

# HEART TO HEART; OR, LOVE'S UNERRING CHOICE.

## CHAPTER IV. "A SOUND OF REVELRY."

Brilliant sunshine was flooding the fair lawns and gardens of the Marham Abbey, and pouring its rays upon motley groups of people met there to celebrate the birthday festivities of the young heiress. In the park were three large marquees with pennons, on which were emblazoned Hilda's monogram and the coat-of-arms of the proud race from which she sprang. Within were tables decorated with profusions of fruit and flowers, and loaded with dainties. The squire's intimate friends had been told off to do duty as stewards, and now, decorated with rosettes of blue and silver, they were busy marshalling the guests into the seats allotted for them. The farmers, their wives and families, in one tent, the poorer tenantry in another, and the villagers in a third. A military band from Windsor was discoursing sweetest music to the high-born guests assembled on the lawn, immediately in front of the Abbey, while the local Temperance band was busy performing "The Roastbeef of Old England" in the neighborhood of the tents.

Roger Montacute, who headed the villagers' table, and was doing his best to attend to the wants of the guests, who were performing wonders in the demolition of gigantic sirloins and rounds of beef, mighty hams, tender fowls and ducks washed down with tankards of Old October, and finishing their repast with such trifles as plum pudding, jellies, blanc-manges and pounds of cherries and strawberries. But all things come to an end in time, and the birthday feast was no exception to the rule. The speeches had been made, the toasts proposed and duly honored, and Roger was free at last to seek repose from his labors in the society of his beloved Hilda.

The luncheon for the visitors who were staying at the Abbey, and those from the neighborhood who had joined the party, had been served in the great hall at 2 o'clock. Roger looking at his watch, and finding it was nearly half-past 4, knew that he would have to seek for Hilda in the grounds. It was rather like the proverbial search of a needle in a bundle of hay, he thought, as he passed group after group of pleasure-seekers without catching a glimpse of Hilda's white gown and radiant face.

Some were dancing quadrilles, under the hot sun, to the music of the local band, while a group of village lads were amusing themselves with "Aunt Sally," which Hilda has provided for their entertainment. At last, upon a level stretch of greenward, the centre of a group of village school children, and attended by Maria Heathcote and Nigel Wentworth, he found the lady of his love. She was busily employed in distributing various pretty and useful prizes for which the eager children had been racing, but desisted from her occupation when she caught sight of Roger. The beaming smile with which she greeted him, and her fond look of affection, was gall and wormwood to the proud, passionate heart of Wentworth, and it was with difficulty he could call his usual "society" smile to his lips, while in his heart a raging demon of lust and envy was let loose.

"Now, Hilda," said Montacute, "I think I have done my duty well to-day, and deserve a cup of tea, which was being taken on to the terrace when I left the tent. So come with me," he said offering his arm, which she instantly accepted, saying as she did so:

"Mr. Wentworth, will you bring Miss Heathcote to have some tea? I am sure she needs it after her exertions."

And Nigel had no alternative but to offer his arm to the vicar's charming daughter, and follow in the wake of the others to the lawn.

A distinguished company of "the county people" were gathered upon the terrace, flirting, drinking tea and languidly watching a number of the village lads and lasses, who were dancing a wonderful set of country dances, which seemed to have no end, and which evidently required a good deal of exertion, to judge by the flushed countenances of the girls, and the moist and perspiring aspect of their swains.

"Poor dear things!" said Maria to Mr. Wentworth, as they mounted the terrace steps, "isn't it quite too delightful to see them enjoying themselves?—so Arcadian, you know! But how warm the dear creatures look! Don't they?" she said, as she sank into a garden chair and accepted a cup of tea from a gentleman who stood near.

