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**"Flatterers"**  
 OR  
**The Shadow of the Future.**

CHAPTER XVIII  
**"COURAGE MOUNTETH WITH OCCASION."**

"And I am wanting to tell all I can. Mr. Vaughan, did you tell the boys I meant to give them watches?"

"Tell them? No."

"Oh, thank you."

"Thank me? Why?"

"Because I cannot do it. I have not changed my mind, but things are altered."

"Altered? How?"—noticing even in the waning light that her features wore a very different aspect to when he had last seen them.

"In this way. You remember what you said to me of riches—"

"And their flying away? Yes."

"Well, mine flew the very moment their wings were fledged. And all my plans flew with them."

"My poor child! Why, how—"

"Please ask nothing. I did use them as you said I ought while I had them. That is all I can tell. I wish I could have let you hear the whole. But I cannot, though I should go away happily."

"Go away?"

"Yes, soon—leaving so much I had meant to do undone! But I'm not to talk of it. It's best for every one I should not. This much even I can only say to you—my spiritual counselor."

"And your spiritual counselor repeats it to none," the rector answered, discerning deep anxiety below the would-be jest. Then he let her walk by him with but few words till his garden was regained, where she made a bad attempt at thanking him for years of kindness, midway in which she broke down into all but speechless farewell, and hurried away toward home.

"Is there a ban upon my pupils?" the master thought, watching the slender figure out of sight. Then with a sigh, turning in-doors, "First one, and now

this other, seem to come into deep waters. And both I should have claimed as fit as any for the best things the world had. I wonder how old I shall have to be before the truth is driven into me that One above knows best!"

Late in, Sydney followed her mother up-stairs to explain her absence.

"I have done as you wished, mamma—found a place where I can earn a living. Will you wish me to go directly?"

"I wish!" exclaimed Mrs. Alwyn. "Have I a single wish on such an unnatural proceeding? It is no wish of mine, Sydney, but your obstinacy, that takes you away. Who are the people and where is the place?" leaning back, a fan over her eyes.

"It is a lady to whom I wrote. I traveled with her last week. By accident she told me she was wanting a companion, and now she is willing to let me go. I shall be paid only a little, but enough to get on with if I suit her."

"If! Yes, and if you do not! What then?"

"Well, then, mamma— fighting bravely to keep hopeful—"I must do as many before me. People have had to trust in Providence—"

Mrs. Alwyn flung up her hands and brought her eye-brows into an acute angle. She had no intention of being blasphemous, but the contempt she contrived to pour into her answer was worthy of a staunch Agnostic.

"Providence! Sydney—Providence! If I had wanted proof of your appalling wrong-headedness, I have it now, when I hear you adopting the slang of a canting pauper! There, go on—fanning herself rapidly—"this state of things will drive me demented. Pray go wherever you choose. What is the name of the person who takes you?"

"It is Miss Hurst, of Wynstone, in Herefordshire, mamma."

Mrs. Alwyn looked up with a start of angry fright.

"You remembered my injunction about your own name? This woman may be a connection of people who once knew us. Hurst is abroad in that part of England. For you, Sydney Alwyn, to be known as living in a species of service might prove an injury to Leonora, who is, at least, un-

ending. Never forget that, Sydney, unless you desire to be malicious."

"I have not forgotten it, mother. I never will. Shall I leave here on Saturday?"

"If you are determined on going, yes."

So, daring to make no general adieus, with no time to spare for nursing grief, Sydney made ready to go. On her last evening she ventured a brief visit to the Gate House, where her pumiled friends had missed her sorely.

"And now going out again?" cried the doctor, after his wife's bona fide improvement had been gladly vaunted.

"Why, how restless you've turned! Pray how long are you going to neglect us, and what are we to do without you?"

Questions that went nigh to drown the phrases prearranged for such curiosity. Answer died on her lips. Mary saw in her pallor something that escaped the elder folks' notice, and filled the pause:

"She must come back as much her usual self as mamma is now."

"Ah! and tell us," said Mrs. Dacie, patting her hand, "when we are all to set about making wedding favors. I wanted to hear that the last night we were at Chaddley but her head ached so when she came back from Lutter-horpe, she could hardly talk. But you will have settled all that by when you come home again, my dear."

Mary saw the girl's face changing, now flushed, now white.

"Perhaps," the doctor cried, "the naughty lassie means to get it all settled before she comes home, Molly, and we are to say a long good-bye to Miss Alwyn."

Another word, and her self-restraint must have snapped asunder. She got up with a laugh marvelously close on tears.

