A MYSTERIOUS QUEST.

CHAPTER XLV.

WHAT HE READ.

(Concluded.)

'Do you recall that day or can you realize even now all that it was to me? You had asked me to give up my fortune, to yield what had been won through ways so tortuous and at cost of efforts so shameful; and I hesitated, can you wonder, and was swayed this way and that, according as my reason or my heart spoke. But reason finally had its way, and I went dressed in velvet, only to repent my decision so bitterly that, before I went within reach of your glance, I stepped into Hilary's dressing-room and put on one of her cloth dresses. Love might mean self-denial and fearful complications with my associates, to whom I had not yet paid the half that was due, but I felt ready to do and bear all, or rather, I felt in that moment more ready to meet the doubtful results of abnegation, than I did the withdrawal of the hope which had made my summer so glorious. But, after I was dressed and before I could meet your appreciative glance, some one brushed me in the crowd and a note was put in my hands. Ah, dearest, that note! It was sent by the Portugese, then sick unto death, it seems; but it was not written by her, but by Montelli, who had been dead three months. As I read it I knew that my intentions had been foreseen by her. That, although she was ill, she had wished to show me that she still kept watch upon my fate. It ran thus: and its contents are as great a mystery to me as they must be to you:

"'I am discovered and must fly. You are safe if you will but forget your weakness for the artist. Cherish that and you are lost. You cannot have love and money, both. So choose, but, in choosing, remember that the Portugese and I will have our money if we have to ask your lover for it. We have not run so many risks for nothing.'

'This, at the moment I was about to commit myself to you irretrievably. What if the writer was dead, the sender was not, or so I thought in that moment of shock and terror. Pushed by the crowd and tortured by my fears, I hesitated one instant, and then went again to Hilary's closet and procured me a cloak. Enveloping myself in this I went below. Did you recognize it as bespeaking the hesitation which it really betrayed? Did your love take alarm and cause you to turn a more willing ear to the insinuations of the detective? I shall never know, for I have never dared to question you.

'But the developments were not at an end. While I hunted for a glimpse of your face, Mr. Byrd came—why Mr. Byrd I have never been able to understand—and told me in the strange way that he told me of Montelli's death, that, by another happy Providence, the sender of this note had perished also; leaving my path clear of enemies and myself free to follow the dictates of my heart.

'You know what followed. How, in a rush of renewed hope, I threw aside my cloak, and called your heart to me in a song. How I looked for response, and how it failed to come. Mr. Byrd was at your ear and you listened to doubts which held you back, and when you did break away from him and seek me, it was to find that I had hearkened to the voice of another wooer, who asked of me nothing, and promised me all things.

'Can you not foresee the rest? How the love which had succumbed to your indifference rose triumphant again at this evidence of your continued affection. I had jeopardized my happiness, but I determined to regain it at any cost. Nothing should nor could stand in the way of what had now become my one passionate desire. I wrote to Mr. Degraw. I took the one means I knew whereby I not only would obtain a full release from my engagement but insure likewise his acceptance of the gift which he never would have given me had he recognized my real unworthiness. I confessed to him my love for you, and I confessed, also, my share in the plot.

'It was a fatal act—how fatal I immediately perceived when my impetuosity led me to your studio, and we had that interview so unhappily interrupted by Hilary. If the suspicions of the police had been aroused in regard to me, how mad had been the impulse which had led me to put upon paper words that could justify their suspicions and make possible the detection of my duplicity. Though it seemed too late to profit by this discovery of my folly, I made one frantic effort to do so. I rode back home and endeavored to stop the delivery of my letter, but failed in this, and Mr. Degraw not only read the story of my deception, but by some treachery or some mischance which he could not himself explain, this letter was stolen from him almost immediately after his reading it, so that my secret was no longer at his mercy only, but at the mercy of the world, and, what was worse, of you.