And so the afternoon waned and the golden moon rose slowly over the tree tops, and a gentle breeze sprang up, laden with the perfume of myriads of Summer flowers which cooled the heated waltzers and gave fresh impetus to the dancers on the lawn; and the tents, where plenty of ale and sparkling cups of all kinds of refreshing beverages were to be obtained, were thronged with the thirsty crowd, who had made up their minds to enjoy to the utmost their share of the festival, for at 10 o'clock it was understood that the park was to be cleared, and several of the county police force were on the spot to assist in clearing the grounds ere the ball, to which all the neighborhood was invited, commenced. And now the barouches and landaus of the county magnates began to roll through the park gates and along the avenue to the great hall doors, where Hilda, looking love, fier than ever in her white satin gown adorned with costly lace and sprays of stephanotis, her father's birthday gift of opals and diamonds gleaming among her golden tresses and clasping her white throat and arms stood by the side of the proud and happy Squire to receive the guests. Then came the officers' drag from Windsor and the Abbey carriages which had gone to meet the special train conveying Hilda's London friends, and soon the flower-decked hall was filled with a

throng of beautifully dressed women and highbred men, and the strains of the exquisite band floated through the air, while eyes looked love to eyes that spoke again and all went merry as a marriage bell.

The early part of the evening was passed by Hilda in dancing sundry "duty dances" with the Berkshire Squires, who were among her father's oldest friends, and she was resting for a few minutes in the conservatory, which was lighted with colored lamps and furnished with luxurious lounges, when Nigel Wentworth approached and requested the honor of her hand for the waltz which was just commencing. Rather unwillingly Hilda rose and was soon floating through the ballroom in Wentworth's strong arm, while the plaintive strain of the "Sweethearts" waltz was rising and falling on the air.

Both were excellent dancers, and, much as she disliked Nigel, Hilda could not but enjoy her waltz, and they danced till the last bar died away gently on the air.

"You look pale," said Nigel, his deep voice taking a tender tone. "Come into the library and rest a while," leading her into the dim, deserted room as he spoke.

The great oriel window was open, and the cool, perfumed night air gently stirred the curtains of heavy green velvet which draped the lofty window. The bright beams of the moon were throwing fantastic patterns on the polished oak floor, which was only covered in the middle of the room by a carpet of rich Persian dyes. The huge apartment, lit only by clusters of wax candles in silver sconces set against the wall, had a weird aspect viewed in the shadowy light, and Hilda shuddered with a nervous feeling, for which she could not account, as she entered.

"What is the matter, Miss Deloraine? Are you cold?" asked Wentworth, pressing closer to his side the little trembling hand.

"No, I am not cold," rejoined Hilda, drawing away her hand and sinking down upon a velvet-covered easy chair by the open window. "I felt an uneasy feeling as if some one was walking over my grave," she said, trying to force a laugh, as she glanced up in the dark, passionate face of her father's trusted friend.

"I brought you in here, Miss Deloraine," said Nigel, seating and trying to possess himself of her hand, "to tell you something that I can keep to myself no longer. I love you, Hilda—an, so passionately that I cannot remain longer in this state of uncertainty. Hilda, dearest, best beloved, I know I am unworthy of you, but will you be my wife?"

"Mr. Wentworth!" exclaimed Hilda indignantly, "surely you are mad. What encouragement have I ever given you to speak to me in this manner?"

"None," replied Wentworth, gloomily, "but surely you cannot be angry with the love which your own beauty, your own sweetness has called into life?"

"But I am angry," replied the girl, "and I consider you forget yourself strangely to speak to me in this manner."

"Oh, Hilda," he exclaimed, his voice taking an agonized tone as he noted the girl's look of aversion, "for Heaven's sake do not crush all my hopes. Give me time to try and win the one prize I care for in this world, striving as he spoke to clasp her in his arms."

Neither now nor in the future will I listen to you Mr. Wentworth, and I repeat that I consider you have been guilty of great presumption in speaking to me at all upon such a subject."

For Hilda, in all the pride of her youth and beauty, considered there was an unmeasurable distance between herself and her father's lawyer, and had no pity for the agony of the man whom she had always disliked.

Wentworth saw in a moment that the game was up, which he would freely have perilled his soul to win, and, stung to madness by Hilda's look of scorn, forgot the caution which was a part of his nature, as he exclaimed:

"I have to thank Mr. Montacute for this destruction of all my cherished hopes. I know full well that he is your favored lover, but let Roger Montacute look to himself, for, by Heaven, I will not stand tamely by and see my happiness shattered by a country bumpkin like himself. Oh, Hilda," he aided, in pleading, passionate tones, "don't be so cruel; there is no one who can love you more than I do."

