

HELEN MOIR

Love and Honour.

A TALE OF THE CLYDE.

CHAPTER XV.

HERMANN IS LAD WITHIN THE AWFUL SHADOW.

"I fear you are very tired, Helen, you are so silent," he whispered, and there was self-reproach in his tone.

"No, Hermann," she answered, "my silence is not the result of physical fatigue. The way we have come has not tired me."

"And what does cause your silence, then?" he gently asked.

"I was thinking how very, very happy we have been," she murmured with faltering lips.

"Have been and are," was his equally low and murmured reply. "Our cup of joy is very sweet and very full."

"Sweeter and fuller than earth generally bestows, Hermann. In view of general human experience, should it not occur to us to suspect the permanence of its presence at our lips? Should we expect exemption from the pain and disappointment which seem universal?"

"Indeed, Helen, I believe this earth is very much as we ourselves make it," he rejoined. "The pain and disappointment to which you allude are to a great extent the result of personal error and wrongdoing. We virtuously invariably practised, good and not evil would be the lot of man below, happiness and not suffering would be the general portion, joy and not sorrow would accompany our steps along the path of life."

"Yes, but, Hermann, error and wrongdoing are so universal that it is vain to expect to escape their consequences."

"Nor will those escape who commit the error and practise the wrongdoing," answered Hermann. "Sooner or later their sin finds them out, and the punishment follows."

"But alas, Hermann, rejoined Helen, approaching now the momentous subject, "the consequences of wrongdoing are not confined to those who do the wrong, but involve others likewise."

"That is true," he answered. "The laws of the universe are inflexible, and so it is so woven together that a crime done by one is like a stone cast into a lake, its disturbing influence widens and widens till innocent people are made to feel the evil effects."

"Yes, I suppose we must cheerfully—at least submissively—accept this condition of things. Must we not, Hermann."

"Of course we must, dearest. We cannot escape it if we would, and we should not if we could, for depend on it the arrangement is a wise and salutary one. We might become very selfish, callous, and indifferent to the erring and to evil itself, if its influence was not social. But there, this is too sombre a subject for us to discuss in such a sweet spot, on such a beautiful evening, and when we have come forth for pure and loving enjoyment. You and I are outside that shadow of evil, and we must not leave the radiant sunshine of our joy to meet it."

"I think it will do us good to speak about it a little more," said Helen in a quiet tone. "Would it be well to forget it, and the probability that we shall have our share of it, like others?"

"Yes, 'tis well to forget it when to remember it is to spoil the enjoyment which a good providence has given us. Whatever may be the share of earth's trouble and sorrow that is allotted to us, dear Helen, I hope when it comes we shall be able to bear it bravely and conqueringly. And the best way to prepare of its endurance is to enjoy with full unalloyed delight the happiness we now possess. It would not be good for us to sacrifice any portion of that in order to anticipate the possible and the future."

"Ah, Hermann," sighed Helen, "the shadow may be near to us without our knowing it. What if its dark fringe is about to overlap us?"

"My darling, why have you taken this melancholy turn to-night? It is so different from your usual self. If you have been too much alone to-day."

"Indeed, no, Hermann. I have been less alone than usual. This—oh, this has been a terrible day to me."

"Good heaven, what—what has happened?" exclaimed Hermann, astonished, and now thoroughly alarmed. In hasty excitement he lifted her head from his bosom and gazed into her face, and saw there only what increased his anxiety.

"Helen, Helen," he cried, "you are ill—you are in great trouble—is that it? For mercy's sake, tell me the cause?"

"I will, Hermann. I mean to do it—I must do it. Oh, my poor dear Hermann, prepare for a terrible shock. I have tried to break it to you gradually, but all the time my heart has been bursting, and now I can conceal it no longer."

"Horror, dismay, and the wildest agony of suspense were traced in his face, and in gasping words he implored her to tell him what had occurred. The sight of his uncontrollable agony of distracting uncertainty had a powerful effect in giving her calmness to comply with his piteous request, and she began the relation of that day's memorable events and experience."

First she told of her meeting with Dubosque in the solitude of the deserted quarry, and in a moment Hermann leaped to his feet in maddened wrath for the thought which darted like lightning into his brain was that Helen had suffered personal outrage at the scoundrel's hands. When by hoarse choking words he gave her to understand what his fear, she hastened to remove the cause of his passion by the assurance that no harm had come to her from the Frenchman, unless from his words; and from these only because of what followed after she had parted from him. Enraged, Hermann to be calm and patient, she recounted her tale, and he, relieved from the first horrible apprehension, sat still and listened.

Yes, wonderfully still he sat, and though he listened with the utmost attention to every syllable she uttered, he actually seemed to grow colder as she proceeded. From the moment that he got a glimpse of the nature of the allegation made by Dubosque, the expression of intense anxiety subsided on his face, the burning light in his eyes faded, and his features relaxed into their accustomed repose. In this manner he listened to her whole narration, without manifesting any uneasy feeling to learn whether or not Ritchie Dunlop corroborated the extraordinary statement which Dubosque had made, and which had shaken Helen's soul to its deepest centre. And when in her recital of the conversation in the churchyard, she told how reluctantly, yet how completely, Ritchie was compelled to confirm the statement in its very worst form, Hermann heard the result quite unmoved. His only concern was evidently for her, and he could scarcely wait for the close of her narrative that he might put a curb on the promptings of his heart, and keep

silent till she had unfolded all. Then he spoke.

"And why should this have cast you into such an overwhelming distress?" he kindly asked, drawing her gently and lovingly towards him, and smiling upon her as he did so. "It is certainly not a pleasant story for you to hear, and I honor Ritchie for keeping you ignorant of it with such noble, faithful devotion. As to Dubosque and his share in the discovery, it is, of course, another manifestation of his cowardly malevolence; but his poisoned arrow will hit the mark only if you allow it. Call your sense and judgment to your aid, and don't allow the truth which has been brought to your knowledge to grieve you unduly; and lest you had the slightest idea that I should feel particularly annoyed at learning of your father's lapse from rectitude, I hasten to remove it. I regret it, of course, as I regret the fact of any true-hearted man falling before temptation—I regret it more because it was your father who so fell; but beyond that it does not affect me, and I trust you will not suffer it to grieve you to the extent to which it seems to have done."

She listened to his words in wondering dubiety, until she saw that he had not comprehended the consequence to themselves of the discovery made.

To be continued.

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JACKSON & HALLETT, General Grocers, Wyndham-Street, Guelph, Sept. 26, 1871

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You will here find some of the largest and most attractive stocks in the Dominion, and at most reasonable prices.

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SMALL FARM, situate in the Township of St. Catharines on the Gravel Road, within three miles of the Village of Port Hope, consisting of 68 acre good land, with barns, &c. Will be sold cheap.

SMALL FARM situate in the Township of Nichol, within two miles of the Village of Fergus, consisting of 73 acres excellent land, 58 cleared and the balance in hardwood. Well-fenced; with a good supply of water. The buildings consist of a good 2 story dwelling house, with stone foundation, stables and sheds. The floor of the stables are paved with stone, all in good condition. Terms easy.

161 ACRES in the Township of Saugeen, in the County of Bruce, about two miles from the Village of Port Hope, an important station on the Wellington, Grey and Bruce R.R. 30 acres cleared, the balance covered with hemlock and hardwood, with a log house and double log barn. There is also a good water privy on Snake Creek, with 14 feet lead.

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