Her Adopted Daughter

"Yes, of course I do. What in the world put that fellow into your head dear?"

"Did you ever see her with him alone?"

"Yes, two or three times—afar off," said Fred, amused and wondering; "but never after that June, I think—no, and I don't remember her ever alluding to him. Why?"

"Was he her husband, do you think, Fred?"

Wyndham burst into a shout of laughter.

"Good gracious, no, my dear girl—certainly not; no more than I am; and it's my private belief, too, that the defunct or not known Mr. Deleware was a much bigger scamp than that fellow ever was."

"Well, but he might have been a lover of hers, perhaps," persisted Arline, "on his side at any rate."

"Oh, that I don't know. Yes, he might have been a lover of hers, perhaps, that was quite in his line, I should say," added Fred, laughing. "Are you meditating the perpetration of a three vol. novel, a la Lady Medora, sister mine?"

"You saucy boy! Not I. Stop to dinner dear?"

"Thanks, I'll vamoose to dress then. Ta-ta!"

Off he went.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STRANGER

The glorious old trees and saplings in Kensington Gardens were already beginning to put on their exquisite spring dress of beauty, even on this third morning of April, the sun shone bright and almost warm on the fair open glades carpeted with the young fresh, green grass; the clear water of the lake rippled under the light breeze that touched its surface, and stirred the tiny leaves just putting forth their dainty loveliness from the sheltering buds, the small birds chirruped in gay rejoicing.

"Telling the another
The spring—the spring is come,"

and high above, around their nests the rooks circled with their ceaseless "caw-caw"—that dear old familiar sound to those to whom it brings back memories of childhood days—when that sound was the sweet harbinger of spring in childish ears, and the childish eyes of wonder watched the busy, noisy builder above in the gaddy treetops.

A gentleman leaning on a stout, gold-headed stick, came slowly across the grass near the round pond, or lake, and sat down on a bench just beyond the trees in the sunlight, on which sat a very young and beautiful woman.

The gentleman was certainly middle aged, fifty, perhaps, dark and sallow, perfectly grey, and evidently either a semi-invalid or suffering from some recent illness, for, beside the stick and slow pace, he was wrapped in a winter ulster, and a fine wool scarf was about his shoulders and neck.

He just glanced at Lenore, for she it was, and leaned back against the seat beside him, but in a minute or two, in some way, the stick slid and fell to the ground. Mrs. Deleware instantly stooped, and replaced it with a bow and smile of that sweet, deferential courtesy which is so charming from youth and strength to age and weakness. It was courteously acknowledged.

"Thank you, very much, madame. A fine morning, is it not, for the time of the year, especially."

"Yes, indeed, and for England," said she, smiling.

"Ah, you are foreign, or have lived much abroad," he remarked, abruptly.

"I thought so from your manner and speech."

"I have lived much abroad, yes."

"So have I—in Germany. Do you know Ems."

"Oh, yes, but I was not long there."

At that minute a tall, slender child, a perfect picture of childish loviness and promise of future beauty—came running up, but stoped short at the sight of the stranger, her blue eyes gazing with curiosity, but without a touch of rudeness.

The gentleman, evidently rather an eccentric, and a bachelor, too, Lenore decided, looking at Pearl.

"Well, my pretty little maiden," said he, "and what do you think of European affairs, I wonder?"

Errol's daughter had not an atom of shyness, nor of forwardness, but just the prettiest, sweetest manners and grace a child could have. The winsome face that had once frowned so blackly on Clement Everest, now ripled with smiles and dimples.

"I don't know, sir, what this is, or I would tell you."

"That's a good little girl. Well I dare say you can tell me how old you are."

"I am nearly four years and a half old, I think."

"What a great age! And is your name Fairy Golden Hair, eh?"

"Oh—no—no," cried the child, as she laughed that rich, joyous laugh we never, ah! never hear after childhood. "I am Pearl."

"And a very precious Pearl, then I am sure, to your sister."

Pearl looked puzzled. Lenore laughed and colored a little.

"To her mother—yes, indeed!"

"You are not that child's mother?" exclaimed the old stranger in his abrupt way. "Her stepmother you mean I suppose, though even then—"

"No, I don't. Pearl is my own child."

"Well, then, you must have been a mere pair of babies when she was born," said the gentleman.

"Not quite so bad as that," answered Lenore, much amused; "I was not eighteen."

