

A Tangled Web

BY MRS. ALEXANDER

Author of "Beaton's Bargain," "His Perfect Trust,"
"By Another Name," "Her Hea's Idol,"
"Half a Truth," "His Rival."

Could it have been because she knew that she and her little girl were unprovided for, and that she did not like being a burden on a husband? Winton was fairly well off, and not likely to let such an obstacle stand in the way of his own or her happiness. Could it be any hesitation about leaving her (Nora) alone, with some mere hired stranger for a companion? No, Helen was too sensible for such an overstrained sense of duty or friendship. Then, as she gazed into the red mass which glowed in the grate, memory unraveled her long record of past benefits and generous acts. The quick, steady kindness, which had won her childish heart, in spite of her natural prejudice against a step-mother, the perpetual shield she interposed between the irritable, exacting, tyrannical father and his daughter. Now that Nora was a woman—a thoughtful, observant woman—how many instances of her step-mother's patience, her care, for every one's comfort, her entire self-forgetfulness, came back to her mind from dim, bygone days. Her own vague wonder that Helen never wanted to go anywhere, never sought release from the wearying attendance on her querulous, suspicious, invalid husband, her undefined impression that somehow life was over for her young step-mother—that she had thought for others, what would she herself have had, had she been reduced to a single-handed struggle with such difficulties as existence would have presented itself without Helen? How much of youth and beauty have enjoyed? How much of education, or pleasure, or freedom from the stunting effect of care too heavy for her young years? Yes! She saw it all clearly. Helen had been more than a mother to her, for she had no claim to such tender, discriminating care. "And if I can repay her I will," thought Nora, her heart glowing warm and strong. "Nothing shall stand between me and a woman to whom I owe so much. Thank God! she is brighter and stronger now than I ever remember her. I do hope she will grow up a tender, loving daughter! She has a dash of my father's temper! But why—why did Helen send Mark Winton away? I can fancy their whole story—growing into love with each other, almost from their school days—then his going away to seek his fortune, some misunderstanding separating them probably. Helen, left a penniless orphan, with no hope in the future, tempted by the chance of a settled home with my father. It is a sad enough story, and I suppose a common one. Well, she shall have peace now if I can secure it. But—why did she send Mark Winton away? I am sure she did not ask her; I must not see intrusive. Will she ever tell me?"

That evening Nora was more than usually kind and cheerful; she insisted on Mrs. L'Estrange lying down where her eyes were shaded from the light, and she read aloud from a picturesque book of travels.

When bed-time came and they parted for the night, Mrs. L'Estrange put her arm around Nora, and kissing her gently, said:

"You are a good dear daughter, and I should say younger sister, to me; you made my life happier than I ever expected it to be. She went quickly upstairs, leaving Nora touched and surprised, for neither were demonstrative women and rarely exchanged caresses.

The days went by, however, and Mrs. L'Estrange did not show any inclination to tell Nora the story she had promised; still, her step-daughter, waited with lovingly suppressed curiosity, and tidings reached them that Winton had gone as far as Florence, where some Indian friends outward bound to Bombay, and had passed through London without calling to see them.

Meantime, Lady Dorrington flattered herself that her plans were maturing successfully. The day after Mrs. Ruthven had been installed in the principal guest-chamber at Chadworth, Marsden arrived from town, and made himself charmingly agreeable to every one, especially to Mrs. Ruthven. The pretty little widow visibly revived after his arrival, and lost something of the pained, strained look in her eyes, which had given Lady Dorrington such uneasiness.

"You ought to go out more, my dear Mrs. Ruthven," she said, as that lady was hiding her hostess good-night. "There are lots of pretty drives about, and I have a capital pair of ponies."

"To say nothing of an excellent character, in the shape of an unworthy brother. Pray allow me to show you the neighborhood. I am

for the remainder of their drive. The morning rose bright and clear, but the projected excursion never came off. A letter from his lawyer arrived in the forenoon for Marsden, and when he ought to have been entertaining Mrs. Ruthven at a tete-a-tete luncheon, he was steaming away to London.

Marsden's summons was peremptory. He could only send a message of farewell to Mrs. Ruthven, who usually breakfasted in her own room, and assure his sister that he should return the first moment he could. With this glimmer of hope she was forced to be content.

"If he finds anything more interesting or amusing than near London, we shall see no more of him, for many a day. I know what Clifford is," said Lady Dorrington to her husband. "I begin to suspect he does not intend to marry Mrs. Ruthven, or matters would not drag as they do."

"Then he is a bit of a black-guard, though he is your brother; every one believes he is paying his respects to her. I do not see how they could think otherwise; and he is bound to give her the option; indeed."

