

"ECHOES of the Past; OR, The Recompense of Love!"

CHAPTER XXV.

"It was better that I should go. I got an engagement to sing at one of the watering places, and that led to other engagements. I have been very fortunate. I have more offers than I can accept."

"I am glad," he said simply. "And—and you are happy, Mina?"

He did not know, then, how cruel the question was. But she did not wince, she even forced a smile.

"I am—content," she said in a low voice. "I love my work—I must go back. What a lovely morning! It tempted me to come out before breakfast." He turned with her, his heart aching. "And you? You must be very happy," she said, after a pause. "I read about you in the newspapers, Mr. Clive—Mr. Harvey."

"No, no!" he said, wincing, as she had not done. "Call me Mr. Clive, Mina. It—it will sound like old times. Oh, Mina, why did you not answer my telegram, my letter? Why did you send it back unopened? You knew I loved you. Could you not have written me one line, if only to say good-by?"

She stopped dead short, and her hand went to her bosom as if something had struck her there.

"Your telegram—letter?" she breathed, her face suddenly pale.

He looked at her amazed, spell-bound. "Yes, I wired to you—I was called away to my father—he died. I wrote to you from Ralborough. I could not come to you, or I would have done so—" He stopped, smitten dumb by the bewilderment, the agony on her face.

"You wrote—to me?" she said in a dull voice, and yet with a note of relief, of joy in it.

"Yes, yes, of course!" he said. "Did you think I should have gone away without writing? You sent the letter back without a word!"

"I never—got it," she said slowly, as if she were speaking to herself rather than to him.

He stared at her, the color coming and going in his face.

"You never got it!" he cried. "Mina! Then—then—who sent it back—who intercepted it? Ah! Tibby!" he answered it for her, his teeth clenched, his face a dusky red.

She was silent for a moment, then she looked at him.

"I am—glad—you wrote," she said almost inaudibly. "I thought—that you had changed your mind. Ah, yes; you were free to do so. It—it was a bargain between us, do you remember? You—you were quite free—quite. And I thought—"

"You wronged me cruelly!" he cried, not loudly, but with all his heart in the cry. "Oh, Mina, didn't you know that I loved you! That I should not change!"

The color flooded her face, then it went white, and she looked from side to side as if in trouble and pain—for them both.

"I—I did not know. You did not come," she said. "I see now why you could not. But then—it seemed as if—as if you did not want to, as if you had regretted what you had said."

"But you understand now?" he said.

Various Forms Of Headache

"It is necessary in order to treat headaches properly to understand the cause which produces the affection," says Dr. J. W. Bay of Brockton, Ala. Continuing, he says: "Physicians cannot even begin the treatment of a disease without knowing what causes give rise to it, and we must remember that headache is to be treated according to the same rule. We must not only be particular to give a remedy intended to combat the cause which produces the headache, but we must also give a remedy to relieve the pain until the cause of the trouble has been removed. To answer this purpose Anti-kamnia Tablets will be found. One tablet every one to three hours gives comfort and rest in the most severe cases of headache, neuralgia and particularly the headaches of women."

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pleaded almost fiercely. "You know now that I was not the—cur you thought me! My wire, my letter explained my absence. Oh, Mina, could you not have trusted me a little longer, have waited!"

She shook her head. "It was not that I did not trust you," she said, "but when you were silent, no message came from you, and I learned that you were—what you are, so far above me—"

He stifled a groan. "As if that counted!" he said hoarsely. "And it was Tibby who intercepted the telegram, who returned the letter. God forgive her! She has wrecked my life! And you—ah, Mina, tell me, that you have not forgotten me."

He stopped, struck silent, by the horror in her eyes, by her sudden shrinking from him.

"Oh, no, no!" she breathed. "It is you who have forgotten. Lady Edith!"

Her face burned and her eyes met his with a solemn reproach in them. Clive stood and gazed at her, as the respitee might gaze when he hears that it is respite only, not full and free pardon, and that the sentence still stands. Mina lowered her eyes as if she could not endure the misery in his.

"Lady Edith! If you knew!" he said hoarsely.

Mina turned her head away. "I—I am not reproaching you," she said, in a low, agitated voice. "You were free. I left you free. Oh, I cannot say any more, cannot stay!" she broke out, the tears threatening to start to her eyes; but she drove them back and faced him with quiet dignity. "I must go. They—they will miss me and wonder. I am sorry—no, I am not, I am glad we have met, that you have told me that you wrote, that—that you had not changed then. I am glad, because now I can think of you without pain—without shame." Her eyes sank for a moment, but she lifted them to his face again bravely. "I shall never forget all your goodness to me. I can never repay it. I have not tried," she added, with a touch of her wonted girlish simplicity. "And I—I wish you every happiness."