"Poor child. And is this your only one?"

Her face changed, she drew Pearl within her arms.

"Yes; I lost my husband before she was born."

"Ah! dear—sad—sad," said the gentleman, shaking his head. "Well, I hope your child will always be a comfort to you, and that's an old bachelor's wish, too."

"You are very kind, sir," she said, touched. "I am sure she will."

"I expect," said the gentleman, patting Pearl's cheek, "that you are quite mother's darling, eh, pretty one?"

"Yes, sir, and I'm Cheri's darling, too, you know," declared Pearl, nodding emphatically.

"I've no doubt; is that your nurse? Come and tell me all about it."

Inwardly a tremor ran through Lenore. What would the innocent child say? She wondered whether the eccentric and crusty bachelor had ever before said so much to a child.

Pearl went to him at once, leaning her dimpled arms confidently on her knees.

"Oh, no, Angelique is my nurse, but Cheri—oh!" cried the child, flushing up with the intensity of feeling and inability to express it. "Cheri is just our very own, and we love him like—like mother's wedding ring, that goes round—round, and hasn't got any end to it at all; don't we mother?"

Did she not? Heaven help her; did she need it put into words, and by his child? Was not her own poor throbbing, aching heart full of the language that has no lexicon or grammar.

"Yes, darling," she said quietly, shrinking inwardly from the keen, swift glance she felt, rather than saw, but added nothing to explain.

"What a happy Cheri he must be to be so loved, then, Pearl."

It was said more to himself it seemed, than the child, with all the wistful envy, and bitter regretfulness of that gem Too Late of one who has all his life shut himself out from the love and sympathy of his kind.

The tears came into Lenore's eyes, and Pearl looked up wistfully, for children—sensitive children especially—are quick to detect the ring of pain.

"Yes," she said, slowly, evidently cogitating some problem in her baby mind or heart; "and he helped mother to nurse me when I had scarlet fever, you know; and he is a dear old friend mother says."

"Then he must be a good Cheri, too, to nurse a little girl."

"Yes, mustn't he. Of course he's good," said Pearl, with a child's sublime faith in her beloved one, "and, oh, I want him to come home so!"—her face grew piteous—"it's so long, mother! Won't he come soon?"

"Very soon, I hope, dear; but come, here, you are taring this gentleman."

"No, no, madam," he interposed, hastily; "let her chatter on. Well, Pearl, and what do you call so long—just week, eh?"

"No; he's gone to Brazil—far, far off—months and months he went away," said Pearl, tearfully, her eyelids drooping.

"A year and nine months," said Lenore.

"But, madam, can she remember this old friend so vividly at such an age. What tenacity of memory—of affection."

"Children are very tenacious both of love and dislikes," she answered. "And of other memories, too, as Pearl proved the next minute by suddenly reverting to what had touched her little heart.

"What did you say about Cheri being happy like you did? Doesn't your little girl love you and make you happy?"

He put his hand with a quick, gesture to the mother to be silent, but his voice was unsteady as he answered the winsome questioner, as it were invisible power wrung it from him.

"Pearl, I have no little girl, no love, no happiness—and it's all my own fault; for who can gather where he has not strewed, or reap where he has not sown? And now it is too late. Who will care when I die, save for my gold?"

The first words at least the child understood, if the after sadness of the latter were but dim to her.

She gazed earnestly for a minute into the sallow, worn face, and then climbed suddenly on to his knees and throwing one arm over his shoulder, stroked his cheek caressingly with the free hand.

"Oh, poor—poor gentleman! don't be unhappy and die, because Pearl will love you!"

The stranger seemed so completely taken aback, so deeply moved, that he could only hold the child to him for many minutes.

"You dear, little innocent child," he muttered hoarsely, at last; "but, if you were older, you, too, would shrink from the selfish egotist who has lived only for himself, believing all the outer world evil, and seeking only his gold; the self-righteous hard Pharisee who cased in his own virtue, has lived a recluse and misanthrope from his kind—wifeless, childless, friendless—shutting his doors against his nearest in blood, because he was a wild, wicked scamp; and yet—yet—Heaven forgive me! perhaps, after all, bad as he was, the recording angel will write against me a heavier account than against even Errol!"

Fortunately the child did not catch the names, but Lenore gave a start that he must have noticed, but for his complete self-absorption from the outward world; he had spoken to himself half aloud, as recluses often do, unconscious of it till it was said, and then he lifted his gray head, bent over the child, and looked earnestly, searchingly into the beautiful young face of the unwitting listener.

