

THE WATERS OF CONTRADICTION

BY ANNA C. MINOQUE Author of "Cardome," Borrowed From the "Niche."

CHAPTER XI

Lucy's hour with Jasper was as miserable as Arthur could have wished. Vainly she exerted herself to find interest in the words which flowed unintermittently from his lips, for Jasper reticent with others, with Lucy knew no feeling of reserve.

"Lucy," he said, out of a silence during which he had regarded her closely, "is there anything the matter? You don't seem to be yourself."

"I am thinking of something you said long ago to me, Jasper, and contrasting it with your present conversation. I suppose you have forgotten it, but you see I did not have a chance to do so, being so soon afterward thrown in with a person who owed it and lived in its atmosphere in thought, if not always in reality. It was what you said about art and your desire to be an artist, the day Arthur and Milly walked off and left us together by the spring."

"But I do remember," he hastened to reply. "I told you I envied you because in all probability you would find an artist in the school to which you were going."

"And I did," she said, slowly. "The most beautiful woman I think I have ever seen. Such eyes—O Jasper, her eyes! Brown and full of golden light and set in a face like a cameo. Only twenty-four and with the wonderful world of art opening before her and ample means to live in it, and yet she turned from it for the convent door, where nobody understands her and where her life is the teaching of silly school-girls—verily casting her pearls before swine!—And she is happy! Can you understand it?"

"Yes," he said, and his eyes dropped slowly from her tense, pale face. "I think I understand it, Lucy."

"Then tell me, won't you?" she cried, leaning forward, seeking for his eyes, but he held them fixed on her white hands clasped nervously on her lap. "As I grew older and probably because I knew you, I seemed to get closer to Sister Claire than to any of the others, and once I asked her how she could do it and be happy."

"And what did she say?" he questioned. "I cannot recall it, no matter how much I try," she rejoined. "I only remember the words left me more perplexed than before, and the sense of hurt that came afterward. I was honest in my questioning, and it might have pleased me all my life if I had gotten an honest answer. The higher call comes to all of us, Jasper, and often; and it were well to know the way others found to answer it."

She met his eyes and shook her head disbelievingly, because she did not understand. He hesitated for a moment; then continued without offering any elucidation: "And having made my decision, I shut the door forever on the life that might have been mine. I might have succeeded there, why shall I not here? You cannot deny it is an interesting life and almost as free as the one foresworn. If I cannot paint pictures on canvas, I shall assist nature in making a fair picture of this portion of the earth allotted to me. There now! Laugh at me if you will, but in this confession you discover why I spent three days this spring planting wild roses along the old fence that separates our land from Mr. Dalton's, why I select my corn and wheat fields with reference to the remainder of the landscape as well as in consideration of the fitness of the soil."

Lucy did not laugh, but her eyes met his with a new gleam of comprehension in their blue depths. Presently she again shook her head. "It was a beautiful sentiment, Jasper," she said then, "but it will not carry you through. It is only a fictitious interest you take in this work to which you have set yourself. It may last to the limit of your youth, but when you find your face turned to the west—what then?"

So long did he remain silent, a feeling of fear of she knew not what, began to grow upon her. When at length he turned his face toward her and the white road creeping dreamily on under the interlacing branches of the great trees, it was so grave and old it smote her as unfamiliar. "I have told you so much, Lucy," he began, "I may as well complete the picture of my life for you. I shall then live in my son."

The color deepened on her cheeks at the words, and though the answering warmth was on his brow, he continued steadily: "I feel that one shall come after me to inherit whatever of talent I possess, even as I was sent to inherit my father's land. Him no parental chains shall bind to a life he knows is not his own. Though it broke my heart to part from him, I shall myself open for him the door of the life he desires. In his work, in his happiness in it I shall find strength to carry me to the end of the journey without one backward glance of regret."

A chill for all the sunniness of the afternoon crept along her veins as she listened, and her face seemed to freeze under his eyes, so terrible to her was this complete annihilation of self. By the side of it, the sacrifice of the artist nun looked poor indeed, for in turning from the world of art, she had been seeking a happiness she deemed higher and more complete than it could give. Renunciation with her had been with the hope of finding something better while he gave up with rever a thought of compensation, human or divine.

Then a thought flashed into her mind, meaning the iciness his words had caused to unfold her. The mother of that son would give him love and companionship, which would prove a staff to lean upon. "And there is something else," she said.

"There are many things, doubtless, for those who need them," he said, simply. "What is this special thing you have in mind?"

"Love," she said softly. "You mean," he began, and then paused, puzzled by her answer. "Your wife, of course," she said, quickly, marvelling at his stupidity. An ashen hue overspread his face and noting it, she asked herself when had she before seen this gray on his countenance. "The woman I love I shall not marry," he said in a voice that mated with the color of his face, and then she remembered it was thus he looked on the afternoon of the picnic, when some one alluded to the time Milly had thrown her arms around his neck, in gratitude for his saving a bird's life. One reason her mind instantly assigned for his confession and it sent the scornful light into her eyes.

