

saw the lifeless form of Mr. Berkeley, of him who had that morning left them in his usual health.

The crushing blow dealt by the hand of Stephen Osburne, added to the ruin of his affairs, had brought on an apoplectic fit during his drive home. He was not, however, dead, as was at first supposed. Medical aid was quickly summoned, but in vain; the physician's efforts to recover him proved fruitless; he died, not unconscious of the presence of his family, but unable to express his sympathy with their grief or his own mental agony.

The chief cause of Mr. Berkeley's sudden death was not long unknown to his family. About an hour after Stephen Osburne left the counting-house he encountered Mark Berkeley in St. Paul street. Suddenly stopping him while a gleam of fiendish joy flashed across his pale face, he told him the blighting tale of his father's baseness and his mother's shame.

Poor Mark, overwhelmed with the cruel tidings, hurried to his father's counting-house to communicate to him the disgraceful information he had just received, hoping that he would be able to refute the calumny.

Finding that Mr. Berkeley had suddenly returned home, Mark hastily followed him, arriving there to find confirmation of his worst fears in the sudden death of his father, brought on, he knew instinctively, by the shock of the discovery of his long hidden disgraceful secret. It was from the lips of her favourite son that Mrs. Berkeley heard the story of her own disgrace in the eyes of the world, and of the infamy now attached to her name. The wish to leave Montreal, to flee from the odium of society, to avoid meeting those fashionable friends who would no longer acknowledge her acquaintance, now took possession of the distracted mind of Mrs. Berkeley. With intense grief and astonishment Thérèse and Hilda became aware of the dreadful state of affairs. Mark, in his stormy indignation, had communicated to them the ignominious story circulating about the Berkeleys through Montreal.

Thérèse raved, declaring she would never live with her mother again. The girl's pride had received a severe blow. She felt the humiliation, the degradation of their position most keenly. This intense indignation and resentment manifested by her children was perhaps the severest punishment Mrs. Berkeley could have endured. To sink in their estimation, to be regarded no longer by them with affection and respect was more than she could bear. In the calm sunshine of her peaceful security the storm had suddenly burst, the sin of her life was revealed, its punishment had come at last.

CHAPTER XL.

GRANT BERKELEY AVENGED.

THE day after Mr. Berkeley's death Grant Berkeley arrived unexpectedly in Montreal from Europe. His pursuit of his wife and Mr. Castonell had been at last successful. He had followed them from place to place, often arriving in a city just after they had left, and as often pursuing them in the wrong direction. But the deep purpose of vengeance in his heart never slumbered, it bore him up under all disappointments and discouragement, for Grant Berkeley's was a passionate, revengeful nature, and from the moment he heard of Pauline's desertion he determined never to rest satisfied till his deed of vengeance was accomplished, swearing to wipe out his dishonour with the blood of her seducer.

Weeks passed on, Grant never faltering in the pursuit, never wavering in his determination, and as yet his efforts to discover the retreat of the fugitives were vain. Pauline was aware her husband was on their trail. The very day they sailed from New York for Havre she had seen him in Broadway; the carriage conveying her and Castonell to the steamer had passed him unobserved in the throng of vehicles in that crowded thoroughfare. The altered expression of her husband's face revealed to Pauline that he was aware of her elopement and had followed her and Castonell to New York. At first seeing him she supposed he had just arrived from Europe; but the gloom, the resentment, the suffering stamped on that pale face convinced her he had heard of her desertion. If he should happen to look for them on board the French steamer, what a fearful exposé there would be! Trembling with apprehension her face blanched at the very thought. She remained in her state-room with Castonell until the passengers were all on board and the steamer had put off from the wharf. What a relief when she found that Grant Berkeley had not made his appearance!

On landing at Havre they crossed France by the shortest route to the Swiss frontier, seeking an asylum from pursuit in a secluded valley of the Alps where they hoped to remain unmolested.

Two months were passed quietly in this charming retreat shut in from the busy world by the towering Alps, and they were beginning to feel quite secure, when unexpectedly the injured husband wandered into this secluded valley, and their brief period of guilty happiness was ended.

It was a hot sultry afternoon in September, Pauline was taking her siesta at the little Alpine inn where she was at present domiciled, and Castonell had strolled out to a romantic spot to enjoy a cigar and contemplate the magnificent scene around him. He had just left the inn by one road when a traveller drove up to the door from an opposite direction. This traveller was Grant Berkeley, and with a start of glad surprise he recognised in the elegant looking pedestrian the man of whom he had been in pursuit so long. How unexpected was the meeting! It was by mere accident Grant Berkeley was crossing the Alps by this route: It did seem to him as if the hand of retribution had led him to this very place, and his heart throbbed wildly at the thought of gratified revenge.

Leisurely Castonell strolled along the winding way which led by the brink of a brawling stream, the waters of which were supplied by a tiny cascade leaping from height to height down the mountain side. Little did he think who was on his track, following unseen at a little distance. On reaching a kind of natural grotto formed by some beetling cliffs, he flung himself down on the verdant turf beneath the jutting rocks which sheltered him from the powerful heat of the sun shining high above in the blue heavens. Castonell lit a cigar and prepared to enjoy an hour of luxurious repose in that cool retreat, surrounded by the magnificent mountains, his thoughts dwelling fondly on Pauline, as he contrasted his present delightful mode of life with the drudgery imposed upon him by his clerical duties. Soon a footfall was heard on the flowery sward and a moment afterwards a man stood before him with a fierce vengeful face and a brace of revolvers in his hand.

The heart of Castonell stood still as he recognized that wrathful countenance, and the darkness of the grave seemed to shut out the light of Heaven.

