



Happiness Secured

A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER XXVI. THE DOCTOR'S SECRET—AND MINE

In honor of Doctor Fuller's presence, Adelaide, who has been confined to her room for a week, and who has no suspicion of the real purpose of his visit to Deepdene, comes downstairs for the evening and makes a brave effort to appear as much like her old self as possible.

The happy light has faded from her eyes, and there is a pitiful change in the outline of the pretty face and figure that strikes me with a sense of pain as I look at her. She is doing her best to hide her trouble; but it is only too plain that her grief has struck deep, that the sensitive heart is still quivering from the wound it has received. Yet she brightens a little as the doctor, relaxing his usual stoicism, draws her into a quiet little chat on general topics, with the object, I secretly believe, of leading up to something more personal presently.

"But what have you been doing to yourself?" she asks, in his brusque way, as a little errand across the room carries me to within reach of her voice. "Have you been working too hard? or have you been ill?"

"I have been ill," she replies, "so ill that at one time I thought—"

"What—what did you think?" she asks, as she comes to a sudden pause, her hands clasped listlessly in her lap, and her hollow, hopeless eyes staring dreamily before her.

"What I was going to die," she replies, as absently as if she were talking to herself.

"Nonsense! My dear Miss Kendrick, you must not give way to such morbid fancies as that! People who take to regarding their case as hopeless merely retard their own progress. You have no need to be alarmed, believe me!"

"Alarmed!" she repeats, looking up at him in surprise. "Do you think I am afraid to die? Ah, Doctor Fuller, if you could tell me, as I have heard of doctors telling their patients, that I had but a short time to live, it would not cost me a penny! I care too little for all the future can offer me to want to drag through it!"

"You feel like that because you are unhappy," he replies, a gentle compassion softening his plain, dark face. "You have had some great sorrow, I am sure! I cannot guess what it is, of course; but try to believe me when I tell you that you will get over it if you try. One after another the things we most value slip away from us, yet we learn to do without them; to take life as we find it—such a different affair, you know, from what in the first enthusiasm of youth we hope and expect. Whatever our troubles, we get used to them in time."

"Do people ever get used to misery?" she asks, with a sound in her voice that is like a stifled sob.

"We get used to everything in time," he replies. "Time is the great healer—the merciful Lethe in which many a bitter sorrow is drowned."

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Try to be patient, and all will come right."
"Patient?" she repeats. "I am patient; but it is because my heart is broken! Ah, Doctor Fuller, you are very good; but you don't know—you cannot know! For some people there may be hope, but not for me! Mine is a trouble that never can come right. Pray forgive me," she adds, with a doubtful glance at her listener; "I did not mean to be so egotistical as to speak of my troubles to you."

"Never is a very long day," he replies. "I do not know the nature of your sorrow, Miss Kendrick; but try to think with the gentle poet who wrote 'Maude Muller,' that 'angels may roll the stone from its grave away.' You cannot tell—we none of us can tell what the future holds in store for us," he gravely adds.

Sharp and quick upon his words follows a loud knock at the door that startles us all; and Len, who goes to open it, comes back almost immediately with a face full of surprise and importance.

"It is Mrs. Martin, girls," he begins. "She is in a heap of trouble, poor soul! That crazy creature over there at the cottage has been and gone and cut her own throat. Nothing very alarming, I fancy; but poor Mrs. Martin is evidently frightened to death—can't stop the blood, and all that sort of thing, you know! Not knowing what else to do, she threw a shawl over her head and rushed over to us, as her nearest neighbors, to ask me to fetch a doctor for her. What a providential thing that we happen to have the desired article in the house!"

Len continues, with a glance at our guest. "I'm going to see what can be done. You will come with me, Fuller, will you not?"

"I must go with them, Lesley," Adelaide exclaims, her hands shaking like a leaf. "I may be able to render some service. Will you come with me?" she asks, rising from her seat with a face as colorless as marble.

