

## STILL AND DEEP.

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"ONE LIFE ONLY," ETC.

## CHAPTER LV.

Mary De L'Isle carried out her plan of summoning nurse Parry to her aid, on behalf of Mrs. Brant, and two or three days later she and her husband drove to the railway station to meet their old friend who had telegraphed her consent to the request.

Many of the Italians who were sauntering about in expectation of the passing excitement to be found in the arrival of the train, watched with admiring eyes the pleasant picture presented by the young couple, as they stood side by side on the platform waiting for its appearance. Bertrand had quite recovered his good looks, as well as his strength and activity; and although his bronzed complexion still bore traces of the open air life he had led during the campaign, yet his handsome face had regained all its brightness of expression, and the somewhat massive proportions of his stalwart frame contrasted well with the grace and delicacy of the pretty figure by his side. Mary did indeed look fair and lovely as the white rose, to which his father always likened her, and his blue eyes shone with joy and pride as he turned them on her each time she spoke to him with her low soft voice.

"Oh, there she is! Look, Bertrand, does it not make you think of the old days at home to see her dear kind face again!" said Mary, as she caught sight of Mrs. Parry.

"Yes indeed; I can recognize the little twinkling eyes behind her spectacles even at this distance," exclaimed Bertrand, and they hurried forward to meet her as the train drew up at the station, while she, with beaming countenance and incoherent ejaculations of delight, almost precipitated herself from the carriage in her eagerness to join them. No sooner, however, was she fairly landed on the platform, by the aid of Bertrand's strong arm, than the good woman fell into the wild state of perturbation and flurry which was her normal condition at a railway station, and it was not until the De L'Isles had placed her comfortably at rest in their own rooms at the hotel, that she was able to hold any rational conversation with them.

"Well, my dears!" she exclaimed, when she had made a good dinner, and was ensconced in an easy chair in front of the sofa where they were seated, "it is an untold happiness to me to be with you again; and you look so bright and bonny, my Mary, that it does my heart good to see you; at the same time I must tell you that I never came to any work with a worse will in my life, and that for more reasons than one."

"Oh, nurse, I am very sorry to hear that!" said Mary, "and surprised too, for generally you are so kind and ready to help any one who is ill."

"Yes, my darling, when it is a Christian person, and not a piece of painted falsehood and selfishness; I can tell you Mrs. Laura Brant is just the very last in the world I want to nurse or be good to. I have been hearing about her. I know that she is your worst enemy, my Mary, as well as poor Mr. Pemberton's."

"Not now, dear nurse," said gentle Mary; "she is much changed, and will be very different for the future from what she has ever been before, I am sure, and besides she is in sorrow and suffering, so we must forget everything but that she requires our help."

"Ah, that is just like you!" said nurse Parry, nodding her head, "I don't pretend to have an angelic temper, and to be al-

ways forgiving and forgetting; but somehow you never fail to make me feel almost as sweet as yourself when there is need of kindness to be shown to any one, and I daresay it will be the same this time; but Mrs. Brant will be very much mistaken if she thinks I have come to her willingly."

"What other reason had you for not wishing to undertake this task, nurse?" asked Bertrand; "you said you had more than one."

"Well, my dear boy, I did not like leaving the Brunots, the children are still very sadly."

"I did not know that any of them were ill," said Mary anxiously; "I would not have asked you to come if I had thought they required nursing."

"Nor do they; it is not that they need, but country air and change; they are very low and weak, one and all of them, but especially Valerie; she has never got over the shock to her nerves which she received that sad day when she witnessed Mr. Pemberton's death. She fell into such a melancholy unnatural state for a child, after you went away, that I really would not have been able to leave her now at all if it had not been for Mr. Davenant."

"Charlie Davenant! has he been with you?" exclaimed Bertrand.

"Yes; I have not had time to tell you about him yet," said nurse Parry, "though I am sure I have been talking as fast as I could," (which she certainly had). "He has been with us for a week, and I left him with the Brunots; but there is quite a pretty story about his first visit to the house, which you will like to hear."

"Let us have it by all means then," said Bertrand; "we shall feel as if we were the good children we used to be when you told us tales long ago."

"Ah, Mr. Bertrand," said the old woman shaking her head, "Mary was always good, but you were as full of mischief as ever you could be."

"And so I am still, nurse; but never mind that, let us hear your story."