"Nonsense, Lord Dorrington; my brother is no worse than other men, tried by your standard; there are few who, at one time or another, do not deserve the very coarse appellation you are pleased to confer on Clifford. Still, I wish he had more sense and taste; Mrs. Ruthven is a very charming woman in my opinion."

"And if mine, too; why, it is extraordinary luck to find money and shot at all a bad man of business, who gets Mrs. Ruthven with a lucky beggar—a deuced lucky beggar!"

"Why, Dorrington! I believe you are capable of giving me a cup of 'cold poison,' and trying your own luck in that quarter!" cried his wife, laughing. "However, all I care for is, to see her safely married to my brother."

"Yes; it would be a capital thing for him. I am not so sure how it would answer for her. Marsden would never be constant to any woman."

"You judge him severely; at any rate, Mrs. Ruthven is a woman of the world, and accustomed to men who are not saints; she has too much sense to be ferociously jealous."

"Don't be too sure; I fancy she is about as far gone after your brother as a woman can be. I saw that long ago; and I am a tolerably shrewd observer."

"You dear old thing! you are not blinder than your neighbors, certainly. I shall write away day, to be ambitious. I should not like to be second to any one."

The evening of the day on which Lord and Lady Dorrington held their conversation, Mrs. L'Estrange and Nora had settled themselves, one to her needle-work, the other to a new book. The day had been wet and stormy, in spite of which they had been obliged to go through a long afternoon of shopping, chiefly commissions for friends at Oldbridge, and both were glad to rest.

Mrs. L'Estrange's spirits recovered from the fit of depression which had exercised her imagination a week before, and had, indeed, been more quietly than usual, since she had had a letter with a foreign stamp, which Nora showed to her.

"It is a little dreamy that evening, and found it difficult to fix her mind on what she was reading. 'I suppose we shall have rain and fog, now that the fine weather has broken up. I really think I should prefer going to town, in rain and storm,' she said, laying down her book, 'I feel quite tired out.'

"Yes," said Mrs. L'Estrange, when she had counted some stitches; "but then there are fewer resources than in town. Have you not turned into a picture-gallery, and find summer or autumnal sunshine for a shining business?"

"Mr. Marsden announced the exact time of his coming to town, on business," was his vague explanation. "Arrived yesterday. Have been torn to pieces by lawyers all day, and am come to lay my mangled remains at your feet." He drew a chair to the cozy fireplace and spoke.

"And do you go back to-morrow?" asked Nora, who was roused and pleased by his sudden appearance. "To-morrow? Not to-morrow, nor to-morrow!" cried Marsden. "It is dull at Chadworth, desperately dull. The hunting no great thing, the shooting no better; but the house is crammed with bucolic chums of that excellent fellow Dorrington, and, in short, here I am, and here I shall stay."

"Lady Dorrington will be very vexed. I had a letter from her yesterday, saying how much better everything went since you had joined them."

"I am glad she knows my value." "And how is Mrs. Ruthven?" returned Nora. "Oh! quite well and blooming. She is fast recovering her misfortunes."

"Captain Shirley was here on Sunday," remarked Mrs. L'Estrange, "and was saying he had never seen her look so ill and depressed since he had known her."

"Shirley? How did that fellow come to call upon you?" asked Marsden. "I don't know why it is, but I can't stand Shirley," he added thoughtfully. "And Winton, where is he?"

"In Florence." "Florence? He is not the sort of man I should imagine would like Florence."

"I don't think he does," said Nora. "He went there to get some Indian friends so far on their way."

"I did not think he would have been so ready to leave London just now," and he gave an expressive

glance to Mrs. L'Estrange which she did not see, but Nora did. Then he asked for Bea, and talked of the child in terms that delighted the mother.

Nora thought Marsden had never seemed so nice and sympathetic. He was quieter and graver than usual, and she felt the relief his presence brought to the monotony of her thoughts most welcome. At length, with apologies for having kept them up so late, he bid them good-night, and drove straight back to his hotel without even an attempt to find if there was any one at his club to play a game of cards or billiards with him.

His spirit's lord sat lightly on his throne. Marsden was little given to think, or trouble himself about the future, but with all his ally carelessness, the last year had been one of irritating anxiety, now he had contrived to clear himself. He could defy Mrs. Ruthven, her unexcused solicitors, and here watchful led-captain Shirley. He owed her nothing. A little love-making, more or less did not count. He was perfectly free to shake her off if he chose, and he did choose. Good heavens! could she have the fresh, natural, girlish elegance of Nora L'Estrange. The arch, delicate animation of the one, the studied grace, the veiled yet perceptible passion of the other. And Nora had been unaffectedly glad to see him. How sweet the candid welcome of her eyes, how unconscious her frank, gracious pleasure. Yes, it would be his delightful lot to watch her from the slumber of childhood to the fullness of womanhood—the power of loving! Yet there was a certain strength and individuality about his young kinswoman, that warned him she was no more waxen doll, to be bent as he chose according to his will. She had ideas of her own—tolerably clear and defined. This would but give piquancy and variety to their intercourse. Heaven! how lovely those eyes of hers would be with the light of love beaming from their basal depths. Then she would be content to wait, with him, till the Eve-aleigh estates were free from all incumbrances before their marriage. He would never be content to exist before her to his position. And before the fever of anticipation let him sleep, Mrs. Marsden made more good solutions than he had ever formed in his life before. Only give him this new, fresh, delicate darling, and he would be a new man, with hopes and aspirations higher and better than had ever before dawned upon his mind.

