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The Web;

OR,
TRUE LOVE'S PASSION.

CHAPTER XX.
The Dictates of Fate.

This request rather surprised Cyril, and he was silent for a second or two. "Certainly not, if you don't wish it," he said; "but—"

"You're wondering why I should ask you, sir?" said Furlong.

"Well, it does seem rather strange," said Cyril. "I don't see why you should care whether Mr. Wesley knows or does not know that I have met you."

Furlong did not respond for a while, and Cyril felt, rather than saw, him looking at him sideways from under his bushy brows; then he said:

"Strange? Yes, I dare say; but I've got my reasons, sir, and they are not altogether whimsical ones. If you insist upon my telling you—"

"Oh, come," Cyril interrupted him quickly, "I haven't the least wish to pry into your private affairs. If you have good reasons for keeping your movements secret, that should be sufficient for both of us; it is for me, at any rate."

"Thank you, sir," said Furlong, quietly, and not a whit embarrassed. "I dare say I shall be back before Mr. Wesley misses me."

There was silence between them for a while, but Cyril every now and then found his companion glancing at him covertly; and he smiled to himself as he thought that if Mr. Furlong was a bad character, how easily he could deal him, Cyril, a slow blow and ease him of his watch and chain.

But the idea did not alarm him, and he could not get up any definite distrust of that gentleman.

"You're traveling by an early train," said Furlong presently, not curiously, by any means.

"Yes," said Cyril, with a sigh, "I am going to leave England; for some time, I'm afraid."

"Yes, sir? On pleasure, I hope?"

"No; business," said Cyril.

"That's pleasure sometimes," remarked Mr. Furlong, philosophically. They were nearing the station lights, and he stopped as he spoke.

"Going back?" said Cyril. "Well, thank you for your company; I wish you an enjoyable holiday."

"Thank you, sir," said Furlong;

the frank, pleasant way which so quickly wins the liking of poor people. "Well, I hope you will have a good time."

Then he settled himself in his corner, and once more gave himself up to thinking of Norah.

CHAPTER XXI. The Deadly Drug.

Guildford Berton had remained until nearly all the guests had gone; and after Norah had vanished he had, so to speak, transferred his attention to Lady Ferndale, hovering about her and rendering her little services in his peculiarly unobtrusive fashion, so that Lady Ferndale felt almost remorseful for her poor opinion of him.

Indeed, when at last he came up, hat in hand, to take his farewell, she smiled upon him more graciously than she had ever done before.

"You have been very kind, Mr. Berton," she said, with a novel friendliness in her tone. "I don't know how to thank you enough for taking so much trouble."

But even as she spoke she caught herself asking mentally what it was in Mr. Berton's dark, handsome face which jarred upon her.

"I have taken no trouble, Lady Ferndale, but have just enjoyed with the rest what has indeed been a delightful time. I only hope that you are not quite worn out with all your exertions. It is a pity that you could not have retired with Lady Norah, but that would have been impossible, I suppose? I trust Lady Norah will have recovered from her fatigue to-morrow."

"Oh, I hope so," responded Lady Ferndale, and she looked at him keenly, for there was something in the tone in which he spoke Norah's name which caught her ladyship's acute ears.

"So that is it," she murmured, as she watched him walk off in his leisurely, impassive manner. "Yes, he has been paying court to her all day. Poor man, I wonder how he would feel if he knew how much Norah dislikes him?"

Whatever his feelings might have been under such knowledge, Mr. Guildford Berton was in the best of humors with himself as he sauntered out into the cool, early morning air; and as he carefully chose a cigar from his case and cut it, a smile of satisfaction flitted over his dark face.

Every man in the game of life has occasional inings, and Guildford Berton had enjoyed some pretty successful inings that day. Indeed, as he went over it all as he walked along, he was conscious of a feeling of surprise at the good fortune which had attended him.

He meant winning Lady Norah, by fair means if possible, by foul if foul were necessary; and as to scruples—well, no such word as "scruples" was in his lexicon.

Some natures delight in plotting and scheming, and Guildford Berton's was one of them. In the silent solitude of his gloomy cottage he had spent many an hour, since Norah's arrival at the Court, in trying to find some means of securing her; but to-day there had actually been no need for scheming. Everything had played into his hands; even Cyril himself, although unconsciously.

He had feared that when Cyril arrived he would seek out Norah and monopolize her; but events had occurred which, trivial in themselves, had kept them apart, and then had come the scene between Cyril and Becca.

If Guildford Berton could have "staged" it personally he could not have done so to greater advantage to himself. Not only to Norah, but to any one, the placing of the ring on Becca's finger by Cyril would have looked like love-making, and Guildford Berton looked up at the stars with an almost devout thankfulness that his luck had prompted him at that moment to ask Norah to come into the air. To her it must have seemed as if Cyril were carrying on at least a flirtation with Becca, and Guildford Berton knew how Norah would regard such a proceeding.