"Well, my dears, it was about a week ago that he came. I heard some one shown by the servant into the outer room. I went in to see who it was, and there was a pleasant looking young Englishman, who told me his name was Charles Davenant. Then he said he was sure I must be nurse Parry, from the description he had often had of me from you. I remembered having heard you speak of him, Mary, so I asked him to sit down, and he did, but he was in a great hurry to ask some question, and he said, 'Mrs. Parry, I have come all the way from England to obtain some news of Miss Trevelyan; I have never been able to hear how she passed through the terrible time of the siege.' 'Ah,' says I, 'there is no such person as Miss Trevelyan any longer,' but I was sorry the moment I had said it, for he went as white as a sheet, and caught me by the arm, crying out 'O surely, surely, it cannot be! is it possible she has really gone quite away from this weary, wicked world!' 'No, no,' says I, 'she is safe enough with her husband; but she is married now; and she has become Madame de L'Isle.' 'Married!' says he, 'and to her own true love; for I suppose you mean it is Bertrand L'Isle that has got her.' Then he drew a long breath, and said, heartily, 'Well, I am right glad of it, for now I hope she'll be happy, though she can be my bright particular star no more.' 'No, indeed,' says I, 'she is nobody's star but Bertrand's, and I can tell you she is a countess now.' 'A countess, cries he, 'she is fit to be queen, and better than a queen. There never was anybody like her, and there never will be!' and with that he asked a great many questions about where you were going to live, and Bertrand's property

and title, and I answered them all, and then when he was quite satisfied about Mary, he said to me, 'And now Mrs. Parry, will you tell me where I can find John Pemberton? I want to see him very much.' You may fancy it gave me quite a turn to hear him say that, without a notion of the truth, so I answered, hastily like, 'You'll have to wait till you get to heaven before you can see John Pemberton, Mr. Davenant; and the poor young fellow gave a great cry. 'You don't mean to tell me he is dead, Mrs. Parry! after all his trial and sorrow it would be too sad!' But I was obliged to tell him it was unhappily true, you know; and when he heard the story of his death he fairly broke down, and sobbed like a child, till it made my heart ache to hear him. He was sitting at the table with his head laid down upon his folded arms, and he was just opposite the door of the inner room, and presently he raised himself to ask me some other question, and lifted his eyes, and there in the doorway stood little Valerie Brunot, in a blaze of light from the sunshine streaming down on her out of the window behind, with her dress shining white and glistening, and her hair all golden like a glory round her head, and she was looking straight at him with her great clear eyes and her beautiful young face so solemn and tender; he stared at her for a minute like a man in a dream, and then whispered to me, 'What is it Mrs. Parry? is it an angel? but before I could answer Valerie began walking slowly towards him, and she came and stood in front of him as he drew his chair back from the table, and said, in her sweet clear voice, 'Did you love Mr. Pemberton, sir?' 'Oh, I did indeed,' he said, 'he was my dearest friend.' 'Then I will love you,' she said, and she put her two little hands in his, and he stooped down and kissed them.

"Then she sat down by his side, and said, 'Now I will comfort you—though I am glad you cried for my dear Mr. Pemberton; but none of us must cry for him any more now, for he is happy, happier than any of us, safe at the feet of the dear Lord Jesus,' and she bowed her pretty head as she said the sacred Name. Well, my dears, Mr. Davenant kept looking at her as if he really did think she was an angel out of heaven, and from that moment those two became such friends as never was. He asked me if he could lodge in the house, and I got him a room, and there he has been ever since. He has done Valerie all the good in the world, taking up her time and attention, and making her forget her sad thoughts. They walk out together, and she helps him with his French, which is worse than mine, and that is saying a good deal, and he is ever so fond of her; he seemed delighted when I told him I left her quite in his care, for her father is out all day selling his Bibles, and her mother is but a poor creature at the best of times."

"I have no doubt he will be kind to her," said Bertrand, "since you have often told me, Mary, what a good fellow he is; but it is seldom a young man will take so much trouble about a child under any circumstances."

"I am not surprised at it when the child is Valerie Brunot; there is a peculiar charm in her character which has its effect on every one who knows her," said Mary; "but I am so glad dear nurse that Mr. Davenant came to take care of her just in time to set you free. You must rest here quietly to-night, and then to-morrow I hope you will come with me to Mrs. Brant."

## CHAPTER LVI

Lurline had been moved by the De L'Isles to more comfortable rooms before the ar-