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The Heir of Bayneham

—AND—
Lady Hutton's Ward.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Crowds of expectant tenants and servants assembled; and when the carriage came at length into sight a cheer arose from all, that made the very welkin ring.

"There is my lord—that is my lady—and see the little viscount!" was heard on all sides.

Lord Bayneham's face wore a reverent, almost awe-struck expression.

"How shall we best deserve all this happiness, Hilda?" he said. "I feel unworthy of it. Heaven help me to do my best!"

In the second carriage Lady Bayneham sat with Barbara Earle and Bertie Carlyon. There were cheers for her, for Barbara was loved by those who served her.

It was a pleasant sight, when the carriage drove away, to see the young earl and his beautiful wife standing under the broad Gothic porch of their old home. People afterward said that Lady Hilda's face was bright as a sunbeam. Lord Bayneham stood holding her hand in his, while he in a few graceful words thanked the crowd around him for their hearty welcome. There was a cheer for the gallant earl, and one for his fair wife. Then Lord Bayneham, raising the child in his arms, called for another cheer for his son, the heir of Bayneham.

Not one word could Bertie Carlyon contrive to speak that evening to Miss Earle. The castle was full of guests—there was no chance; but when the brilliant evening ended, he contrived to whisper as he bade her good-night, "Barbara, has my penance ended?"

Miss Earle smiled, but made no reply. She was however, down early next morning, and for all ornament wore a string of costly pearls, to which was fastened a small golden apple. Bertie's face was a study when he saw it, and then Lord Bayneham interfered.

"The marriage," said he, "shall be delayed no longer."

Before the June roses had ceased to bloom, Barbara Earle became Bertie Carlyon's wife.

Bertie Carlyon's name was known all over England. He became one

of the leading statesmen of the day; and when men congratulated him on his success, he would turn with grateful eyes to the noble woman by his side, and thank her for it.

Lady Bayneham recovered health and spirits, and her own mother could not have been more tender to Hilda than was the proud countess.

The last news discussed at Bayneham was the marriage of Captain Massey. He met Miss Deverney, and to his mother's intense delight, at once fell in love with her. They are very happy, and never omit, once every year, to pay a visit to Bayneham.

One beautiful morning in June, Lord Bayneham asked his wife to accompany him on a little stroll. Lionel ran before them, and a sweet, fair-faced girl, whom her mother called Magdalen, walked by her side.

"Where are we going?" asked Lady Hilda.

"Patience," replied her husband, "you will soon see."

They went through the park, where the wind whispered among the tall trees, and birds sang sweetly in their shady depths, and into the high-road, past the Fir Cottage, and into the little churchyard where Lady Hilda had once stood with despair in her heart.

Lord Bayneham took his wife's hand and led her to what was once a nameless grave.

There stood a monument of white marble, with this inscription—

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF MAGDALEN HURST.

Through many tribulations she has gone to her rest.

"Hilda," said Lord Bayneham, "my mother erected this. I brought you here by her wish. Tell me now, have you one cloud in your sky?"

"Not one," she replied, raising her beautiful face to the clear morning sky. "Heaven is good to me. I will try to deserve it."

The sun that shone upon the quiet grave and the waving trees, upon the true, noble husband and the fair, blooming children, was not more bright than the future that lay before LADY HUTTON'S WARD.

THE END.

LADY LAURA'S RELEASE

—OR—
THE STORY OF A SPOILED BEAUTY.

INTRODUCTION.

"If you are satisfied that such a disposition of your fortune is just; Sir Charles, I have no right perhaps to object," said Edward Sansome, a shrewd lawyer, to his principal client, Sir Charles Rooden, of Road Abbey.

"Of course I am satisfied," laughed handsome, cherry Sir Charles. I have a large fortune and a wife as good and true as she is beautiful. Surely I cannot do wrong in leaving my fortune to such a wife!"

"There is a great difference between doing that which is wrong and that which is imprudent," observed Mr. Sansome.

"And you think that my will errs on the side of imprudence?" questioned Sir Charles uneasily.