"Forgive me, Jasper!" "That's all right, little girl!" he said, and then for a long while they drove on in absolute silence. Burning words rose to Lucy's lips, and then words of encouragement against the despair, prompted by sympathy for her friend and a dread of what might befall herself, for she could not but remember that the one whom Milly loved was Arthur Stanton, and that he had said she stood between him and loneliness. They died unspoken, however, for something, she could not define what, in the man by her side, prevented their utterance. Then, out of that long silence, he said: "I shall not expect anything of my wife I cannot give. She shall come to me in the full knowledge of my life. I do not think she will love me—indeed, I believe she will only come because of the fact that love is not asked of her. We shall both know it to be the companionship of two lonely hearts, two thwarted lives."

As she heard him, the bright, sun-flecked road upon which they traveled, became to the eyes of the girl, suddenly black and lonely, and she beheld herself as the wife of whom this man, by his side spoke. She seemed to feel the gasping of her dying heart as it went forward chained to the dead one in his breast; then, a great wave of oblivion swept over them and the dark road suddenly ended.

Slowly, as one awakening, she came back to the conscious world to find nothing changed. The turnpike ran dreamily on, here showing large patches of sunshine, there covered with alluring shadows, and over it the horse went with the light easy step of a thoroughbred. She stole a glance at Jasper and saw that his face wore once more its exalted expression, made the more pronounced by the paleness it still showed. Her mental swoon, or the projection of her soul into futurity, he had not noticed, so deeply was he absorbed in his own thoughts.

She studied his face as she had never studied another, not even the one which was stamped on her soul. More beautiful than that other, there was on it, in addition, all that a woman who loved him would want to find there. Gradually her eyes were drawn up to his, searching the road creeping on before them. "What do you see?" she cried to herself, and again the picture that had stung her rose weirdly before her—the dark, lonely way, and they two bending on silently to the end, which was oblivion. Something like a shriek rose from the innermost recess of her being. Reaching her lips it voiced itself in an exclamation, which drew him swiftly from his deep reflection.

"Did you speak, Lucy?" he asked, the smile again on his face. "It is getting late," she said, drearily. "Let us go home."

"I fear I have proven poor company this afternoon," he said apologetically, as the horse's head turned homeward, they went back in a brisk trot. "I believe we are both in a bad mood, or rather I made you share mine. It is very rarely I permit myself the luxury of talking about myself. Indeed, I do not recall that I have ever spoken to anyone as to you this afternoon. But there was always that about you, Lucy—we would tell you all about ourselves; and singularly enough, having given you our confidence, we never afterward regretted it. Nor do I now. But I promise you it will not be repeated, and I may call again may I not?"

And Lucy, with one thought of Arthur, gave the desired permission, because she feared her mother. The morning that Lucy had half made a promise to meet Arthur, her mother, returning from the town, had brought a letter for her daughter, and her watchful eyes, while the girl perused it, silently demanded its contents. Knowing this, and, wholly unaware of the hopes slowly forming in her mother's mind, Lucy remarked the note was from Jasper Long, asking to call on her the following Sunday afternoon and take her for a drive. The mother expressed her willingness and started in surprise when Lucy said she would not go.

"Why not?" the mother had inquired. "I do not care to go," she had answered, adding immediately, for candor forbade any attempt at concealment, "and Arthur is coming up to bring me a book."

Woman who had steadily ignored her; therefore, she insisted that Jasper's invitation should be accepted. "But mother," pleaded the girl, "I promised Arthur first. I must keep my word."

The argument was not without effect on the straightlaced woman, who said: "Well, make your engagement with Jasper for a later hour. They are both your friends, and it is not maidenly to show a preference for the society of one above the other."

Being a wise woman she had said no more, and Lucy, warned intuitively against the act and yet not daring to disobey her mother, wrote an answer of acceptance to Jasper's note.

TO BE CONTINUED

GOLGOTHA

A TALE OF CHRISTMAS EVE

The snow whirled about me in great gusts and eddies, and I could scarce move along the street save by clinging close to the walls of the battered houses, and groping with each foot as I extended it. Even so I stumbled into deep holes in the causeway, or floundered in hopeless bewilderment in places where there was no wall left to cling to. The town was oppressively silent and the light of the full moon that filtered occasionally through the scudding cloud-drifts lent it an awful air of desolation. Stark jags and peaks of masonry butted into the sky, and made the place seem like some awful vision of Dore. Still, I had won my way so far. I need not arrive at Headquarters before dawn, and I was worn out and bruised with my stumbling and battling with the snow. There was time for me to get an hour or two's sleep, if I could but find a sheltered spot.