"I fancy that you have put a spoke in your own wheel, Mr. Burne," he muttered, with a sinister smile. "That little scene with Becca will require a great deal of explanation."

But still an explanation might be offered and accepted, and he knit his brows trying to scheme some way of

preventing it. He did not know, as yet, that Cyril was leaving Santeigh by the early train, and might be absent for months, or Guildford Berton's spirits would have risen still higher.

He was a little uneasy, too, about his position with Becca.

Even clever men have their weak moments, and in one of these weak moments Guildford Berton had allowed himself to be smitten by Becca South's black eyes. He had begun by meeting her secretly and flirting with her, and almost insensibly he had drifted into promising to marry her.

She was pretty and fresh; her half-wild, defiant manner had taken his fancy; but some time before Norah had appeared on the scene he had grown tired of Becca, and now she threatened to be very much in his way, notwithstanding that she had been unintentionally of such use to him to-night.

As he walked along he tried to think what he should do with her. Becca was not easy to get rid of. He might, if he had set about it earlier, have procured her a good situation in London, but Norah, had by taking Becca into her service; all unconsciously destroyed his chance of getting rid of her in that way.

As to marrying her! He smiled scornfully at the thought.

The person he meant to marry was Lady Norah, not Becca South, the village girl who had served to amuse him and while away a dull hour or two.

Perhaps, he thought, he might offer her money, but there was not much encouragement in the idea. Becca was not the kind of girl to be bought off; but still, he might try it.

He put her out of his mind after a few minutes, and walked on slowly, smoking his cigar—a very good one—and building castles in the air.

What a fortune and a career lay before him! As the husband of Lady Norah and the owner of the Arrowdale wealth he would be almost the most important person in the county—he, who had been looked down upon by the fellows. He would pay them back in some way when his day came!

He would show them that the steward's son could be as good and as grand a gentleman as any of them.

He was enjoying himself in this fashion when he reached the small door in the high wall of his cheerless cottage, and had inserted the key in the lock, when he felt a touch upon his arm, and a voice said:

"Guildford!"

He turned, and saw Becca standing in the shadow beside him, and with difficulty repressed the oath of impatience and annoyance which rose to his lips.

The touch and voice of the girl he had deceived knocked down his castles in the air like a house of cards, but his voice was as composed and suave as usual as he said in a tone of pleasant surprise:

"Ah, is that you, Becca?"

(To be continued.)

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War News

Messages Received Previous to 9

THE GREEK SITUATION
LONDON.
In view of the definite refusal of the Greek Government to deliver up the forts demanded by the Allies, and of Vice-Admiral Du Fourmont's order of the allied squadrons to take action to-day unless this was acceded to, the news from Athens is awaited anxiously. A dispatch from Athens late yesterday afternoon showed that preparations were being made to resist the advance of arms, and that a French force had arrived at Piraeus to land. The Admiralty is warning that prominent persons taking part in any resistance would be arrested. The Greek Government guarantees that order will be maintained, but it is feared that the arrival of reinforcements will have opposite effect. Admiral Du Fourmont insisted that 64 mountain guns be landed to-day. Further time given for the delivery of arms and materials. An Evening Standard dispatch from Athens at 1.15 this morning, says that further reinforcements have been received from the south from Thessaly and other parts of Greece. North of a garrison of Chalcids is marching towards Schimatari. The adds that a minor disturbance had taken place last night. A few revolvers were fired, but no one was hurt. Just before the time of firing a dispatch, King Constantine notified the Entente Ministers of his decision to hand over the guns.

RUSSIANS ATTACKING
LONDON.
A Berlin wireless despatch reports that the Russians in the battle with the Germans in the pathians and Eastern Trans caucasian front. The despatch continues with stubbornness front of four hundred km (about 248 miles). The despatch says the Russian forces are being renewed constantly.

UNCONFIRMED REPORT
LONDON.
The Cologne Gazette publishes unconfirmed report that troops have arrived at Bucharest.

TURKS DEFEATED.
PETROGRAD.
Turkish troops operating in the Caucasus have suffered defeat at the hands of the Russians, who inflicted great losses on the Turks, according to official reports. The statement of the Persian front our detachment the left flank during November 27, conducted a series of brief attacks against the enemy, mostly in the evening of the evening of the river plete disorder and sustaine losses. We captured two machine batteries, one machine gun and great quantity of material.

ROUMANIANS STILL RETREATING.
BUCHAREST.
After an infantry action we had at Campulung, and are retreating towards Dumbovitza Valley where they had been violently attacked.

TROOPS LAND AT PIRAEUS.
LONDON.
A detachment of Entente troops has embarked at Piraeus, the port of Athens.

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