Grand Anse

Though weather is becoming milder and more spring-like lately yet farmers are complaining of the general backwardness of spring. Fishermen who had been rishing their preparations for lobsters and herring are now patiently waiting for an opportunity to begin proceedings, there still being too much ice along the shore here and there.

Fishermen between here and Bathurst have already begun fishing, ice being clear in that direction, which is a big advantage for them as if calm weather continues ice will likely prevent fishing from here towards Mizonette for several days.

Rebet Sullivan is being rushed building lobster boats this spring. His boats seems to be much in demand.

Potatoes are yet in demand for shipment, prices offering this week being \$1.85 for the whites. Parties who sold some weeks ago for a dollar are feeling a little grum.

There is not near the quantity for



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sale here that used to be other springs, yet there were several carloads shipped.

R. A. Chapman, Fish officer of Moncton, N. B., passed through here last week distributing fishing bounty cheques. Mr. Chapman informed the fishermen that he had discovered a method that he felt sure would frighten the dog fish and that he intended to be around here this summer to prove his assertions.

Daniel O'Neil of Waterloo and J. D. Foley of Pokesaw left here some days ago to take charge of the Tracadie lumber drive.

Stream driving so far this spring have been backward but prospects now seem good as there is a good amount of snow yet in the woods, the mild weather the last few days raising the brooks considerably and no doubt the usual spring rains will shortly help raise freshets.

Hysaint Dorian of Blue Cove and Miss Theriault, daughter of William Theriault of St. Josephs, were married at the R. C. Church here Monday. A good number of relatives and neighbours were pleasantly entertained at his home in the afternoon and evening.

Mrs. John Sullivan of Janerville was buried in the Catholic burying ground here Thursday. Jos Sullivan of Waterloo attended her wake and funeral. The bad roads prevented other relatives from here attending.

Ja'as Nixon, Migonette, spent Wednesday evening at libbert Sullivan's, Waterloo.

Mrs. Wm. Sweeney, proprietress of the Grand Anse Hotel, has been in Bathurst for some days under the care of doctors, with a sprained ankle. It is hoped she will soon be able to return.

Lombard & Co's grindstone quarries here are being started this week under the management of G. L. Welsh of Boston, Mass, M. Welsh, Foreman.

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Escuminac

B. E. Miller paid Mr. Herbert Brown a flying visit on Saturday. Mrs. John Elliott and Miss Mary Little drove to Dalhousie on Wednesday.

Mrs. Henry McDavid of Oak Bay visited her parents on Saturday.

Mr. John Dumville is busy hauling lumber for a barn.

Mr. Jas Little is busy hauling clapboards from Wm Currie & Co. to complete his new house.

Miss Minnie Mann of this place spent Sunday with Mrs. Enoch Hunter of Oak Bay returning home on Monday.

Temple Bryant of Oak Bay was the guest of James Little on Tuesday.

Dr. Duchene of Nonville visited friends here last week.

Miss Beatrice Little spent Sunday at Oak Bay; she leaves Monday for Broadlands where she will again take up music studies.

Mr. Hubert Dickie of Point La Guard visited friends in Escuminac River on Friday.

Miss Minnie and Alice Edwards who have been in Boston for some time have returned home to visit their parents here.

State of Ohio, City of Toledo) Lucas County ss: Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and state aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of Hall's Catarrh Cure. FRANK J. CHENEY Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1886.

(SEAL) A. W. GILSON, Notary Public. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, and acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Send for testimonials free.

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Janerville

We are having a spell of soft weather now and nearly all the snow has disappeared.

A. J. W. McKenzie loaded a car of potatoes last week. Friends of Mr. Albert Ellis are sorry to note that he got seriously hurt last week while working on the Carquet train.

Messrs Wesley Doull Waldron Caie and Ernest Deason are spending a few days in Janerville.

Mr. Geo. Robinson has returned home from the woods.

We are glad to note that Mrs. R. H. Jennings is able to be about again after a spell of sickness. We are pleased to see the Carquet train running again. We are sorry to note the illness of Mr. Daniel Sullivan.

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