"For God's sake!" he pleaded hoarsely. "Is this the last word, is this our farewell, our real parting, Mina?" he said almost inaudibly. "Ah, what can I say!"

What could he say? Certainly he could not tell her that he was marrying Lady Edith because he was forced to do so by a chapter of accidents!

She was silent a moment or two, then she said gravely:

"Yes. I—I hope we shall not meet again. Last night—"

"Last night!" He caught her up with what he knew to be a mean eagerness.

She blushed. "Last night I—I was startled by the sight of you, and—and it all came back to me so suddenly, like a flood, that—that— But it will not happen again. No; it will not affect me so again. I think now

I have seen you that I shall be—more at peace."

"This was too much for him. "Mina!" he cried desperately. "We must not part—we must not! I cannot! God help me, I am tied and bound, a slave but it is not too late!"

He had caught at her hand and, grasping it tightly, drew her nearer to him. His eyes half-closed and he saw her quiver and bend toward him as a flame is swayed by the wind, then, with a faint cry, she tore her hand free and drew back.

"No, no! Please let me go! There are some people—"

Clive turned his head angrily and saw some persons coming down the lane. One of them was a woman, wrapped in voluminous drapery with a veil half-down across her face. It was Sara. In his surprise at her appearance and his indignation—for it flashed upon him that she must have been spying on them—he released Mina's hand, and she passed him and walked on quickly. As she came toward the Hindu woman, Sara stopped and looked at her with a fierce, threatening stare; then she walked on until she came to Clive, where she stopped and salaamed.

Clive eyed her sternly. "Sara! What are you doing here?" he demanded.

She salaamed again. "I came in search of the sahib," she said. "My mistress gave me a note to send early this morning, and the weather being so fine, I take it myself. At the hotel they say the sahib is out walking. I come to find the sahib."

He held out his hand for the note and she took it from the folds of her shawl. It was a line or two from Lady Edith asking him to lunch at the Grange. He thrust it in his pocket and gazed at the dusky face moodily and in doubt whether or not he should offer any explanation of his meeting with Mina, in doubt as to whether Sara had seen him take Mina's hand.

"Thank you, Sara," he said. "Will you tell Lady Edith that I will be there?"

"Yes, sahib," said Sara. She stood for a moment or two eyeing him with a strange intentness, then she salaamed and went on.

Clive mechanically walked toward the hotel. His brain was in a whirl. It was almost impossible for him to think, for his emotions overwhelmed his capacity for reasoning. If he had ever laid the flattering unction to his soul that he had ceased to love Mina, this meeting with her, this discovery that she had not received his telegram and letter, and had fled from Benson's Rents because she thought him faithless, undecieved him. He loved her as devotedly, as passionately as ever.

And that being so, his engagement to Lady Edith suddenly appeared in its true light. When his brain grew clearer and able to act, he saw that in marrying her he would do her a great, a cruel wrong. He had hoped that in time he should be able to love her; but he knew now that the hope was a futile, an impossible one.

Yes; he must, at all costs to her and himself, tell her the truth, the whole truth, and save her from a loveless marriage. But the cost was so great that he naturally shrank

from the ordeal through which they must both pass. He would wait until the election was over, until they had returned to town and the announcement of the rupture of the engagement could be made at a time when it would attract less attention than it would do at the present moment, when his name was so prominently before the public.

He made a pretense of a breakfast and plunged into work. He had to address a meeting in the forenoon, and forced himself to concentrate his mind on his speech, though he felt that it mattered little whether he were returned for Brimleigh or not, mattered little what became of his political career. What he wanted, longed for, was a quiet life away from the world—with Mina.

He was late at the Wynthaw's lunch, and his haggard face, though he endeavored to force a show of cheerfulness, of course, attracted attention and evoked the sympathy of the ladies.

"You will want a long rest after the election, Mr. Harvey," said Lady Wynthaw. "I used to think a fashionable doctor the hardest worked man in the world, but I'm inclined to alter my opinion and give the palm to a present-day politician. You must take the kind of holiday my doctor goes in for. He spends his fortnight in bed every year, and declares that it does him more good than the seaside or the Continent. What a successful concert last night!" she went on. "I was so sorry for that pretty young girl who was taken ill! I sent to inquire after her this morning, but her party had just left the hotel. Hers must be a hard life—what is the new word for it?—strenuous, isn't it?"

"I also sent," said Lord Chesterleigh, "and was too late. It seemed to me that she saw something or some one in the audience who startled her; looked up you think so, Clive?"

Clive looked up but was fortunately spared the reply, for Lady Edith said, with a laugh, before he could answer:

"What a romantic explanation, father! 'A face in the crowd' kind of idea! No; I fancy she lost her words."



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