

"He has not cared for anybody else since he left you, darling."

"But how do you know?"

"I know. And I have come to take you down to tea. Dry your eyes and come with me."

She dries her eyes obediently; she is just as much of a child still as she was three years ago. In other things she is improved out of all resemblance to her former self. In appearance, she has, if anything, gained in attractiveness, while in manner she is as different from the girl I brought down to Woodhay three years ago, as she is in education and refinement of speech. I have taken pains to make Gerard's wife as beautiful mentally as she is outwardly, for his sake, and I have been rewarded by a most unexpected measure of success. Lily is as fair as the flower she is called after—the touched surroundings of her neglected childhood have not smothered the whiteness of her soul.

A little wayward she is still, a little willful even, but to me she is always obedience itself. I think she always would be to any one she loved.

And she loves me with a perfect passion of devotion. Whether she would love me so much if she knew how Gerard once loved me, I know not—I have taken care that she shall never hear that story from me or from any one else.

"What shall I do if he hates me, Rosalie?"

I am holding one of the small trembling hands, smoothing back the tendrils of red gold hair out of the velvety sapphire blue eyes. The beauty of the wistful face sends a strange pang to my heart.

"Hate you, darling? As if he could!"

"He never loved me as I loved him, Rosalie."

"Then he will fall in love with you to-morrow," I assure her, smiling. She smiles too at that, a very childlike smile.

"If I could only think it—"

"My darling, you may be sure of it. He will not be able to help himself."

"Am I so different from what I was then?"

The deep velvety eyes search my face wistfully, the color burns deeper and deeper in the rounded cheeks.

"Just the difference that he would wish to see, Lily. You were a child then, darling; now you are a woman, ready to lend a woman's earnest helpful life."

"If I may only help him, Rosalie?"

"You shall help him. See how he has got on—what a name he has made for himself! And if he has done so much alone, what will he not do with you to cheer and encourage him?"

She sighs, as if the picture oppressed her with its weight of felicity.

"What have you been doing up here all the afternoon, Lily?"

"Looking at myself in the glass," she answers at once.

"What a child you are!" I say, laughing.

"It was childish, wasn't it? But, if you knew, Rosalie—"

"I do know, darling—I know all about it."

It is I who sigh this time, remembering a girl in a blue dress, with a bunch of violets nestling over her heart—a girl who had looked up into Gerard Baxter's dark eyes and "loved him with that love which was her doom."

"Come down and have some tea," I say, drawing her out of the room with me.

I love the child, for Gerard's sake, but it has cost me many a pang to watch her growing loveliness and think whose arms will clasp her, whose lips will kiss her by and by when I am forgotten! The pain is very vague now, a dimness has come over it of late. But I know that it is only in absence—that the very sound of Gerard Baxter's voice will bring it to life again, to haunt me with its old tormenting anguish of unrest.

"I shall know to-morrow," the girl says dreamily, as we cross the hall together. "I shall know to-morrow."

"And I," I echo, but not aloud—"I too shall know to-morrow."

We find Olive and Ronald Scott apparently exchanging confidences in the sunshine, Ronald with his elbow on the window sill, looking up, and Olive looking down. They cease talking when we make our appearance, which rather rouses my suspicion, but Olive looks so demurely unconscious that I may be mistaken in supposing she was telling tales of me. And Ronald looks so curiously at Lily as we come forward to the window that I half fancy they must have been talking of her.

## CHAPTER XV.

"Oh, Rosalie, why have you put on that hideous dress?"

"Hideous?" I repeat, looking down at it. "Do you think it hideous, Lily?"

"Why, everybody does! It is about the only unbecoming dress you have, Rosalie—Mrs. Lockhart is always wishing somebody would steal it, or burn it, or something."

"Oh, Olive never admired my taste in dress?"

"But it is not becoming to you, indeed, Rosalie."

"My dear, I have ceased to study my appearance"—which is not true, as I have studied it particularly this evening.

"And I wanted you to look well," Lily says, sighing, as she considers me.

"If you look well, that is all that is of any consequence."

"Do I?" the girl asks wistfully.

She looks exquisite in her dress of snowy flama softly ruffled with Spanish lace.

(To be continued.)

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