

## Choice Literature.

## LAD'S LOVE.

BY L. B. COCROFT.

(Continued.)

Without knowing all the details I knew enough to feel sure that there was some truth in Lillian's surmise. Rex, never studious at the best of times, had fallen in with an objectionable set during the last year of his college life. There were stories of card and billiard parties kept up to all hours of night or morning, and rumour had it that Rex had won and lost a good deal of money on such occasions. Harsh the Doctor could not find it in his heart to be, but still, conduct such as this could not be passed over in silence. Rex had resented his brother's words of remonstrance and sad entreaty, and, finally, instead of returning to Bythessea, had gone to the West. There, out of Humphrey's reach, he might either be coming to his better self, or plunging yet deeper into the mire. None of us could do more than hazard a guess as to his probable course, for he was easily swayed, whether for good or evil, and was equally capable of redeeming his past or ruining his future. He had professed sorrow for the faults of which the doctor had accused him, and had promised amendment; but he had been silent regarding various transactions of which his brother was ignorant, and it was only after Rex's departure that they had come to light. Such a beginning was not likely to inspire his friends with any great degree of confidence in his sincerity, nor did it lead Humphrey to be sanguine as to the sequel.

"One would think," went on Lillian, after a pause, "that Mr. Tracey could not find it in his heart to grieve the doctor, who seems to think that there is no one in the world quite like him. And you know how hard it is to be disappointed in those we love. I wish I dared to tell Dr. Shirley how sorry I am."

"Tell him," I spoke impulsively—"tell him; he needs a kind word sometimes just as much as any of us."

"I believe I will," was Lillian's answer; and later in the day she did so.

I had guessed, when I gave the advice, what the result would be; consequently it was no surprise to me to see the doctor coming up his garden path in the twilight with Lillian's arm through his own. If I had not already known the story I should have guessed it all as he bent over her, drawing her close to him for a moment, and then, turning, put her in his mother's arms, while Lillian's head went down on Mrs. Tracey's shoulder to be lifted again presently for her tender kiss and blessing.

My husband having been called to New York, I was to spend the night at my friend's, but after seeing that little tableau I had lingered on my own piazza until the dusk had deepened into darkness. Then I went over, and found Mrs. Tracey alone. Lillian had gone down the street on an errand, and the doctor had been summoned several miles away to the scene of an explosion which had occurred that afternoon.

"It is rather hard on him to have to go there to-night of all nights," said his mother regretfully. "Well," she added, "it has come all right at last, though I can hardly believe it even now. If it had been Rex, I could have understood it easily enough; but Humphrey, who would have thought Humphrey one to win a girl's heart?"

"Anybody who knows him might think it," I answered warmly. "Why should you be surprised? Surely she would have been blind, if she had failed to see that his love is worth taking."

"But the things best worth having are not always those which we most value," said Mrs. Tracey. "I grant you that any woman might feel touched and honoured by such a devotion as he offers to Lillian, and yet—and yet—"

"And yet you are surprised to find a woman wise enough to know, after a summer's close companionship, that he is one among a thousand," I said, a trifle indignantly.

"He is; indeed he is. But you know that every girl likes to throw the halo of a little romance around her lover, and Humphrey, with all his goodness, is but a homely subject for such work."

"I should like to alter the definition of that word 'homely,'" I retorted. "From our use of it one might imagine a home to be the spot where all that is harsh and rude and unlovely centres. And yet, surely, our homely joys are our holiest, homely sorrows sink deepest into our hearts, homely friends are our nearest and dearest, and homely duties make, for most of us, the best work of our lives. Homely—it ought to mean the next best thing to heavenly."

Mrs. Tracey had no chance to reply, for just then Lillian came in, and slipped into her favourite seat, a footstool at the old lady's feet.

There was silence for a few moments after that. Lillian's thoughts were doubtless busy with the future, as I think Mrs. Tracey's were with the past. Watching her, I saw a tear steal down her cheek and fall upon the sunny head which she was stroking with gentle mother fingers.

Perhaps the tears were given to some tender memory of long ago; perhaps they were given to Rex, who was never wholly absent from her thoughts.

My own fancies, too, strayed to the wilful lad, self-exiled from the home which would, I sadly feared, be home to him no longer. He had been first there all his life. How would he brook it to see the doctor's wife in his place?

"But, after all, she will take her own place, not his," I mused; "and when he knows her, he cannot fail to like her. As to the rest, if Humphrey is happy, why need we disquiet ourselves as to the fitness or unfitness of his choice? He knows what he wants—and who can blame him for loving Lillian?"

Lillian herself seemed tranquilly happy. Mrs. Tracey went to her room at her usual hour, but we others, anxious to hear the doctor's report, decided to wait a little longer before giving up to the drowsiness which was fast stealing

over us. "Besides," urged Lillian, "who could tell how long it might be before we spent another evening together. Was I not going back to New York in a few days' time, and before another summer came round?"

