

CHOICE LITERATURE.

MORE THAN CONQUEROR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ONE LIFE ONLY," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

Rex Erlesleigh came into his brother's room to inquire how he was, for a few minutes, before starting on horseback with Mr. Vivian, and Anthony welcomed him the more gladly that it was literally the first time he had seen him alone since the commencement of his illness. He had noticed with some surprise that Mr. Vivian appeared resolved never to leave Rex alone with him, but as he did not suppose there could be any special motive for it, he simply concluded that his friend was afraid Rex might be more talkative and excitable than was suitable for a sick-room, and thought nothing of it.

"Why, old fellow, you look much better this morning!" exclaimed Rex, as he greeted his brother warmly; "you have fairly turned the corner now, have you not?"

"Yes, I feel much stronger, I am thankful to say, Rex. I wish you could stay an hour with me; I have never had the chance to ask you how the world has gone with you since I have been shut out of it."

"Most charmingly well, I can assure you," said Rex, with a bright smile; "and there is a great deal I want to tell you, Anthony, now you are well enough to hear it. I wish indeed I could stay at home this morning. I do not at all want to take this long ride alone with Mr. Vivian. I suppose we shall be away some hours."

"You can talk to me at least till he is ready to start," said Anthony, "I have a great deal to ask you too."

But before Rex could take a seat, as he was about to do, Vivian came hurriedly into the room, and called to him, "The horses are just ready; pray come at once, Rex; the sooner we go the sooner we shall return, and I do not want to leave Anthony too long alone. I have brought you some books to amuse you," he added to Anthony; "I think you are well enough to read a little now."

"Not very much I am afraid; it makes my eyes ache; but I can try."

"I am sorry to leave you, old fellow," said Rex, lingering, as Vivian went out, "but you see I cannot help it."

"No, of course; but tell me one thing I have always wanted to ask you, Rex. Have you remained here all the time I have been ill?"

"Yes, indeed I have," replied Rex, half laughing. "Of course I was anxious about you, and I should have been miserable away from you, so I was glad enough to stay when Mr. Vivian gave me leave, and then I found it a very attractive residence, I can tell you."

"Rex, are you coming?" sounded from Mr. Vivian's voice at the bottom of the stairs, with a touch of annoyance in the tone.

And the young man darted away, leaving his brother vaguely uneasy, he could not tell why. He heard the tramp of the horses' hoofs under the window, as Vivian and Rex rode away, and then all was still and silent around him, save for the warbling of birds and humming of insects in the warm air, as the glowing sunshine of a brilliant summer day poured into his room through his open windows.

Anthony was alone, as he no longer required the nurse's constant attention, and had not, of course, any particular desire for her company, but he was not at all disposed to read the books Mr. Vivian had brought for his amusement. He tossed them away, and moved restlessly on his sofa, hardly able to bear the thought that Innocentia and he were alone in the house, and yet he was as much separated from her as if he had been miles away. He had asked Rex to leave the door open as he went out, as if that would be at least so much less of a barrier between himself and her, and he listened eagerly in the hope that perhaps the far-off sound of her voice singing as she went about might reach his longing ears. The only room on the same floor with his own was Mr. Vivian's study, where Innocentia did not often go unless her father was at home, so that he had very little hope of her coming nearer to him than her own apartments, till he suddenly found that fortune favored him. As he lay there straining his ears to catch every faintest sound, he heard the light footfall that was as music to his heart pass along the passage to the door of the study, then the sound of the handle turning, and a cessation of the steps, so that it was plain Innocentia had entered her father's room.

Anthony lay quiet for a little while, his heart beating almost to suffocation, and then he could stand it no longer. To be so near her and yet parted was more than he could endure. He knew that she would never dream of coming to his room and defying her father's prohibition, but Vivian had always told him to wait till he could leave his own apartments, and then he should see her. The only difficulty then was in the fact that he had not yet attempted to walk, but surely his feet, however feeble, would bear him to Innocentia, and giving himself no farther time for thought, Anthony rose slowly from his couch and stood upright. He felt very faint for a moment, and had to steady himself by holding both hands on the back of a chair, then he found that by pushing the chair before him so as to support him he could walk, and in this way, as he crossed the room. Once out in the passage his progress there was more easy, because he could support himself by the wall on either side, and with a few labored steps he reached the door of Vivian's study, which stood open. Then his heart leaped up with joy, for his eyes rested once more on her who was his very light of life, as he had often told her father.

