

A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY MISS MURLOCK.

CHAPTER IV.

There is something peculiar about our fire. Most likely the quantity of fir-wood we use for this region gives them that curious aromatic smell. How I love fir trees of any sort in any season of the year! How I used to delight myself in our pine-woods, strolling in and out among the holes of the trees so straight, strong and unchangeable—grave in summer, and green in winter! How I have stood listening to the wind in their tops, and looking for the fir-cones, wonderful treasures! which they had dropped on the soft dry mossy ground. What glorious fun it was to fill my pinafore—or in more dignified days—my black silk apron—with fir-cones; to heap a superstitious store of them in a corner of the school-room, and burn them, one by one on the top of the fire. How they did blaze!

concerned hypocrisies on earth than many of your "interior sinners." If I cannot think of something or somebody better than myself I will just give up thinking. The expression of two lines, which I have made up, fully so successfully that they seem to be natural; like our girls' new cloaks, which everybody imagines sober gray, till a lifting of the arms shows the other side of the cloth to be scarlet. That reminds me by what a blaze of scarlet Captain Treherne appeared at our modest dinner-table. He was engaged to a full-dress party at the camp, he said, and must leave immediately after dinner—which he didn't. Was his company much missed, I wonder? Two here could well have spared it; and these were Colin Granton and Francis Charteris.

How odd that until to-night Captain Treherne should have had no notion that his cousin was engaged to our Penelope, or even visited at Rockmount. Odd, too, that other people never told him. But it is such an old affair, and we were not likely to make the solemn communication ourselves; besides, we never knew much about the youth, except that he was one of Francis's fine relations. Yet, to think that Francis all these years should never have even hinted to these said fine relations that he was engaged to our Penelope!

"Was he ever hurt—Dr. Urquhart, I mean?" "Once or twice, slightly, while looking after his wounded on the field. But he made no account of it, and always got up directly. You see, he is such an exceptionally brave man in all things—such a quiet temper—has himself in such thorough control, that he has twice the chance in keeping in health that most men have, especially our fellows there, who, he declared, died quite as much of eating, drinking, and smoking, as they did of Russian bullets." "Your friend must be a remarkable man."

I want to know where my two sisters and Miss Emery were sitting over the fire. Miss Emery was talking very fast, and Penelope listening with a slightly scornful lip—the profess that ladies, middle-aged ladies particularly, are such very stupid company. Lisabel wore her good-natured smile, always the same to everybody. "I was quite pleased," Miss Emery was saying, "to notice how cordially Captain Treherne and Mr. Charteris met; I always understood there was a sort of— a coolness, in short. Very natural. As his nephew and next heir after the Captain, Sir William might have done more for Mr. Charteris. So people said, and only that one son. You have been to Treherne Court, Miss Johnston?" Penelope abruptly answered "No;" and Lisabel added amiably that she seldom went from home—papa liked to have us at Rockmount all the year round.

You may believe or not, but he really did it." "How, when, and where?" "In the conservatory, under the big orange-tree—a few minutes before he left." I said, since she was so sure of it, perhaps she would have no objection to tell me the precise words in which he "did it." "Oh dear, no, not the smallest objection. We were joking about a bit of orange-blossom Colin had given me, and Treherne wanted me to throw away; but I said 'No, I like the scent, and mean to wear a wreath of natural orange flowers when I was married.' Upon which he grew quite furious, and said it would drive him mad if I ever married any man but him. Then he got hold of my hand, and—the usual thing, you know." She blushed a little. "It ended by my telling him he had better speak to papa, and he said he should do so to-morrow. That's all."

GEORGE CHEBBARD