"Oh yes; I know what will happen before another summer comes round," I said, laughing. "And no doubt Lillian Shirley will be far too dignified a personage to curl up in my arms like a kitten, as she is doing at this present moment."

"Only she isn't Lillian Shirley yet," said the girl, laughing too. Then, "Were you surprised, Nell? I was; I never had dreamed of such a thing. Do you know, he had an idea that I might think him too old and grave to be worth caring about. As if I could help loving him for all his goodness to me! Nelly, do you suppose there is another man in the world who would have done as much as he did for—for her, and afterward for me. I sometimes think that if I died for him, even that would not pay the debt I owe him."

"He is much more concerned in having you live for him," I said, smiling. "And, Lillian, I can't tell you how glad I am for you both."

"Are you? for me; yes. But are you satisfied for him? It seems to me that I can never be half good enough, or wise enough for him, though I mean to learn to be like him, if I can. And then, you know, I shall grow older too."

"Rest content, Lillian; he has no idea of moulding you."

"No," said Lillian, assentingly. Then after a moment she went on:

"I do not remember my father; he died when I was two years old, but I often think that I should have felt toward him just as I should toward the doctor. You cannot choose but love Humphrey, and look up to him and trust him. He gives you that feeling of absolute safety and security—and rest."

Her frank, half-reverent affection was not the coin in which to repay a love such as Humphrey's, but, such as it was, it was genuine, and as she talked my heart grew lighter. It was evident that he had no rival; she was not conscientiously withholding her heart from his keeping, and surely at last it would, it must be his as fully and absolutely as even he could desire.

We sat talking until we heard the doctor's steps on the piazza, and Lillian sprang up to open the door. He came in exhausted and almost unmanned by the scenes through which he had passed, and yielded himself passively into Lillian's hands as she fairly guided him to his chair.

"One man was instantly killed," he said, in answer to my eager questions. "There were four others badly injured, and two of them died while I was there. One of the others I hope to find alive in the morning, but the other is past help; and a little child, who had been playing near the mill at the time of the accident, is crushed so that—" and there his voice failed him, and the hand which had lately held the surgeon's knife without a tremor shook visibly as he laid it upon Lillian's shoulder.

She laid her own hand lightly on his lips.

"Don't try to talk. Wait here just a moment," and at the last word she disappeared, to return in an instant with a little tray in her hands.

"I knew you would be tired and cold," she said, sitting it down beside him, "so I thought this would be the best thing to do for you. It is tea—the kind you like."

Humphrey took the cup from her, and bent down to kiss the little fingers that had held it.

"You stayed up to make this for me? Lillian, what ought I to say to you? Do you know that it is past two o'clock? And remember that you are a fragile bit of porcelain after all, not fit—"

"Not fit for anything but just to be petted, and taken care of? Don't say that, Humphrey."

"Precious enough to be worth all the petting and care I know how to give you. There, Mrs. Morris has gone after her lamp. Say good-night and go too."

She lingered for a few moments, but gained my side as I reached the upper hall.

"Humphrey says we are not to talk under the penalty of his high displeasure," she said, slipping her arm through mine. "Oh, Nell! were you ever so tired in your life? Talk, indeed! I can't say another word except good-night."

She was asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow, and the breakfast bell failed to waken her in the morning. Thinking it a pity to arouse her, I let her sleep on, and did not see her again until afternoon, for my husband came on the early train with news that set me to work to make ready to leave for home at a few hours' notice. We had an early lunch, finished our packing, and then went over to bid our friends good-by.

There, too, the house was in confusion. Rex had telegraphed from New York that he would be home that night, and Mrs. Tracey, in a flutter of joyous agitation, was making all sorts of preparations for his arrival. Lillian, pale and heavy-eyed, in spite of her long sleep, was in the dining-room, piling a fruit dish with grapes, peaches and pears, of which the doctor had brought in a supply from the garden.

Humphrey has gone to that place where he went last night. He will be dreadfully sorry not to say good-by," she said regretfully. "And I—oh, Nell! what shall I do without you all this long winter?"

"But you know you are to come and see me in New York, if Humphrey can be brought to spare you. And, besides, you have forgotten Rex. You cannot be lonely where he is. Take my word for it, by this day week you will be the best of friends."

"I hope we may," said Lillian soberly; but her tone showed that she was not very confident in seeing my prophecy fulfilled.

I did not see Bythessea again for many months, nor did I see Lillian, who failed to pay her promised visit. She wrote, however, frequently, and thus I learned that she was spending a pleasant winter, and learning, as she said, to do all sorts of useful things. With Rex she was, as I had foreseen, the best of friends, and his name occurred far more frequently than did Humphrey's in her letters. The doctor

wrote, too, occasionally, but the tone of his correspondence was less cheerful than Lillian's. He looked in upon us once or twice before Christmas, and, on his second visit, spent an hour or two with us.