"I am 'Hilda' only to my friends, Mr. Wentworth; to all else I am 'Miss Deloraine,'" said the young girl, with cutting irony. "And let me assure you that were there no Mr. Montacute in the world I should still have refused the honor you would offer me. I am sorry for your disappointment, but you have brought it on yourself. Doubtless you will soon forget my refusal to bestow on you my hand and fortune."

This unlooked for and, in truth, undeserved insult—for had Hilda been utterly penniless, Nigel Wentworth would still have longed to make her his wife—roused all that was evil in the man's nature, and catching her to his breast as she stood before him, he pressed a burning kiss upon her lips, exclaiming as he did so:

"You will never be Roger Montacute's wife, Hilda, for by heaven, if you refuse my love I will be revenged, and you know no power over you, proud girl, or you would never defy me thus openly!"

And holding her so tightly in his arms that she felt against his bosom the beating of his stormy heart, he rained down passionate kisses upon her lips, which she was powerless to resist, and then, losing her from his arms, he turned away and quitted the room.

## CHAPTER V. CYPRUS OR ORANGE BLOSSOMS?

"Can you spare half an hour to come down to the church and see what you think of the decorations?" asked Maria Heathcote one bitterly cold day in January, as she entered Hilda's pleasant morning-room, where that young lady was busy examining the contents of sundry boxes and packages. "Are those some more of your things, dear?" taking up some dainty trifle which Hilda's maid was taking out of a box marked with the name of the great "Elise." "I thought everything was packed?"

"Oh, no, Maria, not everything; only those that I am going to take with me; but let us go down to the church, dear. I am rather tired and stupid this morning, and the air will revive me. Fetch my fur coat and hat, Perkins," she added, turning to her maid.

And in a few minutes the two girls were crossing the park together.

It was the eve of Hilda Deloraine's marriage. The next morning would see her plight her vows to Roger Montacute, and in all the kingdom there was no happier woman than Mark Deloraine's daughter. The course of her love had run upon velvet. Both the squire and Mrs. Palmer had been delighted at the engagement. Roger's frank, manly, pleasant disposition had long endeared him to Deloraine, and Mrs. Palmer was rejoiced that her nephew should marry so wealthy and beautiful a girl as Hilda, and one, too, whose birth and lineage were irreproachable.

Mrs. Palmer would never have tolerated a mesalliance for that beloved nephew. Hilda had never breathed a word to her father concerning the painful scene which had taken place between herself and Mr. Wentworth on the night of her birthday ball. She knew how greatly her father esteemed and trusted Nigel, and she could not bear to be the cause of separating him from his friend. She had, therefore, on the rare occasions of Wentworth's visits to the Abbey, met him as if nothing had happened to disturb the serenity of their intercourse, though she had carefully avoided ever being left alone with him, as she was fearful lest he should again urge his suit upon her. He had arrived at the Abbey on the preceding evening, bringing with him the marriage settlements, which were to be signed that evening by the bride and bridegroom. Several of the guests who were to attend the marriage were staying at the Temple with Mrs. Palmer; others were expected to arrive at the Abbey in time for dinner, so that Hilda knew, as she took her way across the park with Maria, that this would in all probability be the last confidential chat she would have with her old friend.

"Here is Mr. Wentworth to-day, Hilda," asked Maria, as they crossed the ivy-covered bridge that spanned the moat. The young lady would have been by no means averse to a chat with Nigel, who could, when he pleased, make himself eminently fascinating to the fair sex, and rather resented his withdrawing himself from their society.

"He has gone to meet papa, dear," answered Hilda. "He seemed at a loss what to do with himself this afternoon, so I suggested that means of occupying his time."

"Where is the squire?" asked Maria.

"He rode into Windsor this morning," rejoined Hilda. "I expect we shall find him at home when we return."

"And Roger?"

"And Roger also."

They had by this time reached the door of the church, which stood open, and the two girls entered.

