



A Child of Sorrow.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"Hands up, both of you!" he said, quite calmly, and as if the affair were merely a question of give and take. "Hands up, or I'll shoot you as you stand."

Black Jake and his mate shrank away from the revolver that covered them and with flowery oaths threw up their hands.

"That's all right," said Heroncourt, in that deadly cheerful way which seems to belong exclusively to men of his class. "Now, you two fellows walk off. You've been guilty of attempted highway robbery, and I'm warranted by the unwritten law of this land in shooting you now; and, by the sun above us, I'll do it, if I see you again on the Dartford land! You know me, and you know that I will keep my word. Out of my sight and keep out of it."

Black Jake and his companion exchanged glances; the revolver was still covering them. Black Jake's hand stole towards his pocket; but Heroncourt's eyes were as keen as a hawk's.

"Stop that!" he said, sternly. "Keep your hands still—Mr. David Jones, relieve those men of their shooters—they are dangerous."

The little man stepped forward spryly, drew the revolver from Black Jake's pocket, and, after searching the other man, said succinctly:

"No weapon, sir."

"Right," said Heroncourt. "Now, march, you two men. And remember! I do not threaten in vain."

Black Jake and his companion slouched off, muttering curses in their beards, and Heroncourt turned to the little man.

"You'd better come on with me to the camp," he said, as he put away his revolver. "We'll ride back, turn and turn."

David Jones nodded. His face was pale, his blue eyes blinked strangely. "I suppose you know you've saved my life?" he said, as if he spoke with difficulty.

"Oh, it's all in a day's work," said Heroncourt. "But I like your pluck. Consider yourself engaged on the Dartford station, Mr. David Jones. Come on."

Mr. David Jones eyed his new master curiously, but all he said was: "Thank you, sir."

CHAPTER XXIX

Heroncourt rode on slowly to the lumber-station, with his new man walking by the side of his horse. It is not usual to question your hands about their past, so the conversation was only of a general character: about the seasons, the weather, the cattle, and so on.

When they reached the camp, Heroncourt found the men at work—very hard work: they had either seen or heard him approach. He inspected the camp, talked to the men, then suddenly he said:

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"Who brought the liquor up here?" There was a dead silence; the sound of the axes was stilled, and they turned and looked at him like men caught in a trap.

"Ah, well, never mind," said Heroncourt. "Just bring it out here. I am rather in a hurry, so don't keep me waiting. I'll give you five minutes; if it is not produced by then, I'll discharge the camp. It would be foolish of you to compel me to do that, for you are getting higher wages than you would get anywhere else, and there is a long spell of work."

The men exchanged glances and murmured amongst themselves, then two of them brought a couple of cases, one unbroken, the contents of the other partly disposed of.

"Thank you," said Heroncourt. "Now, see here; I'm not a total abstainer myself, and I like a glass of good ale and a drink of whiskey; but you chaps are not content with moderation; you go on a regular bender. The work stops, and you take to card-playing and fighting." He nodded at two or three men, whose black eyes and bruised faces were indicative of a recent fight. "In fact, you can't be trusted with an unlimited supply, and I'm obliged to cut it off. Two of you fellows come and smash these cases for me."

There was a murmur—a sullen murmur—and dark looks were directed at Heroncourt, who sat at ease on his horse and smiled down at them easily.

"I don't want to rob any man," he said. "The value of this stuff shall be scored up to your credit; but away it goes, and at once. Bring your axes, you two, and make short work of it."

He nodded to two of the most scowling—there was something in the cool, insolent manner which rendered disobedience impossible; and, after a glance or two at their companions, they stepped forward reluctantly enough and smashed the cases and their contents with their axes.

"That's all right; thank you," said Heroncourt, as if they had cut down a tree or removed one at his orders.

For the first time the little man's eyes looked evasive and shifty.

"No offence, sir," he said. "Seemed to me you had a kind of look of a new chum about you."

"Well, as it happens, you are right," said Heroncourt, checking a sigh.

"It's wonderful what different kinds of men come out here," remarked David Jones, casually. "Things go wrong in England or they have a stroke of bad luck."

Heroncourt sighed outright at this thrust.

"Yes," he said, almost to himself. "Some of us have a stroke of bad luck. I hope that's not your case?" he asked.

"Oh, I was born unlucky," said the little man. "I'm a kind of Jonah, that's what I am. I've only got to go aboard a concern, and it goes down straight away." He laughed with a kind of grim humor. "After that, you'll be sorry for taking me on, sir."

"Oh, no," said Heroncourt, with a smile. "I don't believe in modern Jonahs; and I'm thinking that there's not very much in luck; the trouble a man runs up against in his life he has made for himself: in most cases, anyhow."

"I daresay," assented David Jones. They rode on for the rest of the way almost in silence; for Heroncourt was thinking of the bad luck that had robbed him of Maida and wrecked his life. At the hut, the master and the new man parted, David Jones going to the men's quarters and Heroncourt into the hut.

"I've got a new hand, Lucy," he said. "Picked him up on the road; he seems a decent old chap, and he's a rare plucked one. You and Mrs. Towser must give an eye to him and see that he is comfortable; he's not so rough as some of them."

Lucy threw up her chin.

"Oh, we'll take care of him, sir," she said. "He isn't the only one in the camp who wants taking care of; you've scarcely been out of that saddle for twenty-four hours; and I suppose it wouldn't take much to send you into it again."

She went down on her knees to take off his long boots; but Heroncourt laid his hand on her shoulder and held her back.