"Not you, dear," I entreat, with a frightened glance at the quivering lips and poor, little, trembling hands. "I will go if you like; but the excitement will be too much for you. Only stay quietly here, dear, while I go over to the cottage with Len and the doctor and see what can be done."

"I cannot—indeed I cannot! The suspense would be a thousand times worse than any excitement!" is the reply. "I must go! I must see this woman who has robbed me of my happiness!"

I am obliged to give way. One look into the resolute white face, and I see how worse than useless either persuasion or argument must be; and three minutes later we are on our way to Ivy Cottage.

Mrs. Martin, who has gone on in advance, opens the door on our arrival, and admits us into the tiny hall, from which, opening a second door to the right, she ushers us into the parlor beyond, where a sight meets my eyes that turns me faint and sick with horror.

Stretched on the floor, with a pillow under her head, lies the wild form that has so often haunted my thoughts since that first night that we came to Deepdene.

Her long, gray hair, all dabbled in blood, strays wildly over the pillow, while the poor, thin face looks almost ghastly in the pallor of unconscious exhaustion.

A pitiful spectacle, indeed, I think, with conflicting feelings of pity and loathing, as I remember her evil history and the heavy trouble she has brought into the lives of others.

"Why, doctor, what is up?" exclaims Len, in a tone of surprise, his voice breaking sharply in upon the silence of the room. "You don't mean to say that the sight of your patient has upset you, old fellow?"

Well may he ask, for, looking up into the dark face, I behold that same

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white, stricken look of horror that came to it that night in the garden at Deepdene when the demented inmate of Ivy Cottage stood so unexpectedly before us in the moonlight.

He does not answer; but the next moment, with an evident effort to control himself, he is bending in silence over the unconscious figure on the floor, bathing away the blood and bandaging the wound in her throat, which, ghastly as it looks, is not dangerous, he tells us.

With the assistance of Len, he lifts her to the sofa, and applies restoratives, by means of which the patient is brought back to consciousness.

"She is coming to herself quite reasonably, poor dear," Mrs. Martin remarks, in a little aside to me, as her charge opens her eyes and looks from one face to another with the expression of a person whose mind is struggling back from some long, bewildering dream. "She does have intervals of rationality at times, you know, but it never lasts."

"Robert, is that you?" the patient asks at last, as her eyes encounter the stern, dark face of the doctor—stern, and hard, and pitiless as I have never seen him before. "Good heavens! What brought you here, Robert Fuller? How did you find me? What are you going to do to me?" she asks without relaxing, that shrinking, frightened stare she has fixed on him.

"Calm yourself!" is the stern reply. "You must be very quiet, or you will make yourself ill."
"Ah, yes; and that might spoil my beauty," she replies, with what looks like the ghost of a coquettish smile, the brief interval of reason evidently at an end. "You are so proud of my beauty, are you not, Robert? And then there is the ball to-night, and I must look my best," she rambles on, her mind wandering back into the past.

But it is Doctor Fuller who absorbs my thoughts and rivets my attention, as, with that stern, inscrutable face of his turning to stone, he stands there, when everything needful has been done, looking down, stern and silent, on the pitiful wreck of womanhood before him, with an expression that defies my efforts to read it.

"What do you know of Mrs. Lennox, Doctor Fuller?" I ask, with rather strutting abruptness, a little later this evening as we stand for a few moments alone together in the lamp-lit parlor at Deepdene. "What is she to you?" I add, determined, if possible, to penetrate to the heart of this mysterious connection of his with Ernest Warden's mad wife.

"To me!" he repeats, the dark eyes flashing down at me with a start of surprise. "How do you know that she is anything to me?"

"I am sure of it!" I persist, my curiosity getting the better of my politeness. "She recognized you, and called you by name."

"Yes," he replies, as, with his back to the fern-filled fireplace, he draws himself up so far above me that I can hardly see his face; "but what do you

know of her, Miss Kendrick? How came this Mrs. Lennox, as you call her, at Ivy Cottage?"