"Thank you," he said, humbly, "for the sympathy I read in your face; and pardon me for the pain I see there, too; I don't deserve even pity, for I am what I have said, and I have no right to get it almost perforce from a stranger's generosity."

"Nay," Lenore said, gently, "every human being has some right to sympathy—pity — however mistaken or wrong they have been. Perhaps, too you have—" she stopped, flushing up—"pardon me—"

"Go on, please; my cramped, hard, middle age is learning for the first time to-day a new lesson, from a child and a mere girl—finish it, that I may carry it away, to think of between this and the grave."

For one second she paused. Should she tell him she guessed—was almost certain—who he was? No; the secret of Pearl's identity made her fearful; and besides, Errol was so proud, and this cousin was rich.

She said, glancing from the man to the child he still held:

"Perhaps you have judged your kinsman too harshly; he may not have been so bad as he seemed, after all."

"I don't know; he was wild and reckless from his youth up, and after events showed him utterly bad—disgracefully bad," said the stranger. "I wouldn't trust any one to him; and, as, for instance, for doing what your friend has done, nursing, tending a child, loving and being loved by a child, he'd never have done it, and certainly never have so borne himself all through as to win and retain, as your friend has plainly done, the respect and friendship of such a woman as I feel sure you are."

"Well, but suppose, for argument's sake, that he had so done?" said Lenore, with suppressed excitement; "what then?"

"I wouldn't believe it of any such man," said the stranger, with sardonic emphasis; the old Adam coming out.

"But still, if you did," she persisted, with true feminine determination, "what, then?"

"If—well, then, I should be dumfounded, and forced to reconsider the whole position and problem."

Mrs. Deleware laid her hand on his arm.

"Forgive me for saying so much to a man so much my elder and a stranger; but we are not taught, as a cardinal axiom, judge not, that ye be not judged?"

"Certainly, but facts are facts."

"Granted, yet even facts—or apparent facts—cannot see the limit to the hold God keeps on the soul. He has given life to, and it a redeeming point is possible in one wild sinner—I will put it strongly—why not in another?"

"I don't quite see your drift there, he said."

"Simply this," answered Lenore, "that this very man, our friend, is exactly such a one as you tell me your kinsman is, and written by the world very much worse than I have proved him to be, which may perhaps be the case with your relative. For the sake of justice, then, consider the problem and position when you go home."

"I will think it out, yes, I'll think it over," he repeated, putting the child gently down, and rising as Lenore stood up. "Are you going now then?"

"I fear I must, my father expects me to lunch, and my victoria is at the Kensington gate."

"So is my brougham. Will you still kindly bear me company so far, madam?"

"With pleasure."

They moved on slowly—his pace Pearl careering around like a young pup. Presently the stranger said abruptly:

"May I venture to ask you one very great—most unwarrantable favor? Ah, you smile. Youth—youth! what would I not give for your youth and health, child! Well, well, the favor."

"Yes, there can be no harm in asking it, Monsieur l'Etrangere."

"Would you mind then giving me some—I don't presume to ask more—but some name and address by which I could, if I wished, communicate with you, or send a message through any friend, or your lawyer, that would reach you. You need not pay it the least attention if you do not choose. It is an extraordinary request I know, but you need not fear that in granting it I should for one moment misjudge you, and I do not think you will misjudge me either."

"I do not, neither one nor the other," said Lenore frankly. "I will give you an address, and should you write pay what attention I can to your letter."

She took out her pocketbook, wrote on it her own initials, L. M. D., and Mr. Beresford's address, and gave it to her old companion, whose name she could have now so well given to him.

"Thank you, very much, madam, he said, with grave courtesy.

Just short of the garden gate he stopped.

"Here I will bid you good-bye, he said." "Pearl, will you give me a kiss, my dear?"

Smiles and dimples again. Pearl held up her bright face as he stooped and kissed it.

"Good-bye fairy; I shall see you again some day, I hope, and you too madam."

He held out his hand, held hers in it for a moment, and then dropping it, lifted his hat, adding:

"Good-bye, then. Thank you for your kindnes to an old misanthrope."

"Don't say that, it has been a pleasure. Adieu."

She took Pearl's hand, bowed, and pased out of the gateway, where her dainty victoria waited.