"Oh, how exquisite!" exclaimed Maria looking down the nave with a critical air. And, indeed, the church did look beautiful, seen in the golden western light that shone through the partly painted window, and flung its rich colors upon the marble pavement. The pillars were wreathed with rich scarlet and white camelias, while font and pulpit, altar and reredos—aye, even the tombs in the burial chapel itself—were adorned with profusions of rich hot house blossoms; the cross over the altar was formed of orange flowers and stephanotis, which exhaled a subtle perfume as the girls stood in the chancel admiring the effect of the beautiful church decked for the bridal.

As Hilda stood silent, listening to Maria's gay chat, the ring of spurs was heard upon the time-worn marble pavement, and Roger Montacute, his tall form clad in riding dress, advanced to meet the girls.

"How did you know we were here Roger?" asked Hilda, as her lover clasped her hand in his.

"I have been to the Abbey, dear," he replied, "and Mason told me where you were gone. Come, Hilda you can look at all this to-morrow," he headed, with a glance of fond passion down at the girl's blushing face. "Come away, now; it is freezing sharply, and will be bitterly cold before the sun sets."

Hilda took his offered arm with an answering smile, and together the lovers and Maria left the church.

A few hours later Hilda stood in the drawing-room chatting to her guests and waiting the return of her father, it being already past the dinner hour.

"How lovely she looks," thought Roger, as his eyes rested on her radiant face and queenly figure, set off by the quaint dress of Indian cashmere, of a deep Venetian red, the long velvet waistcoat, tight sleeves and skirt, mass of gold braid and embroidery. How his heart throbbed when he remembered that in a few short hours this peerless beauty would be his own forever. Ah! Roger, recollect the old proverb of the cup and the lip, and be not too sure that the bliss which seems within your grasp to-night will ever be your own.

A rustle in the hall, plainly heard through the open drawing-room door, caused Hilda to exclaim gladly:

"Ah! there's papa returned at last."

And she was leaving the room to welcome her father when she was met upon the threshold by Nigel Wentworth. He wore his riding dress and was white and agitated.

"Where is papa?" she asked surprised at his excited manner. "Then, as Wentworth took her hand to lead her back into the drawing-room, she exclaimed: 'Something is the matter! What is it? Where is my father?'"

"Mr. Montacute," Nigel cried out, "pray come here; interpose your authority. Miss Deloraine cannot go to the Squire now."

"But I will go!" cried Hilda, snatching her hand from Nigel's hold, and before either of the gentlemen could prevent her she had rushed from the room.

Hark! What was that appalling shriek that echoed through the hall, causing the company in the drawing-room to turn pale and hurry helter-skelter there to learn the cause of that dread sound? It was soon accounted for. In the centre of a group of terrified servants, stretched upon the table of the hall, lay the body of the Squire, and it was plain enough to the most careless observer that life was extinct. His faithful groom stood holding his master's fast stiffening hand and sobbing like a child, while the unhappy Hilda was lying face downward across her father's body,

without sense or motion. She had become insensible immediately after uttering that cry of horror which had pierced the ears of the listeners in the drawing-room.

"For Heaven's sake, get her away and clear the hall," said the doctor, who had been hastily summoned.

And Roger, lifting the form of his darling in his arms, carried her to her own room, where he resigned her to the care of her maid and the housekeeper, returning to the hall to hear the verdict of the medical man. It was soon known; all human aid was unavailing. A false step of his horse upon the slippery avenue had flung his rider headlong upon the hard road at the foot of the terrace steps, and it was a corpse which the frightened groom and Nigel Wentworth carried into the hall, never more to re-echo to Mark Deloraine's genial voice and manly tread. In after years, Montacute could never remember the events of that awful night without a shudder. The corpse of the master of the Abbey was in the dining-room awaiting the inquest in the midst of wreaths and stands of bright flowers, costly plate and all the splendid paraphernalia that had been got together to celebrate the wedding festival. The guests had all taken their departure from the house of mourning; all save Maria Heathcote, who remained with her unhappy friend, and Nigel Wentworth, to whom everybody looked for advice, aid and assistance. Hilda remained throughout the whole of the day which was to have been her bridal in a state of semi-stupor, induced by the composing draught which the doctor had administered to her, and the inquest was over, the body of the poor Squire placed in his coffin, and the day of the funeral fixed, before the wretched girl had regained sufficient consciousness to feel the full force of the blow which was fated to shatter all her dreams of happiness.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## QUEEN VICTORIA'S CROWN.