"Do you never answer one question except by asking another, Doctor Fuller?" I return, a little irritably. "You have not told me yet what you know of Mrs. Lennox."

"You must curb your curiosity, Lesley, for that is a question that I cannot answer," he replies, in a gentler tone. "The subject is too painful a one for me. But you can answer mine. What do you know of her?"

"Simply that she is a charge of Ernest Warden's," I return.

"Of Warden's!" is the astonished exclamation. "In the name of wonder what does he know of her? What is she to him?"

"That is a question Mr. Warden must answer for himself, Doctor Fuller," I return, by no means disposed to betray his secret.

"Strange!" he exclaims, as if speaking rather to himself than to me. "She can have no possible claim upon him!"

Alas, how little he knows, how little he suspects!
"Mrs. Lennox's injuries are not dangerous, you think, Doctor Fuller?" I presently hazard, a wild hope springing up in my heart as I remember the fragile appearance of that thin figure and ghastly face, and the happiness her death would bring to Addie and the man she loves. "She looks very ill; she cannot possibly live long, I think."

"She is as likely to live as you or I," is the brief reply, by which my half-formed hope is shattered; "live to work more mischief and create more misery, perhaps!" he adds, in a tone both sad and bitter.

"I am sorry to hear it," I reply. "Don't look so horrified, Doctor Fuller! I mean what I say! That woman's life, wretched, purposeless as it is, stands between two people who might be very happy together if she were gone!"

To the day of my death I shall never forget the look of wondering surprise that comes into the grave face as I speak.

(To be Continued.)

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CABLE NEWS.

CLEMENCEAU'S ENCOURAGING MESSAGE.

PARIS, Aug. 26. (Havas Agency.)—Premier Clemenceau telegraphed the Presidents of the General Councils that they could rely upon the Government and Marshal Foch and his magnificent staff and the Allied Military Commanders to turn the present success of the Allied arms into a complete and decisive collapse of the enemy. The splendid victories of recent weeks, says M. Clemenceau, in which the spirit of our Allies has so magnificently rivalled ours, have definitely settled the fortunes of the war. The enemy, bewildered, deceived himself as to his own strength, and now is finding out that he underestimated us. The results achieved are the first fruits of our harvest of rewards, the highest of which will be having delivered the world from ruthless oppression and brutality.

NEW ATTACK BY BRITISH.

LONDON, Aug. 26. At three o'clock this morning our troops attacked in the Scarpe River section and are reported to have made progress. On the southern portion of the battlefield from the Somme, and by the slightly along the Somme, and by a successful operation have made progress in the direction of Maricourt. Yesterday evening the enemy launched strong counter attacks south and north of Bapaume in the neighborhood of Eaucourt, Abbeay and Fereville. Our troops met the enemy with the bayonet, inflicting heavy casualties upon him and taking prisoners. Another attack attempted by the enemy later in this latter neighborhood was also unsuccessful. Fereville is in our hands and we have made some progress beyond the villages north of this point. We have improved our position southeast of Mory and west of Croisilles. Heavy rain is falling on the battlefield.

BRITISH ADVANCE.

LONDON, Aug. 26. This morning's attack was launched between the Scarpe River and Pampou, and the heights northeast of Neuville Vitasse. In a few hours the British made an advance of two miles on a front of four miles. According to advices received here from the battlefield, Monchy le Preux, Busnappe and Vancourt, a little less than five miles southeast of Arras, have been taken in to-day's attacks. Further south the British have taken Mory and made progress to the southeast of the village.

SUBSTANTIAL VICTORY.

WITH THE FRENCH ARMIES IN FRANCE, Aug. 26. (By the A.P.)—The first phase of the Battle of the Oise has put the French in solid possession of the entire south bank of the Oise, west of the Allette, and also the Allette River from the Oise to just St. Mar. As the situation is highly general Mangin has won an absolutely substantial victory, capturing on the front, besides 13,000 prisoners and three hundred cannon captured. He set out first to drive