"Right, Dr. Dacie, of course. I am eloping. The chaise is waiting, now so fare ye well."

But Mary, at the outer door, whispered, "There is something wrong, Sydney. But you will write about it to me?"

"As soon—if ever I can," faltered Sydney, avoiding this pleading by a sigh. "And if you don't hear, don't be frightened, or angry with me. Oh, if—with a more passionate outburst of regret than she had ever spent on herself—if only I had done something for you all before I went!"

"We owe you too much now," Mary checked her tightening her arm round Sydney's waist, as they went down the path between gleaming patches of scented pink. "Can I pay back nothing by sharing whatever pain you have now? I know there is something. Am I to be no good to you?"

"Not this time, Mary, for—the difficulty lies between mamma and me. It is—weighing each word—"that I am doing something she—dislikes. And I—won't give it up. Don't name it to her, Mary; and ask me nothing more."

Mary felt panic-stricken. "But you will write then, and give me your address?"

Sydney hesitated. To admit herself going among strangers, discarding her full name, was impossible. There was only one road out of the dilemma, and that she took.

"I might offend doubly by giving my direction. So, when I write, it shall be through mamma, and I will ask her to send me your answers back. And Mary, if—Mr. Drayton should come here, tell me directly, will you?"

Mary Dacie's touch trembled as she stroked the head now resting on her shoulder. "I will. Do you want him to return, then?"

"Oh, I do! Badly! If only he came. I think my troubles would half vanish. And when you see him, be very kind to him."

"For her sake!" Mary Dacie thought, giving with her farewell the promise that for long dogged her like a nightmare. For what could dispute with Mrs. Alwyn mean but rejection of Rupert Villiers? What that rejection but preference for Richard Drayton? He worthy of Sydney, Sydney of him, who was she to come between them? Why, if she were not traitor to the girl who had brightened so many years, she must foster all chances of happiness for these two, and yield herself fully to that solitary state, never unpalatable till the rector's quondam pupil had visited St. Clair's. A highway of simple propriety lay before her. Along it the doctor's daughter prepared to trudge, through it was like journeying from sunshine into night.

Next morning Sydney quitted the Dale and started on new seas, horizon limitless, ultimate haven unknown. Quickly St. Clair's, with its wide, flat meadows, sleepy stream, and church-crowned straggling village, was left far behind. Dream-like the swift retracing of last week's expedition, "what when and how years seemed to have rolled. By afternoon Chaddley was passed. A rose she recollected in bud upon the station fence was only just full blown. Why, seasons might have come and gone since she last saw it! The longer route by Stillcote she had chosen, just for a sight of Jacob Cheene. As the old man stood the four waiting minutes beside her carriage, she was with a sort of timid fear lest her valiant purpose should be giving way, she told him all was going well, and the promised funds would reach him soon from Major Villiers. Then, when Jacob could send her word it was portened out aright, she should be happier and so thankful to him."

(To be continued)

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Diamonds, Mich.—"I had inflammation and a displacement and weakness, and it was so nervous I felt almost that it caused great pain, and this affected my mind and nerves so that I was very irritable. I had severe pains every month, so that I was often obliged to lie in bed for two days at a time. I suffered for more than a year before my friends said, 'Why don't you try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound?' So I purchased one bottle after another until I had taken ten bottles, then Lydia E. Pinkham's Sanative Wash, and received so much benefit from this treatment that I am now able to do my own work."—Mrs. W. D. Britten, R. No. 2, Diamonds, Mich.

Another Michigan woman says: "I was bothered for a long time with female troubles and was so nervous I felt almost afraid at times. I also had a pain in my right side and was certainly in a bad way. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has relieved me of these nervous feelings and pains and I am much better in every way. I don't know just how many bottles I have taken, but I took it for nearly a year and it has done me a world of good."—Mrs. Jesse Granger, R. No. 3, Box 61, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Good health is a woman's greatest asset. With it she may be the inspiration of her husband, a happy mother, and the life of the home. Without it she suffers agonies herself, household duties are a burden, and her family is made miserable by her condition.

Is it any wonder that these women were nervous and irritable after suffering so long from such distressing conditions? Such ailments act directly upon the nerves, and it has been said that a large percentage of nervous prostration, nervous depression, "blue devils," and nervous irritability of women arise from some derangement of the female organism.

If women who are in this condition would only profit by the experience of others and take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound at once, much suffering and unhappiness would be averted, as everyone knows a nervous, irritable, sickly mother makes the home unhappy and her condition tries both husband and children.

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