was you. You're rolling in money, you're a great swell, living in a palace kind of house, with all the world at your feet; but when I looked at you through the window there, it came on me all of a sudden that, had time as I've had since you robbed me, perhaps you've had a worse."

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Casualty List.

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5713—Pte. Frederick Soubright, Red Rock Cove; emphysema.

J. R. BENNETT, Minister of Militia.

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The Home Dressmaker should keep a Catalogue Scrap Book of our Fashion Plates. These will be found very useful to refer to from time to time.

A NEW AND STYLISH DRESS FOR THE GROWING GIRL.



2559—Blue and green plaid woolen for the skirt and trimming, with blue serge for waist and tunic. Is here shown. This model is also good for gabardine, silk, velvet, checked suiting, gingham, repp and poplin.

The Pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 8, 10, 12 and 14 years. Size 10 requires 5 yards of 36-inch material.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

A COMFORTABLE SUIT FOR THE LITTLE BOY.



2330—For this model, the blouse could be of drill, madras, linen or flannel, and the trousers of serge, chevrot, or of wash fabrics. The suspender portions are a new feature. They could be omitted.

The Pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. Size 4 requires 1 1/2 yard of 44-inch material for the waist and 2 1/2 yards for the trousers.

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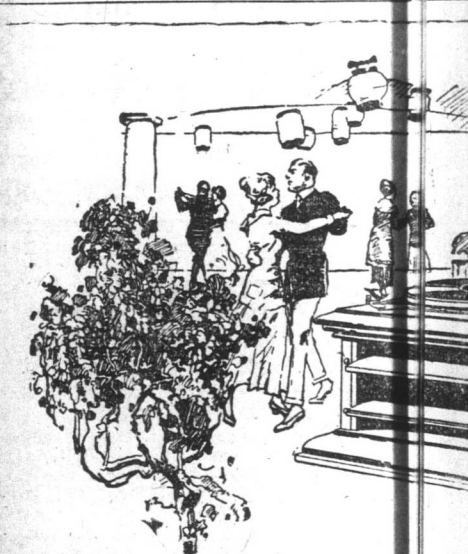
'Phone, No. 454

A Division of Bohemians are Italian Army

Russia, in a fine emotional moment, produced a Battalion of Death—women soldiers with poison phials in their blouses, sworn never to surrender. Bohemia, the enslaved and down-trodden, the mere historical ornament of a nation, has produced its first Division of Death.

It has been known for some time that there were about 20,000 Czech-Slovak troops in a single group with the Italian army—first in training near Perugia and later at the battle front itself. It is not commonly known, however, that these soldiers will never be used on the defensive except in the last extremity, and are being held by the high Italian command to be flung across No Man's Land when Italy strikes her next great blow.

The reason for this is simple. These men will be hanged if they are captured by the Austrians. Four hundred and seventy Czech-Slovaks since the war started have been hanged in Trieste alone—over one per cent of the population—for offenses much more venial in Austrian eyes than that of serving in the ranks of the enemy. An army loses most prisoners when it stands on the defensive. When it strikes, its casualties in killed and wounded are higher, but the wounded can be cared for in the rear of the advancing forces. Therefore the Czech-Slovak division will be



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