

Life's Chequerboard.

(Continued from page 15)

likely enough stole away to join him. I wish I could think better of the lad," a sudden pitiful crack in the thin, high voice, "but since I can't, the only thing is to try not to think of him, and sometimes I succeed. But spare me another talk like this; I can't bear it, indeed."

The little ring-laden hands were quivering though tightly clasped. The faint colour had gone from the soft, withered face, leaving it blanched like a frosted rose. The weight of her years, usually so gracefully and gallantly carried, seemed suddenly to have descended upon her like a crushing burden.

CHAPTER XIV.

Could she bear such another talk herself, Lesley wondered, when, having soothed Lady Marchmont as best she could and left her to rest, she returned to the drawing-room. By tacit consent Adrian Skene's name had dropped into silence among those who had once known him, and Lesley, too, had striven to raise barriers against memory, though every now and again it rose in a flood and swept her feeble defences away like so many straws. But Lady Marchmont was right, though her philosophy, as Lesley had just had proof, did not extend far below the surface. At the least, it was unwise to look back too much.

Seeking for something, anything, to distract her thoughts from past blackness and from present doubt, Lesley picked up a book of poems, of which she had heard much, rather too much she was inclined to think, during her few days in town, but amid the quick succession of engagements she had not yet had time to look at it. This was her opportunity. At last she might have a quiet hour, as Agatha Kenyon had declared that she had a hundred things to do that afternoon.

At first Lesley turned the pages rather languidly. Mrs. Kenyon and some of her friends had rather wearied her by their enthusiasm and their speculations as to the unknown author of a book which had aroused keen interest, such as, truth to tell, modern poetry but rarely does. Her thoughts at first were not on the words, but first the music of a line caught her ear, then a thought struck home, and presently she found herself reading with a rapt, almost painful, eagerness.

The poems seemed the utterances of one wandering in dry places, seeking rest and finding none. The cry of a soul ground down under the wheels of blind, unheeding Circumstance into black depths beyond the reach of justice—bare justice, if indeed justice or mercy existed in the chaos of life, where the hopes and aims and ambitions of men, their futile struggles towards a possible good, or fierce snatches at a petty, present prize seemed but the sport and plaything of Chance. At times there broke forth a fierce arraignment of a world into which man had been called only to suffer—the indictment of the poet-philosopher of the East:

"What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A convulsive Something to resent the yoke."

As Lesley afterwards walked slowly along between the swathes of westerling sunlight, falling athwart the path between the boles of the trees, she ceased setting up her futile defences, and let memory have its way for once. On that fatal day when Adrian Skene had left the

library a disgraced man she had awakened to the full knowledge of her love for him, knew that had she been free to do it, she would willingly have followed him even through loneliness and dishonour. She was not ashamed of her love. It had been given all unconsciously as a free gift long before she knew of any barrier between her cousin and herself, but now she knew—ah, there to her pure heart and honest mind lay the difference.

The shock of Alys's flight had forced Lesley from her inward struggles to seek self-forgetfulness without. She had thrown herself with new zeal into the affairs of the estate, those cares which attend "great possessions." Still more earnestly she set herself to consider the wants of the many lives dependent upon her, which she had now full power to relieve. In time she had her reward. She found distraction at first, then growing interest, and at times even forgetfulness by helping others. When Sir Neil had that day asked his pointed question, she had been able to answer him quite honestly, so she believed, that no one—and each knew to whom that vague term applied—stood any longer between them. That page of life was closed for ever, and conscience kept the seal.

An approaching footstep made her glance round.

For a time she had been vaguely conscious of a distant figure far down the long green perspective, but slowly drawing nearer. He was close at hand now, and as, without interest or curiosity, but instinctively seeking momentary escape from a too insistent question, she mechanically looked up. The ground heaved under her feet, the tall trees, soaring motionless into the serene sky, rocked and swayed—there before her, unless she were mad or dreaming, with the yellow evening sunlight full upon his face, was her Cousin Adrian!