But Grant Berkeley's intention was not to shoot him as he lay there unarmed,—he would at least give him a chance for his life. In the hoarse tones of passion he told him to defend himself, offering him one of the deadly weapons in his hand. The next minute the two men stood face to face six paces apart, the signal to fire being the dropping of Grant's handkerchief. It was given, and two shots were heard resounding through the silent valley and echoing from the tree-clad heights above.

Castonell's agitation from surprise—it might be fright—made his hand unsteady, and his ball only slightly wounded the arm of Grant Berkeley, while his penetrated his antagonist's heart. With a sudden bound he fell lifeless to the earth, his blood crimsoning the spot where he had so lately stretched himself for enjoyment and repose. But all that was ended now,—the punishment of his sin had not tarried, and his guilt-stained soul had suddenly passed to its account.

Taking from his pocket a card Grant wrote above his name engraved on it the words—"I am revenged, the villain's blood has wiped out the stain of my dishonour." This he placed in the stiffening fingers of the dead man, conveying intelligence in that way to Pauline that it was by his hand her lover had fallen. He then hastened back to the inn where he had left the carriage which conveyed him to the valley, and continued his journey. The rest of the autumn and most of the winter he spent on the continent of Europe, travelling from city to city, seeking in amusement and change of scene to divert his mind and recover something of his former happiness. He returned to Montreal in February, arriving just in time to attend his father's funeral, and lay his remains in the picturesque resting-place of Mount Royal Cemetery.

The ruin and disgrace which had fallen on the Berkeleys was less keenly felt by Grant than by the other members of the family. The mind becomes accustomed to suffering, and the intensity of his own sorrow for the desertion of the wife he idolized seemed to blunt the bitterness of this new trouble. Instead of flying from Montreal like the others he determined to remain and wind up the affairs of the firm, hoping to save sufficient from the wreck of their fortune for the support of his mother and Thérèse. Mark Berkeley, declaring he would not stay in Montreal after such disgrace to be snubbed by his brother officers, and encounter the withering contempt of his former associates, sold his commission and emigrated to California. But he did not go alone; he persuaded Blanche Osburne to share his fortunes, and their wedding was quietly celebrated in the little church of St. John the Evangelist, Mrs. Castonell and Maud alone witnessing the ceremony.

On leaving Montreal Mrs. Berkeley retired to a village in the Eastern Townships, there to hide herself in obscurity from the contumely of the world. Thither Hilda and Thérèse accompanied her, the latter with concealed reluctance, so deep was her resentment towards the guilty mother who had caused such degradation to her family. Some weeks passed on, a miserable time to all. Thérèse drooped like a crushed flower beaten down by the rude blast of adversity. Hilda, tried by every means in her power to comfort the wretched girl, and soothe the still greater sufferings of

her deeply-erring mother, whose health was rapidly declining, though Thérèse, shut up in her own selfish sorrow, scarcely noticed that mother's altered looks, caring little whether she lived or died.

With uncomplaining patience Mrs. Berkeley bore it all—the neglect of Claribel, the desertion of Mark, the resentful coldness of Thérèse—her deep feeling of self-abasement, the repentance and remorse that had come at last making her take it all as her punishment, richly deserved.

The hour of release from earthly suffering came at length, and the penitent woman passed to her account, glad to close her eyes upon a world where, for the last few months, she had experienced a life-time of sorrow.

After her mother's death, Thérèse Berkeley went to live with her sister Claribel, in New York, and in time forgot her brief sorrow in the pleasures of the gay world to which Claribel's wealth procured an easy access. The beauty of Thérèse gained her many admirers, and she, as well as her sister, married a millionaire.

This dispersion of the Berkeley family again left Hilda Tremayne without a home. By the advice of her cousin Grant, she went to reside with Mrs. Castonell and her daughter. Edith's school had not prospered according to her expectations, and she gladly gave it up to become the companion and chaperone of Miss Tremayne. Her fortune, not having been placed in Mr. Berkeley's hands, was safe, and Hilda fortunately escaped the ruin involving her uncle's family.

CHAPTER XLI.

A DEATH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

IT had a very picturesque appearance that grey, old house on the Richelieu, some miles from St. John's, where Miss Tremayne re-ided with Mrs. Castonell and her daughter Maud. She had removed there from Montreal the summer after Mrs. Berkeley's death, the retirement of the country being more in accordance with the sadness of her feelings—the melancholy that had seized upon her after her return from Toronto, and the departure of Sir Gervase Montague for England, to which country he proceeded immediately after reaching Quebec, his regiment having been ordered home during his trip in Western Canada. The house was situated on a grassy eminence which rose gradually from the river, sheltered behind by a grove of tall pine, but open in front to the beautiful view its elevated site commanded of the fine country along the Richelieu, and the bold peaks of Rouville, Belœil, and Ste. Thérèse towering in the distance.

In a cheerful apartment in that quaint-fashioned, French mansion, three ladies are sitting at breakfast; the hour is morning, the romantic scene without is bathed in glorious sunshine, through the open windows, looking out upon the river, steals the summer breeze redolent of delicious fragrance from the tastefully-laid-out parterre in front.

The ladies are not strangers to the reader. That gentle-looking lady seated before the elegant breakfast equipage is Mrs. Castonell. Opposite to her sits Miss Tremayne, the mistress of the mansion, and beside her, in that beautiful girl of nineteen, the reader may easily recognize Maud Castonell.

Four years have passed since Mrs. Berkeley's death. Hilda looks older and sadder. The secret sorrow, the vain regret, are graving their traces on her countenance, stealing away its fresh, radiant beauty. The only face at that breakfast-table which wears a bright, happy expression, is Maud Castonell's. She has yet felt few of life's ills, its bitterness has not yet been experienced. She was too young at the time of her father's desertion to feel it very deeply, and Maud had never felt much affection for him. His harshness caused that.

To be continued.

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