"Lillian was well," he said, "and brighter than she had been at any time during the summer." She and Rex between them were making the old house young again. They got on capably; Rex took great care of her, and the doctor felt that she was acquiring great influence over him—greater than anybody else had been able to exert over the wilful lad. Both he himself and Mrs. Tracey hoped great things from that influence, though I failed to see much ground for their expectations. Rex liked Lillian, and was devoting himself to her service for the winter. By spring he would doubtless have transferred his affections elsewhere.

"Well," I reflected, "by spring she will have ceased to need him," for the wedding was to take place early in May.

She would have come to me after Christmas, the doctor assured me, but when the time came there was no Lillian—only a letter from the doctor, saying that she was ailing, coughed constantly, and was not in a fit state to leave home. Could not I come to them instead?

(To be concluded.)

## THE PSALMS IN HISTORY.

There lately died in Scotland a minister whose fame was in all its Churches, and a professor whose influence for good was very marked among the students of the "body" to which he belonged.

Shortly before his death Dr. Ker had completed a compilation which cannot fail to be interesting to a large number of people. Good as it is—and it is very good—it is perhaps more valuable for the field it opens up and the study it suggests than for its own intrinsic merits, great as these are, because this collection of illustrations of the part the Psalms have played in history and biography can only be regarded as the first sheaf of gleanings from a very abundant harvest-field.

It is curious to note that the sixth psalm is associated with such strangely different people as Catherine de Medici, Elizabeth Charlotte, niece of Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and wife of the Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV., Mrs. Carlyle, John Calvin, and Robert Rolloch, first Principal of the University of Edinburgh.

The twentieth psalm was called by the late Sir James Y. Simpson, and his brothers and sisters, "Mother's Psalm." When she was hard pressed with thinking and toiling, and could not see her way "through," she used to sit down and repeat it, and rise refreshed. When Edward Irving was on his deathbed he repeated the twenty-third psalm in Hebrew, and the well known fourth verse were the dying words of Sir William Hamilton. The twenty-fifth psalm was the dying song of Margaret Wilson, one of the Wigan martyrs. The fifth verse of the thirty-first psalm, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit," has naturally been the closing utterance of many a life, sanctified as it is by being one of the seven sayings on the cross. "The Lord Himself gave the word, and great has been the company of those that publish it." "It was the parting word of Luther, of Knox, of John Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Julian Palmer, one of the noted martyrs in the reign of the English Mary, of Francis Tessler, the first martyr of the 'Desert,' who ascended the scaffold singing it in 1686, and of countless more." The second verse of the thirty-second psalm contains the spiritual ideal which quaint old Isaac Walton set up for the model of his life. In closing his biography of Bishop Sanderson, he says: "'Tis now too late to wish that my life may be like his, for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age; but I humbly beseech Almighty God that my death may be, and I earnestly beg of every reader to say 'Amen.' Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

Thomas Fuller tells how Queen Mary of England erected again the hospital of the Savoy, which had been founded by her grandfather, Henry VII.; and how her maids of honour, out of their own wardrobe, furnished it with beds, blankets and sheets; and he adds, "Were any of these ladies still alive, I would pray for them in the language of the Psalmist, 'The Lord make all their bed in their sickness.' (Psalm xlii. 3.) And He is a good bed-maker indeed, who can and will make it fit for the person and please the patient. But, seeing such are all long since deceased, it will be no superstitious praise to God for their piety, and commend their practice to the imitation of posterity." The forty-sixth psalm and the thirty-seventh are respectively the basis of Luther's "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," and Paul Gerhardt's "Befiehl du deine Wege." The seventh verse of the fifty-first psalm has a touching association. Dr. Ker says, "Probably the northernmost grave on the surface of the earth is one made for a member of the expedition of Sir George Nares to the Arctic Sea, in the ship *Alert*. It is near Cape Beechy, on the brow of a hill covered with snow, and commanding a view of crowded masses of ice which stretch away into the mysterious Northern Ocean, where, hung like a lamp over the door of the unknown, shines the Polar Star. A large stone covers the dead, and on a copper tablet at the head the words are engraved, 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'" Darnley read the fifty-fifth psalm on the night of his murder.

The sixty-eighth psalm was known among the Huguenots as the "Song of Battles," and was chanted by Savonarola and his brother Dominicans as they marched to the Grand Piazza of Florence to meet the trial of fire, to which they had been summoned by their enemies. The seventy-fourth psalm, "a cry of the Church on the brink of despair," was the song of the band of Covenanters defeated at Rullion Green, on Nov. 28, 1666. The seventy-sixth psalm was sung at Drumclog thirty-three years later. The ninety-fifth, the *Venite exultemus Domino*, was the chant of the Templars, the Knights of the Red Cross, when they fought with the Saracens for the conquest of Jerusalem. The one hundred and fifteenth, *Non nobis Domine*, was the battle song of the heroic John Sobieski, King of Poland, when he marched down from the heights of Kalenberg, and defeated