"Adrian!" Her cry was as involuntary as the sudden leap of all her pulses.

"Adrian, would you have passed me by?"

At such moments in life what is there to say?

"Ghosts cannot speak unless they are spoken to, so we have always been told," said Adrian with a faint smile. "I am only re-visiting the glimpses of the moon. I did not expect to cross the path of the living, and least of all yours."

"But ghosts must answer if they are challenged," said Lesley, catching up his words to relieve the intolerable difficulty of speech. "Adrian, tell me about yourself."

"Myself?" with a dreary little laugh, and Lesley repented her impulsive question.

"I have lived because I haven't died—I've been 'going to and fro on the earth and walking up and down in it.' Perhaps that's more descriptive than exact," went on Adrian in the same indifferent fashion. "I've been doing some foreign correspondent work, some friends of the old days, good souls who asked no questions, helped me to get it. It has served me well. I only came back a day or so ago to look for a fresh berth. But you?" The life stirred in his tone again, though he did not look up. "I suppose by this time I may congratulate you, or rather Sir Neil Wedderburne?"

"No," said Lesley gravely, and in that moment she knew that her question—God help and pity her—was answered to the full. "He deserves more than I can ever give him." And again there was silence between them.

"And—and Alys, where is she?" faltered Lesley at last.

At the name a sudden change swept

Makes Sturdy, Robust Youngsters

Every Morning Give 'Em Plenty of

SHREDDED WHEAT

and see how they'll enjoy it and grow strong and active on it. Makes bone, muscle, good teeth and brains. Contains all the food elements of the whole wheat, prepared in a digestible form. Makes red blood. Nothing so good for the youngsters.

Biscuit and Milk for Breakfast. Triscuit Toast for Luncheon.
All Grocers, 13c a carton, 2 for 25c.

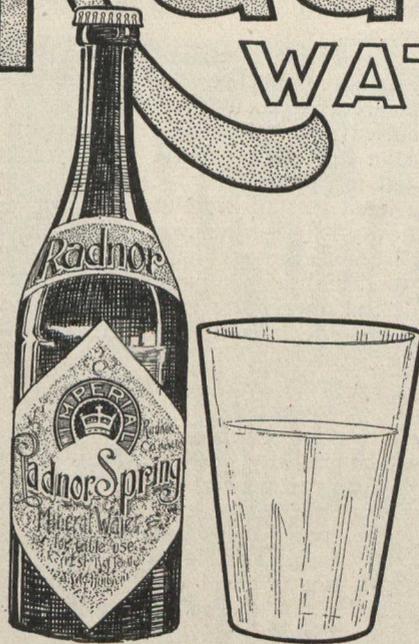
75



OWAN'S
COCOA

Gives Health and Strength to all who use it.

Radnor WATER



RADNOR

blends perfectly with the most delicious wines and liquors.

As a blender with claret or champagne it has no equal.

For sale at all leading Grocers, Restaurants, and Clubs.



CABLE ADDRESS, "CANDEC"

The Canadian Detective Bureau

LIMITED
MAX J. KELLER, GEN. MANAGER
WILLIAM H. WELSH, GEN. SUPT.

GENERAL OFFICES: TORONTO, ONT.
Crown Life Building—Queen and Victoria Sts.

BRANCH OFFICES
OTTAWA, ONT., Trust Bldg., Sparks St. MONTREAL, P.Q., Bank of Ottawa Bldg.
WINNIPEG, MAN., Bank of Hamilton Bldg.
ST. JOHN, N.B., Pugsley Bldg. HALIFAX, N.S., St. Paul Bldg.
VANCOUVER, B.C., Inns of Court Bldg. DAWSON, Y.T., N.C. Bldg.
NEW YORK, N.Y. LONDON, ENG. PARIS, FRANCE

This Bureau is prepared to undertake all classes of legitimate detective work for railroads, banks, insurance companies, other corporations and private individuals.

Our offices being located from one end of the Dominion to the other give us specially good facilities for handling business for clients with connection throughout the various provinces.