Then, in a sudden uplifting of the pall of snow, I found that the confines of the street were receding. I was in the Grande Place. I could just distinguish the bounds of the square to my right and left—heaps of brick and rubble, with here and there a solitary bulk of undemolished masonry, crowded perhaps by a mocking chimney-pot, left deliberately, it would seem, by some leering devil, who crowded over the run of all that quiet joy and hearth-happiness.

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POPE AS WORLD'S PEACE POWER

HON. HONOUR COCKRAN IN ELOQUENT SPEECH POINTS TO UNIVERSAL MORAL AUTHORITY OF HOLY FATHER AS SOLUTION

There is but one moral authority in the world that has any pretense to be universal, and that is the moral authority of the Holy Father at Rome and the Church Eternal. This authority must be recognized if this world is to be saved. I do not say that we should recognize it by the conversion of all men; that they shall recognize the Pope's spiritual authority; but I do say that it is the only authority that can do anything in the way of establishing peace among the nations.

In every quarter of the globe, he is the common father of them all. He is alone capable of establishing peace on the only conditions under which it can rest, and that is perfect reconciliation among all the nations. They cannot be reconciled among themselves. They are even now threatening to continue measures of commercial destruction after the hostilities in the field are ended by treaty. If they go on ignoring God's authority there will be no nations organized after this War, and there will be few of the population surviving. But I think the world is going to survive and end the waste that is now going on by the restoration of profound peace; and that would repair the ravages of this War in a few days.

Men are at the pit, where destruction is continuous, ruin irremediable; but under the stimulus of religion and the aid of revelation they can rise up to a prosperity greater than ever yet has been attained. On one side is death, desolation and destruction. On the other is life, liberty, progress and justice. At that pathway stands Our Lord Jesus Christ, holding aloft the light by which all the progress man has ever made was accomplished. He holds it alight by reason of His Vice-regent on earth, the Supreme Pontiff who rules the Catholic Church. His authority must be recognized, I do not know how, or the world must perish. I believe it will live on through the only agency capable of maintaining peace and leading to universal disarmament.

In saying that, I only say that it can do what it has done before. Once only was peace established on earth, and that was long ago, when the continuous conflict of five hundred years that followed the fall of the Roman Empire, supplemented by famine, had so decimated the human family that it had begun to despair, that the Church established the Peace of God, forbidding them to fight and quarrel; and tremendous abundance followed. But the churchmen who urged the Peace of God did it as a measure of human policy; and within three or four years the very abundance it produced caused fresh wars, and human nature was again plunged in despair, when the Church exercised her spiritual authority and she proclaimed the Truce of God.

That was a measure of religious duty imposed upon the people. She forbade it. At this time the Pope was the head of chivalry, and chivalry embraced all the fighting forces of the world. His word being obeyed by the fighting forces, his action resulted in a truce being observed from Saturday until Monday, the period of Our Lord's Crucifixion and His Ascension; and it was generally observed. Then it was extended until the period of the Truth of God embraced the ember days.

During the whole of the eleventh century the Peace of God was practically recognized everywhere, and when at the end of it, Urban II, preached the First Crusade, he was but enforcing it anew by forbidding them to war against each other, and commanding them that they unite for the purpose of rescuing the Holy Land from the pollution of the tread of a heathen conqueror.

The Crusades failed in their object, but they furnished transportation to armies and helped to establish the trade and commerce of modern times. Out of them grew the great cities which became the cradles of progress and liberty. During those Crusades the Popes themselves proposed that international law about which we hear so much today. They imposed it upon the knightliness of Christians, imposing upon the contending forces the principles that they must respect the weak; that non-combatants must not be injured wantonly; that the tools of trade and the progress in industry must be respected; and that captives taken in war should not be treated as an asset to be sold into captivity, but as Christians as he would answer for them at the throne of God.

Before that time, even in the highest civilization, the rule of war was woe to the conquered. A conquered city was put to sack and pillage, and men and women and children were placed in captivity and sold into slavery. They graced the wheels of the Roman chariots when the Roman conqueror had his chance. The city was delivered up to destruction. But ever since the authority of the Popes was established over war, those rules of international law, about which our President has been making such a vigorous and effective campaign, became back of the relations existing between human beings. But yet, when in the organization of temporal and civic pride, this idea that enlightened self-interest could

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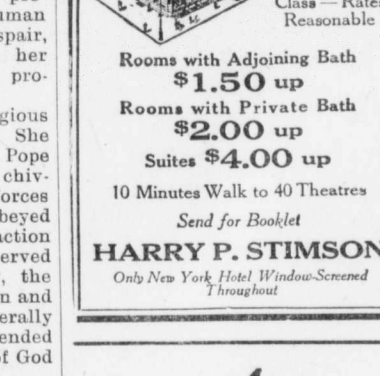
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