'Do you understand now the frenzy which drove me into asking you to marry me that night, or how I could hardly subdue my fears when you urequested time to notify your mother? Detection lay before me, and I had neither the strength to meet it nor the courage to forestall it by telling you what would shatter your love at a blow. For though Mr. Degraw urged me to this course, measuring your nature, perhaps, by his own, which is affectionate rather than passionate, and tenacious rather than proud, I, who knew you better than he, felt that death must precede any confession of my past deception to you.

"What! Tell you that the sweet innocence of which you have so often spoken was the mask which hid a scheming heart? Rob my beauty of its charm and my memory of its grace? Make the most beautiful moment of our lives the mere climax to a farce, and teach your soul to hate that which had given it life and purpose? Impossible. I could die, but I could not do this; and though there was one chance remaining of this letter escaping your notice, I prepared for death, and re-hired these rooms, that you might take your last look of me where you did your first, and thus see in the final act of my life an expiation which would soften your hate, and lead, perhaps, in time, to your regarding me with pity and tenderness.

"But this one chance came near succeeding, and I breathed again, only to be dashed once more into the fathomless depths of despair. You had received the letter, but you had not read it, and though you gave it back to me, you wished to see its contents.

"It was the final blow. Though it was possible to deny you what you requested, it would be, as I knew, at the cost of your future confidence. I could not lose this and be your wife, so I gave up the struggle from that moment, and bade farewell to you forever in the silence with which I met your parting embrace.

"This was two hours ago, but it already seems an age, for the shadows of death are upon me, and I miss the smile which should help me across the dark river into which I am about to plunge. Has that smile left me forever? or may I hope that your pity, if not your love, will follow me into the shadows. I do not plead my youth; I do not plead my ill bringing-up or my disappointments and temptations. I plead my love, which, if small at first, has grown to be the ruling passion of my life. It led me to give up a great fortune, it led me to betray my secret faults, and now it has brought me here. Will you drop a tear for it, if not for your dead JENNY?"

CHAPTER XLVI.

TOO LATE.

Some minutes later Mr. Byrd entered 391 East——street. As he passed the door of the death room he perceived the form of the artist sitting bowed above the scattered sheets of a long and closely written letter.

"Am I too late?" the detective seemed to ask, as he shut the door behind him, and advanced. There was nothing in the attitude of the artist to answer this question.

Puzzled by the incongruity between Mr. Degraw's wedding suit and the desolate character of his surroundings, Mr. Byrd hastened to ask with ill-concealed anxiety in his tone:

"Have you been married to Miss Rogers, Mr. Degraw?"

The artist shivered, and suddenly looked up.

"Married?" he repeated, and his voice had a dull sound.

"If you have not," continued Mr Byrd, "I have something to say which may influence you. In this hope I have followed you from the studio to Miss Aspinwall's house, and from there here, having just learned—"

"Hush!" commanded Degraw, now wholly himself. And crossing the floor, he flung open the door leading into the room of death, and bade the detective look in. "Death has forestalled you," said he. "You can tell nothing I do not know!"

CHAPTER XLVII.

LOOSE THREADS.

It was weeks before Mr. Byrd explained to the artist how he first came to entertain suspicions of the beautiful Miss Rogers.

If the reader will cast his mind back to the interview between her and this gentleman in Great Barrington he will remember the unnatural look of elation with which she hailed the news of Montelli's death. This caused him his first doubt. But as this strong display of feeling on her part might be simply the natural expression of a timid disposition suddenly released from dread, he did not attach any great significance to it at the time. But he remembered it when in handling the dagger of the dead valet he discovered a cavity in the handle and in that cavity a note, whose lines bore every appearance of having been addressed to the young lady at whose feet the weapon had been cast.