Thousands of Diamonds and Gems Are In It, and It Is Very Uncomfortable.

In the tower of London is kept the Queen's crown, the diadem used at her coronation in 1838. It is composed of very ancient relics, but is a very modern composition, having been made by the firm of Rundell & Bridge, and completed in the year 1838.

The crown is constructed of jewels taken from old crowns, and other stones provided by her Majesty. It consists of emeralds, rubies, sapphires, pearls and diamonds. The stones which are set in gold and silver, encase a crimson velvet cap with a border of ermine, the whole of the interior being lined with the finest white silk.

Above the crimson border on the lower edge of the band is a row of 129 pearls. Round the upper part of the band is a border of 112 pearls. In the front, stationed between the two borders of pearls, is a huge sapphire, purchased by George IV., set in the centre of valuable pearls. At the back, in the same position, is another but smaller sapphire.

The sides are adorned with three sapphires, and between these are eight emeralds. Above and below the sapphires, extending all round the crown, are placed at intervals fourteen large diamonds, the eight emeralds being encircled by clusters of diamonds, 128 in number. Between the emeralds and sapphires are sixteen ornaments, each consisting of eight diamonds. Above a circular band are eight sapphires, set separately, encircled by eight diamonds. Between each of these eight sapphires are eight festoons of eighteen diamonds each.

In front of the crown is a diamond Maltese cross, in the centre of which glitters the famous ruby given to Edward I. by Don Pedro the Cruel. This is the stone which adorned the helmet of Henry V. at the battle of Agincourt. The centre of the ruby is hollowed out, and the space filled, in accordance with the Eastern custom, with a smaller ruby. The Maltese cross is formed of seventy-five splendid diamonds. At each of the sides and at the back is a Maltese cross with emerald centres, containing respectively 132, 124, 130 sparkling diamonds.

Level with the four Maltese crosses, and stationed between them, are four ornaments shaped like the fleur-de-lis, with four rubies in the centre, and surrounded by diamonds, containing 85,86, and 87 diamonds. From the Maltese crosses spring four imperial arches, composed of oak leaves and diamonds. The leaves are formed of 728 diamonds; 32 pearls represent the acorns and 54 diamonds the cups.

From the upper part of the imperial arches hang suspended four large pendant-shaped pearls set in diamond cups, each cup being formed of twelve diamonds, the stems from each of the four hanging pearls being incrustured with twenty-four diamonds. Above the arch is the mount, which is made of 438 diamonds. The zone and arc are represented by thirty-three diamonds. On the summit of the throne is a cross, which has for its centre a rose-cut sapphire set in the centre of fourteen large diamonds.

Altogether the crown comprises one large ruby, one large sapphire, twenty-six smaller sapphires, eleven emeralds, four rubies, 1,367 brilliants, 1,273 rose diamonds, four pendant-shaped pearls, and 273 smaller pearls.

It is the heaviest and most uncomfortable diadem of any crowned head in Europe.

## Avaricious.

Avarice is one of the vices that go with a man to the end.

Mr. Watson, a man of very large fortune and uncle to Lord Rockingham, just before he died desired his attendant to give him a shirt out of a certain drawer to which he pointed.

Gracious, sir, said the attendant, what do you mean, to think of putting on another shirt now?

Why, said Watson, according to custom the shirt I have on will be the perquisite of those who lay me out, and that is an old ragged one, good enough for them.

## The Unvarnished Fact.

He—Arctic explorers are the safest men in the world to trust yourself to.

She—Why so?

He (with a howl)—They are always cool in the time of greatest danger.

## HEALTH.

### Catarrh of the Stomach.

The stomach is covered throughout with a lining identical with that of the nose, mouth and throat. All disorders of the stomach, therefore, are attended with more or less of the same condition which is present in disturbances of these passages—that is, catarrh.