"So it seems to me," replied the lawyer.

"How can it, when I leave all that I have to my wife?" asked Sir Charles.

"There are so many contingencies," answered the lawyer.

"Yes, I know; you are thinking that it is possible her ladyship may marry again," said Sir Charles.

"It is not improbable," returned the lawyer cautiously.

"It would not be in an ordinary case; but this is not an ordinary case. You seem to forget that our marriage was a pure love-match."

"I have been the beginning and the end of many love-matches," remarked Mr. Sansome quietly.

"Probably, but not a love-match like ours. During my married life I have never given one thought to any other woman—indeed, I might say, in the words of the old song, 'All other women are but shadows to me.' She is the woman for whom I care and whom I love."

"That is romance, not practical common sense," said Mr. Sansome;

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D29

"and they differ as light from dark—"

"It matters little whether it is romance or not; it happens to be true," laughed Sir Charles. "I am easy enough on the score of my will. If my fortune were twice as large, I should leave it all to my wife."

"But would it not be as well to insert a clause to the effect that some portion of this vast fortune is to be forfeited if Lady Rooden marries again?"

The frank handsome face darkened, and the blue eyes flashed fiercely.

"I would not so insult her for the world!" he cried. "You do not understand the depth of our mutual love and trust; and on that ground I can excuse your professional suspicion. It would be impossible for my wife to marry again in the event of my death. She has been the love of my life, the heart of my heart; and do you think she whose very soul is mine would or could ever listen to the wooing of another man? You will excuse me for saying so, but the very idea of it seems like sacrilege to me. I am desirous of showing my implicit faith and trust in the wife whom I honor as much as I love; therefore I leave my whole fortune to her, to be held in trust for my daughter Angela. During her life-time Lady Rooden can make what allowance she may think proper to our daughter. If she marries, it will be in her ladyship's power to give her a very handsome dowry; and at Lady Rooden's death the whole estate goes to my daughter intact. That seems simple enough."

"Yes, it is simple enough," agreed Mr. Sansome, though evidently still unconvinced of the justice of it.

Sir Charles went on:

"If—which Heaven forbid!—Lady Rooden dies first—my property will revert to my daughter on my death—"

"Yes, that is right enough; but—" Sir Charles interrupted him.

"I am anxious to make my will at once, simply as a matter of prudence. Not that I have any fear of dying yet. I am not much over thirty-five, and, being blessed with good health and a sound constitution, in all human probability death and I will be strangers for many long years. Several of my ancestors lived to be over ninety years of age; it may be the same with me."

"I hope so sincerely, Sir Charles," said the lawyer.

"Thank you," returned the baronet. "But you do not look satisfied yet, Sansome," he added. "Now what is it? Tell me frankly what you yourself think of my intentions; you will not offend me. I know the value of a truthful friend. Tell me just what is passing through your mind."

"I am inclined to think you will not be pleased, Sir Charles; still I will speak out my thoughts. I think you are leaving too much in the power of a lady, though one of the most estimable of her sex, is still only a woman. I see my words have vexed you; I knew they would."

"No, I am not vexed," said Sir Charles; "because I know you mean well. Tell me what you think I ought to do."

"My advice will be very unpalatable to you," said Mr. Sansome; "but I should counsel you to make some change. If you should die before Lady Rooden, and she should marry again, it would be as well to stipulate in such a case that half the property must go at once to your daughter."

"My wife would never marry again," Sir Charles declared emphatically. "If I die before her, all happiness for her in this world will die with me."

"Still there is the possibility of such a thing happening," urged the lawyer cautiously.

"There is no such possibility as regards Lady Rooden," again declared Sir Charles. "You may dismiss that idea from your mind at once and forever. Think of the other side of the picture, which you have entirely overlooked—what a tie it will form between mother and daughter in case of my death! Their interests will be one and the same; the daughter will always be dependent upon the mother, the mother ever striving to do her best for her child. Instead of feeling anxious, so far as I know, I congratulate myself on the wisdom of the course I am taking."

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