Innocentia sat at the table, busily engaged in writing; her sweet serious face bent down over her work, half veiled by the long hair falling round her in a sunny cloud. The slight sound which Anthony's entrance made aroused her. She looked up, opened wide her bright blue eyes with delighted surprise, threw aside her pen, and started to her feet.

"Oh Anthony!" she exclaimed, running towards him, and putting her hands into his, "how happy I am to see you again! I have been wishing so much to come to you, but

father said I could not see you till you left your room, and here you are, able to do so at last."

"Yes, darling," said Anthony, faintly, overcome in no small degree by the sight of her for whom his heart had been so longing; "but I am afraid I cannot stand yet; I must sit down."

"Oh yes, come and lie down here; let me help you." And with her little hands she held him by the arm, and supported him to a couch where he gladly sank down, unable to speak for a few minutes after his exertion.

Innocentia bathed his forehead with *am de Cologne*, and made him drink a glass of wine and eat some grapes, which she flew to bring from the larder for him, and when all her care had quite revived him, so that she saw he could enjoy a conversation with her, she took a low seat, and sat down by his side, with her beautiful eyes raised tenderly to his face.

"Now I am going to tell you so much I have wanted you to know for a long time, dear Anthony."

"I hope you are going to tell me you have missed me, darling Nina, all this weary long time of our separation," he said, fondly.

"Oh, yes, indeed I did; though not so much, of course, as if Rex had not been here. I should have been very unhappy and frightened at your illness, only after the first dreadful shock of your accident father told me I must not be distressed, because you would be sure to get well. So then, when I knew I should have my friend again after a little while, I let myself be so very happy, happier than I ever was in all my life before."

"And what made you so very happy, Nina, while I was hid away from you ill and unconscious?" said Anthony, somewhat sadly.

"I could not help it," she answered, softly. "I had Rex, my Rex," she added, in a low tone.

"What?" said Anthony, raising himself, and looking keenly at her while his color came and went; "do you like Rex so very much then?"

"I love him!" she answered; and then, raising her candid eyes to heaven—"I love my Rex better than any one else in the world; even my father, dear as he is, cannot be to me what Rex is, and ever will be, my one and only love!"

She spoke out the feelings of her inmost heart with the simplicity and frankness of perfect innocence, and Anthony knew that she had spoken a truth which gave a sudden and final death-blow to all his hopes of happiness on earth. He sank back, pale and trembling; and Nina, little dreaming the cause of his change of countenance, was full of solicitude at once.

"Oh, dear Anthony, you are feeling ill again I am sure; let me ring for Nurse, she will know how to help you."

"No, Innocentia," he said, gasping for breath; "do not ring for any one; I shall be better presently. I want very much to know how it is with you and Rex; you will help me best if you will go on telling me all that has passed between you."

Innocentia, always docile, waited till she saw the color return to his lips, and then answered—"I will do as you wish, dear Anthony; and, indeed, I have been longing to tell you all about my engagement to Rex, for it has become the very life of my life, and I know that you will take an interest in whatever makes me happy, you who were my first friend."

"Ah yes, Innocentia, and I thought to be your best and dearest. Did you not bid me stay with you always?" said Anthony, with a bitter cry of distress, which pained the young girl intensely, though she did not in the least understand the reason of it.

"I did—I did! and, indeed, I hope you will. It is one of the many joys which Rex's love has brought me that now you will stay with me, not as my friend alone, but as my brother."

"It is all settled then?" asked Anthony, faintly.

"What—that Rex and I are to be married? Oh yes—that is certain. How wretched I should be if it were not!—for they say that it is only marriage which could make us belong to each other for ever, and be always together, and if I were to be parted from Rex now I should die; I could not live; he says it would be the same with himself, and I believe it, for he loves me as deeply as I love him."

"How long has this been arranged?" said Anthony, passing his hand over his burning, tearless eyes, as if he would fain have tried to persuade himself that he was asleep and dreaming.

"For more than a month; but Rex and I loved each other from the first moment we met—that happy evening which we spent together the day you both came, while you and father were talking of your affairs in here, was quite enough to show, to me at least, that there never could be any one so dear and beautiful as Rex in all the world, and he says he felt the same for me even then, and more and more every hour since."

The thought of that evening to which Innocentia alluded, when Anthony believed she had been given to him for ever, wrung from him words he did not wish to have uttered in his generous unsellishness, but they burst from his lips in spite of himself. "Oh, Innocentia, did you not know that I loved you too? Yes, loved you with all my heart and soul, long before Rex ever saw you!"