"Home, Allison," she said, and off went the equipage.

How strange things had just happened this morning! How very odd that she and Errl's child, not himself, should first after all these years come accross his hard, unjust, cousin the wild disowned and misjudged sinner had spoken with merited cynicism; strange that she should be the first to in truth vindicate the "wicked scamp."

Where would it end? She must write and tell him that if he tarried much longer away—but, oh! if he would only come back, only return to them!

Gus Featherstone, not an hour older to look at, met her at the door of the dining-room with an open letter in one hand and a sealed one in the other, both foreign paper.

"There, child!" he cried, tossing the sealed letter into her hand; "there is jolly good news for you, I hope, and for me, news from Sant' Anna; the mines are in order, everything on train at last, and my handsome, clever confrere has started down to Rio."

"Was that all—only to Rio?"

"What is that to me?" she said, turning sharply aside in her bitter pain; "it's nothing!"

"Nothing to you?" cried Gus, heartily; "ha! ha! nothing that he is on his way home, child—home, I tell you—Errol Castlenau!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A WOMAN'S WONDERFUL LOVE.

One year and nine months ago Errol Castlenau had torn himself from his only child, and the woman he loved, for that woman's sake; and when he had gone and she was left alone; when days passed into weeks, and weeks into months, then there grew upon her the heavy sense of a great blank that nothing near her could fill—something missing that had subtly, insidiously become a very part of her existence; something gone round which all the tendrils of the young impassioned nature had insensibly wound themselves in those close familiar relations of nearly four months, in which the child had been and was the mutual bond—and in which precious bond lay for her the young heart's self-deception and blindness. Instinctively, as time passed, she shrunk from looking within; she dared not face her own heart; would not dared not attempt to analyze its passionate surging, its full deep pain, or why into her ceaseless yearning for that one man's return there grew at last a new, vague dread, unrecognized as such, but there all the same.

Dearer every day, if that could be Pearl became to her; and she thought, if thought it was that had no mental shape or form, that this love was only all which had belonged to her own lost babe, and that which naturally Pearl would inspire, and as a sequence that she clung to the father for the child's sake; she saw not, in the blindness that would not see, that the woman's heart, despite the cruel fetters that can never fetter its impulses, had irresistibly given out at last its first rich love, and that the child—his child, part of him—had a double hold upon her—she loved the child for the father's sake. "One must love something, you know," she had said; and Heaven help her, when she could be startled into the full knowledge, how absolutely the words had come back to her.

And now, at last, at last, the long, dreary night of separation was to end, the day was at hand, and Lenore's heart throbbed wildly in a passion of joy and unacknowledged dread of she knew not what, as she read again and again Errol's short letter, telling her he was leaving Rio at once, and would soon follow his letter—that he might arrive in a week or perhaps a few days.

It was nearly two hours after luncheon now, and Lenore was alone in her spacious and elegant boudoir, which overlooked the back garden, for Featherstone had gone into the city, he said, and Pearl was out for her afternoon walk with Angelique; but Mrs. Deleware could settle to nothing; she could not read, nor even play—still less sing. She shut the piano and went to the flower-stand in one of the two bay-windows, picking off leaves in very restlessness, her back toward the door, at which there came a light tap as she was lifting a heavy flowerpot from one side of the stand to the other.

To be Continued.

NOVEL CURE FOR CATARRHAL ILLS.

Stops Bronchitis, Relieves Hoarseness, Cures Asthma, Prevents Throat Irritation.

The most effective way to treat and cure ailment of the breathing organs is by inhalation.

New as this method is in application, its practise is as old as man. Down from Adam has spread the reputation of the air of the pine woods, charged with balsam and healing for diseases of the throat, lungs and nasal passages.

Yet medical men neglected to employ the natural curative agency for diseases of the throat, lungs and nasal passages until the wonderful results which attended the Catarrhozone dry air method were brought to their notice and compelled attention.

The air of the pine woods, charged with little drops of balsam and ozone, has been enhanced by the Catarrhozone method through the addition of vegetable antiseptics more powerfully healing than the air of the pine woods.

This balsamic and healing vegetable compound is broken up by the air INTO MINUTE PARTICLES so small that the air is enabled to carry them to the remotest parts of the lungs, throat and nasal passages—in fact, it is the air of the pine woods concentrated a thousandfold, and you can have it at home.

FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

You can now understand why Catarrhozone cures with such certainty. It is medicated air carried to the seat of bronchitic congestion or situation here the micro-organisms which excite asthma or hay fever exert their baneful and dangerous influence.

The air distributes evenly over the entire diseased surfaces a covering of healing Catarrhozone. Immediately congestion is relieved, inflammation is subdued, the microbes which cause the trouble are destroyed, and cure follows as inevitably as the sun follows the night.

THOUSANDS CURED DAILY.

No other medicine has achieved such remarkable success, and to-day not less than twenty thousand physicians in America alone are prescribing Catarrhozone. And why? Simply because they realize that a healing remedy like Catarrhozone which air carries direct to the sore, inflamed membranes is bound to cure every form of Catarrh, all types of bronchitis and throat trouble, and will almost instantly stamp out coughs, colds, sneezing and bronchial deafness.

CATARRHOZONE CURES.

The reputation of Catarrhozone has grown by leaps and bounds. It reaches the diseased spot. It cures speedily. Almost the first use gives such relief in the worst cases that most people cannot understand its action.

Don't experiment longer—Catarrhozone means sure cure. Two months' treatment (guaranteed), price $1.00; smaller size, 50c, at all dealers, or the Catarrhozone Company, Kingston, Ont.

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When your back is sore and lame, when it hurts to stoop over, to lift, to straighten up after bending down—that's a sure sign of lameness in the muscles that can be relieved and cured by "Nerviline." Rub it over the back and sides, the more rubbing the better. Let the pain-destroying properties of Nerviline sink through all the cords and muscles that are lame—tension and stiffness will ease off—lameness will disappear after the third application.

Nerviline

Although absolutely sure to cure the aches of sciatica and lumbago, it is well to assist Nerviline by putting on a Nerviline Porous Plaster, which will continue to supply warmth and protection to the tender spot and thereby prevent a relapse.

Remember this: There is no muscular ache or pain, no strain, swelling, sprain, or external soreness, that the Nerviline Treatment can't cure. Nerviline Plasters 25c each and large 25c bottles of Nerviline are sold by all dealers.

Alfred Thompson, M. P., addreesed Galt Canadian Club as to the possibilities of the Yukon.

F. S. Spence, of Toronto, adressed Belleville Canadian Club on municipal government problems.

WOUND WAS FATAL.

James Mortson Received Charge That Was Intended for a Cat.

Toronto, Feb. 17.—Turning the muzzle of a rifle to examine it after it had failed to discharge when he pulled the trigger, James Mortson received a charge of shot in the lower part of the stomach, which resulted in his death at the Western Hospital on Saturday a few hours after he had been brought from Gormley, Ont., where the accident happened. The body will be taken back to Gormley for interment.

The charge of shot was originally intended for a cat which Mortson was attempting to shoot, to test his aim. Before Mortson lapsed into unconsciousness at the hospital, he told the attending physicians that when the cartridge did not discharge he was about to extract it when the powder exploded. He attempted to get back into the house, but fell at the kitchen door, where he was found by Elijah Rose, a neighbor, who heard the explosion.

The dead man was twenty-eight years old.

SMALLPOX AT TORONTO.

Six People are Quarantined on Florence Street.

Toronto, Feb. 17.—Six people are quarantined in a house on Florence Street as a result of a case of smallpox. The infected person, who was a vendor of vegetables, appeared to have been suffering from chicken-pox for ten days, but the case became so serious that the Health Department was advised of it, and immediately quarantined the house.

The department received word at 1 o'clock Saturday, and had an offiicer on the door of the house at 2.30. The sick man was removed to the Swiss Cottage Hospital by 3.30, and the house was disinfected by 5 o'clock.

The victim, who appears to be suffering from a mild attack of the malady, has never been vaccinated. Two children in the house have not been vaccinated. The four other adults have been vaccinated, however.

At present there are five people in the Swiss Cottage Hospital.

Over 200 attended the Waterloo county temperance convention at Berlin.

Arthur, the five-year-old son of J. Orr, of Hamilton, was killed by an automobile.

Fire did $5,000 damage to the Halifax School for the Blind. The 135 pupils got out safely.

St. Catharines anglers will petition Ottawa to have fishermen's nets kept quarter of a mile from shore.

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To supply it, too, to your liking and to your advantage.

Let us get together on this house-furnishing question.

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