W have read that note: it is the one which was so mysteriously delivered to Miss Rogers at Miss Aspinwall's reception. It contained no names, as you will remember, but there are in it allusions to the artist which are very suggestive, and from the moment of reading it, these allusions caused Mr. Byrd and his associates to become assured that this seemingly innocent girl held a very different connection with the plot they were endeavoring to fathom than had hitherto been suspected. Yet, since the evidence was not positive and there was so much in her position to commend her to their consideration, they had delayed all active proceedings against her, in the hope that time and the strict surveillance which was now set upon her movements might elicit such further proof as would either entirely dispel their doubts or corroborate them to such an extent as to make an open interference justifiable.

But though Mr. Byrd showed his usual skill in this matter, he had not met with his usual success. For, while his suspicions had been strengthened by every fresh evidence which he received of the youthful heiress being under obligations, which forbade her the free use of her money, the death of Montelli and the continued absence of the only other party to the plot, known to the police—viz: the adventuress in whose behalf the conspiracy had first been started—made any further advance toward the truth almost impossible. Not till he received the intimation from the artist as to the possible identity between Miss Rogers' hair-dresser and the long-looked for Portugese, did he see his way to a solution of the enigma. And then he had hardly arrested this woman before she was taken with such a sudden and dangerous complaint that confession from her became impossible, and she died on his hands without uttering a word liable to compromise herself or any one else. It was a great disappointment to him, but he did not allow it to dishearten him. On the contrary, he took advantage of this catastrophe to satisfy himself that his suspicions against Miss Rogers were just.

Seeking out a female detective, he sent her in the capacity of hair-dresser, to that lady's house, with injunctions to follow Miss Rogers to Miss Aspinwall's reception, and there to deliver to her the mysterious note which had been taken from the valet's dagger. If the heiress was shaken by it—and he meant to be present and see—he resolved to follow up his advantage by suddenly telling her of the Portugese's death, and if this produced the effect he expected, then he would no longer be dealing with vague suspicions but with a moral certainty, which would at least entitle him to warn the artist of the doubtful character of the woman he loved.

(To be continued.)

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The Eve

"Things better tha were a haven't anything. I'm just waiting somet to turn u So a who has been diss with the tions tha round wrote me in answer to a quer whether she had taken any st wards bettering them.

What a common attitude scribed. How many dissatisfie less people we meet everywhe continually fret and chafe agai conditions that surround the never take any decisive steps changing these conditions. are always vaguely hoping, li cawber, that "something wil up" to help them, without an tasteful activity on their own pa

Hope, you remember, was th fairy who came last out of Pa box, comforted and promised h against all the evils that foolis body had set free. But I som wonder if this good fairy Ho not—in true fairy fashion—h bad twin brother among th spirits.

There are a few things more ful than the right kind of hop hope that cheers a man on to best and believes in ultimate s no matter how dark the outlo how heavy the odds against hi

There are a few things more ful than the wrong kind of hop flabby, folded-hands hope, that a man continually procrastinat effort, and cheats him with th ish expectation that some turn cumstances, some stroke of luc surely end his misfortunes and

Not Sisters

Now and again you see two w ing down the street who look You are astonished to learn th mother and daughter, and you a woman at forty or forty-five at her finest and fairest. Why

The general health of woma timately associated with the of the essentially feminine there can be no red cheeks form where there is female w

Women who have suffere this trouble have found relief and cure in the use Pierce's Favorite Prescrip organs of womanhood. eyes and reddens the chee

No alcohol, or habit-forming Any sick woman may consu held as sacredly confidential, a World's Dispensary Medical As

Household Note

Lemon syrup, made by bakl lemon for twenty minutes and squeezing out the juice in half of sugar, is excellent for hoars and to break up a cold.

When baking an apple pie, teaspoonful or two of strong co in the filling; also try the sa your apple sauce or baked apple notice the improved flavor.

The white mayonnaise prepar foreign chefs calls for cream, juice and the white of egg, inst the oil, vinegar and egg yolks ordinary mayonnaise.

Sandwiches prepared in ad of serving time can be kept as as when made by wrapping the napkin wrung out in hot wate then placing in a cool place.

In baking biscuits, have the quite hot at first, but lower the

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