Chronic catarrh of the stomach commonly arises from repeated attacks of acute indigestion, though it may follow any disturbance which produces a congestion of the arteries and veins of the stomach, as disease of the heart, lungs or liver. It may also arise from the continued use of alcoholic or other irritating drinks.

In recent cases of gastric catarrh, as has been said, the same conditions are present as in every case of inflammation of the mouth, nose and throat, and the surface of the stomach presents the same red, swollen, slime-covered appearance. As the disease progresses, however, there is not only a superabundance of catarrhal secretion, which envelops every particle of food that is put in the stomach in an impervious and slimy covering, but the glands which secrete the all-important gastric juices and which are situated just below the surface, are themselves attacked, and one after another are destroyed.

By this means the power of the stomach, as an organ of digestion, is slowly but surely undermined. A more or less extensive ulceration of the surface follows the destruction of the glands. These raw patches give rise to a disagreeable gnawing sensation, and to the tenderness which is experienced at the pit of the stomach, and are responsible for the patient's unnatural thirst for water and stimulants.

The food, being covered with mucus and thus rendered impervious to the action of the juices, undergoes fermentation. To the gases which arise from this fermentation is due the prominence which may be felt at the pit of the stomach. To them also, indirectly, is to be attributed the loss of appetite, since there is an almost constant feeling of fullness in the stomach. The body thus suffers literal starvation. Tonsillitis of an aggravated type adds to the general distress.

Only light, easily digested food, well cooked and without spicy seasoning, should be taken into the stomach of one troubled with this form of catarrh. The digestion may be aided by some one of the many pepsin preparations.

A popular method of treating gastric catarrh is by washing out the stomach daily with a syphon. Rest of the body in general is as imperative as rest of the stomach.

### The Sick Room.

A woman who is a trained nurse, in a course of lectures on her profession says there is no such thing as a born nurse; the habit of observation is a duty and the basis of nursing, which is an art only to be learned by practice.

A sunny sick room, one that is entered by the sun once in 24 hours, is desirable; patients placed on the south side of an hospital ward recover sooner, by from ten days to a fortnight, than those on the north side. Plenty of light is beneficial, except in cases of brain disease. The less furniture in a room the better, and to keep it clean a damp duster should be used instead of a dry one.

The air must be kept as pure inside as outside, and there is little or no risk about having the window open, top and bottom, if the patient is well covered, head included, and a good fire kept burning. Night air is not injurious; it is purer in a city after 10 p. m. than any other time.

The bed should never be in a corner but accessible from all points. In fever and surgical cases, a "cradle" has sometimes to be used to keep off the weight of the bedclothes; an impromptu cradle can be made out of a bandbox, with the bottom knocked out.

Bedmaking is the grammar and keystone of nursing; many regular nurses cannot make a good bed. It is important to act with decision when the time comes for any office, and not to worry the patient by hesitation or talking of what is to be done; to tread quietly but firmly, not to tip-toe, and never to whisper to a third person.

Every effort ought to be made to secure for the patient two hours' sleep before midnight. Amateur nurses often break down through neglecting to take food when keeping watch through the night.

### Correct Breathing.

Breathe properly and systematically and rhythmically and you may overcome indigestion, weak lungs, indigestion and even seasickness. This at least is the theory, as well as the successful practice, of the patients of the famous Dr. Oertel, of Munich, who has elaborated a system of breathing that he has set forth in a large work on the subject. The breathing is done by count, or rather by steps—so many full deep breaths to a step; the number being regulated by the nature of the place where the walk is taken, whether it be level or an ascent or descent. The speed is regulated by the ailment and condition of the patient.

### Good for the Shoes.

Vaseline is highly recommended for use on shoes, instead of any kind of polish. Put it on at night, rubbing it in well; after wearing the shoes a short time in the morning you will be surprised at the polish they will take on. A little lamplack mixed with the vaseline adds somewhat to the polish.

### Colonel of Many Regiments.

The Prince of Wales is the greatest colonel, in a numerical sense, the world has ever known. To say nothing of his honorary colonelcies in foreign armies, besides the leadership of the Blucher Hussars, he is the colonel of no fewer than sixty regiments in his royal mother's armies.