In her guilelessness she did not understand him, and answered calmly, "Yes, dear Anthony, I knew you loved me, as I hope you do still; and I am so glad of it, because you are Rex's brother—now you are mine also."

"But you," he said, with a last despairing effort; "you have often told me you loved me very much."

"And I have never changed, dear," she said, very simply. "I love my father and you as I always did; but of course when I came to know my Rex I learned that there can be but one to whom is given the deep, changeless heart's love which is bound up with the very life, and to which all other affections must give way, if ever they come in conflict with each other; but I am happy that there is no struggle in my case. I have my father still, and you as my friend; but Rex is my all—my one and only love."

(To be continued.)

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

MY REFUGE.

Let me in the valley keep
Where the Master leads his sheep,
Where the stillest waters flow,
Where the heart's ease loves to grow;
In the pastures of his choice,
Following his tender voice,
Never questioning His will,
Ever drawing closer still.
When the hills with tempest rock,
When the wolf is in the flock,
I so near him shall have pressed,
He will catch me to his breast.
Let me in his garden walk,
Where the ring-doves softly talk,
Where he notes his sparrows small,
If they fly, or if they fall;
Where the lilies, low and sweet,
Fain would kiss his sacred feet;
Where the little violet
Spinneth not with toil or fret;
Where the smiling of his face
Is the sunshine of the place;
Far from clamour, strife, and pride,
Let me here with Him abide.

"FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE."

"To keep the Gospel truth in the Church is even of greater importance than to keep peace."

I suppose no man knew better the value of peace or unity than the Apostle Paul. He was the Apostle who wrote to the Corinthians about charity. He was the Apostle who said, "Be of one mind one toward another," "Be at peace among yourselves," "Mind the same things," "The servant of God must not strive," "There is one body and there is one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." He was the Apostle who said, "I became all things to all men, that by all means I may save some." Yet see how he acted at Antioch: "I withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." He withstands Peter to the face. He publicly rebukes him. He runs the risk of all consequences that might follow or of everything that might be said by the enemies of the Church at Antioch. See above all how he writes it down for a perpetual memorial, that it never might be forgotten,—that wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the world, the public rebuke of an erring Apostle might be known and read of all men.

Now, why did he do this? Because he dreaded false doctrine,—because he knew that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,—because he would teach us that we ought to contend for the truth zealously, and fear the loss of truth more than the loss of peace. St. Paul's example is one we should do well to remember in the present day. Many people will put up with anything in religion, if they may only have a quiet life. They have a morbid dread of what they call "controversy." They are filled with a morbid fear of what they style, in a vague way, "party spirit," though they never define clearly what party spirit is. They are possessed with a morbid desire to keep the peace, and make all things smooth and pleasant, even though it be at the expense of truth. So long as they have outward order, they seem content to give up everything else. I believe they would have thought with Ahab, that Elijah was a troubler of Israel; and would have helped the princes of Judah, when they put Jeremiah in prison to stop his mouth. I have no doubt that many of these men of whom I speak, would have thought Paul at Antioch was a very imprudent man, and that he went too far.

I believe this is all wrong. We have no right to expect anything but the pure Gospel of Christ, unmixed and unadulterated,—the same Gospel that was taught by the Apostles,—to do good to the souls of men. I believe that to maintain this pure truth in the Church, men should be ready to make any sacrifice; to hazard peace, to risk dissension, and run the chance of division. They should no more tolerate false doctrine than they would tolerate sin. They should withstand any adding to or taking away from the simple message of the Gospel of Christ. For the truth's sake our Lord Jesus Christ denounced the Pharisees, though they sat in Moses' seat, and were the appointed and authorized teachers of men. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," he says eight times in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. And who shall dare to breathe a suspicion that our Lord was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Paul withstood and blamed Peter, though a brother. Where was the use of unity when pure doctrine was gone? And who shall dare to say he was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Athanasius stood out against the world to maintain the pure doctrine about the divinity of Christ, and waged a controversy with the great majority of the professing Church. And who shall dare to say he was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Luther broke the unity of the Church in which he was born, denounced the Pope and all his ways, and laid the foundation of a new teaching. And who shall dare to say that Luther was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer, the English Reformers, counselled Henry VIII., and Edward VI. to separate from Rome, and to risk the consequences of division. And who shall dare to say they were wrong?

For the truth's sake, Whitfield and Wesley, too years ago, denounced the same barren moral preaching of the clergy of their day, and went out into the highways and byways to save souls, knowing well that they would be cast