"That's not the work for a woman, Lucy," he said, with the smile which every woman likes to see on a man's face.

She looked up at him with a strange intensity in her child-like eyes and the blood rose slowly to her pretty face.

"Why not?" she asked, in a low voice. "There's nothing you wouldn't do."

"I've the bad luck to be a man, Lucy," he laughed.



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are an Englishman, I take it?" David Jones looked straight before him with his expressionless, pale-blue eyes, and nodded his head.

"Yes, a long while," he replied. "Long enough to reckon up the kind of gentry we've just left. Some of them would make trouble if they could; but you took 'em by surprise, sir!"

Heroncourt laughed.

"It was the only way," he said. "I wanted them to see that I wasn't afraid of them."

"No; I shouldn't think you were afraid of many things," David Jones said, slowly. "And yet I'm thinking that you haven't been out here long."

"Why do you think that?" asked Heroncourt, with some little surprise.

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"I've the bad luck to be a man, Lucy," he laughed.

She still knelt on her knee, eyeing the boots wistfully, but Baxter came in with his military step, and, with a little moue and a shrug of her shoulders she arose and went on preparing the supper.

David Jones fell into his place with the ready adaptability of the colonist. Heroncourt had taken a fancy to the man, and whenever he came across him stopped and passed the time of day and spoke to him about his work. There was no doubt about his usefulness; he might have been a Jonah, but he was quick at turning his hand to anything, and Heroncourt found that he was as absolutely reliable as Gosford himself; he understood cattle and sheep, could ride like an Australian, and soon won the good graces of the women-folk by his readiness to do the numerous little things in and about the house which come more easily to the man than the woman. But he was not particularly sociable with the men, and though he of course ate his meals with them, preferred to smoke his pipe in the solitude outside. Heroncourt several times came upon him sitting under a tree with his hands clasping his knees, his hat over his brows and his whole appearance that of a man lost in thought.

To all appearances things were going smoothly at the camp, and Heroncourt was inclined to think that the threatened trouble had passed away like a summer cloud; but one evening while he was taking his go-to-bed pipe in the parlour, he was struck in a vague way by the quietness of the men on the other side of the partition. As a rule they were given to loud talking and laughing; but to-night their voices were lowered and there were long pauses in their conversation, pauses broken by a few words spoken almost in a whisper.

"The men are very quiet to-night, Lucy," he remarked, as she came into the room with his hot water.

She stopped to listen, with her head on one side.

"Yes, they are," she said. "They have been like that for the last two or three nights; ever since Jake and a couple of men came down from the camp."

"Oh, has Jake been here?" said Heroncourt, refilling his pipe.

"Yes," said Lucy, who did not know that Jake had been dismissed and threatened. "I saw him at the back of the yard, talking to some of the men. He turned his back and slouched his hat as if he didn't want me to see him; but it was bright moonlight and I saw him right enough, though he was gone the next minute. That was three nights ago."

"Ah! let me know if you see him again," said Heroncourt.

As he spoke, the men began to talk and laugh loudly, and it at once struck Heroncourt that, as neither he nor Lucy had spoken in a whisper, the men had heard them, and were noisy with intention.

After she had left the room, he went out quietly and patrolled round the house; but everything was as usual, and there was no one lurking about. Just as he was turning the corner, he came upon David Jones, who was sitting in his favourite attitude, with his back leaning against the rough log wall.

He touched his hat to Heroncourt, and Heroncourt, making him a sign, walked a little distance, and David Jones, after a cautious glance round him, and a lapse of a minute or two, rose, stretched himself, and strolled casually after him. (To be Continued.)

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POLISH TROOPS GO ON

LONDON.—A Zurich despatch states that a telegram from the Polish Legation in London, that not merely single Polish Legionaries refused to take military oath, but that including four Infantry, one Artillery and part of the forces under General Skrzywicki, were ready to march to the front. It is believed that serious consequences will ensue. The next sitting of the Reichstag is expected to be of significant and important amount of friction between Austria, that the permitted the publication of the ports in the Czarow abroad. A Copenhagen July 26th stated that the ski, organizer and founder of the Polish Legion, while attempting to flee to the United States, was arrested by German authorities. General Skrzywicki marks the culmination of the Polish desire to form an independent army and the German insist that Polish forces be under German control.

ROMANIAN

LONDON.—The Romanian War ports: "On the 27th, the Valleys of the Casin advanced some kilometers, and captured the villages of Sovani, Negriileto, Topesia, and Calcau. We again took some motor batteries of the enemy."

SMALL ENCOUNTER

LONDON.—The text of the official issued to-day says: "A small thing of special importance on the British front, in small encounters between the enemy's patrol and our forces."

VIOLENT ARTILLERY

PARIS.—Last night there were violent duels in the Alsace regions of the French. French official statement afternoon says that German attacks at various points were repulsed. The statement reads: "The marked by rather fierce actions, notably in the sectors of Launois and Epernay, in the region of the Marne, and on both sides of the River Meuse. Surprise, the enemy at various points, but we have repulsed by our fire."

BRITISH CRUISER

LONDON.—The British cruiser Albatross, of 1,000 tons, has been sunk. No further news is yet available. The Admiralty announced that the crew of the Albatross were lost on the 27th.

PRESS CRITICISM

LONDON.—The statements by the special Chancellor and Count of the Austro-Hungarian Government, which are regarded as the most serious in the history of the news columns of the press. They are generally editorially as an indication of the future of Belgium, in the desire for peace by the Austro-German peace.

