

THE GREAT TEMPTATION.

By RAYMOND WRIGHT.

CHAPTER IX.

Dr. Cyril walked to and fro in his consulting room. His steps were short and impatient and gave evidence of a troubled mind. In his hand he held a letter and although he had read it several times before, he stopped, opened it and perused it once again—

Dear Sir,

We have constituted every inquiry, and of ten months has passed since our late client, Mr. Oakleigh, died, and according to the terms of his will he leaves the whole of his estate to yourself in the event of his daughter not being found within twelve months of the date of the said will.

We have constituted every inquiry, and have strained every effort to find the departed daughter, but regret to say that our activity in this direction leads us to form the conclusion that she is dead. We therefore write to you in order that you may prepare yourself to take over the administration of this estate which now falls to you, and under the circumstances we should be pleased if you would call upon us at an early date.

Trusting that we may have the pleasure of your early visit,

We are, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

BERNARD GERALD & SON,

Solicitors.

Ten months ago since his old patient Mr. Oakleigh had died! And Rene Oakleigh was believed to be dead! Unless Rene proved to be alive, and within two months, he would be the owner of Mr. Oakleigh's estates.

The receipt of the letter had given him no great joy. On the contrary he did not believe that Rene was dead, and although he would be fully entitled to the estate when the time came, he felt that he would not care to inherit and keep the old man's wealth whilst feeling that another person who had more right to it, was still alive. To enjoy his possessions he would have to know that Rene Oakleigh was dead.

And at one time he had great affection for Rene Oakleigh and somehow he could not think of her death with any feeling of pleasure.

And yet why, when he was within an ace of grasping money, power and position, should he pause to think of another? Here was his chance. Here was the realisation of his dreams—he had longed for it. Of late the world had treated him badly and the treatment had banished some of his finer feelings. He might work on at this sordid hospital for years and even then be no better off.

And what of Rene Oakleigh? If she did not turn up it was not his fault. She had had twelve months in which to make up her mind. If she had wanted to come back she would have done so surely; she must have heard of her father's death; if she had not heard of it then she did not care about her father and had no desire to return to her home.

Every effort had been strained to find her. She had been advertised for; men had been sought out to trace her and they had failed—she must either be dead or entirely indifferent, and why should she refuse to take a legacy because someone else whom it would have fallen had not turned up in time to claim it.

If, when he got it, the missing one was found, he could afford to be generous, but he would be a fool to forego his chance; besides it was legally his if Rene did not make her claim within the time, and if she did not make her claim within the time then she deserved to lose it.

Old Mr. Oakleigh had been a great friend of his and had often said that he wished he had a son like the doctor's self; and he had often said that he would like his daughter to marry such a man as Dr. Cyril. The old man had even encouraged him to pay his respects to Rene and had expressed his desire that they should marry.

The will had been made, conditionally, in Dr. Cyril's favour, and the old man had told him the provisions of the will and had said that unless Rene came back within twelve months the whole of his estate should belong to the Doctor.

And he was not going to demur about taking it now, surely.

But yet his mind was not at rest although he had decided to visit the solicitor and put everything in order.

He paused in his meditations and looked through the window.

Outside he could see a knot of men bringing a woman to the hospital on a stretcher. It was evident that there had been an accident in the locality for the stretcher-bearers were those who worked at the hospital, and Dr. Cyril was intimately acquainted with them.

From where he was standing the Doctor could not judge the nature of the accident which the woman had suffered. Whether she had been run over by a vehicle or knocked down by a horse he could not tell; he would know soon enough he told himself, and smiling grimly at the thought he endeavoured to dismiss the matter of the unfortunate woman from his thoughts so that he might think more clearly on the subject of his legacy.

Yes, he would visit Bernard Gerald without delay and he would get everything in order so that he could place himself at the head of the Oakleigh estates as soon as possible.

CHAPTER X.

Dr. Cyril rubbed his hands together; this was a habit of his when he was particularly pleased with himself.

He had just returned from a visit to the solicitor, Bernard Gerald, and he had prepared himself for the taking over the late Mr. Oakleigh's possessions. He had learned the precise value of the estate and had received the lawyer's estimate of the size of the income which the estate would yield.

He now found himself practically the owner of property and land which would bring him in a comfortable income of something like £2,000 a year.

Further than that the lawyer had ventured to express that in his opinion, Miss Rene Oakleigh was dead; although he could not furnish absolute proof of her decease he had not a shadow of a doubt in his own mind that she had died a month ago.

The solicitor's confidence was well-founded and was the result of diligent inquiries made by himself whereby he learned that a certain girl answering exactly to the description of Rene Oakleigh had died in childbirth in some workhouse in the Midlands. The story the solicitor told showed that the unfortunate woman had married and had been deserted by her husband shortly after their wedding.

Poverty quickly encompassed her and drove her on the road where by begging she kept herself alive until the prospect of the on-coming event drove her to the workhouse where she gave her life in giving birth to another. The child died a few hours after its mother.

She had given the name of Miss Simpson to the authorities, but some of her belongings were marked "Oakleigh" and the solicitor had no doubt whatever that the unfortunate woman was none other than Rene Oakleigh herself.

And now that everything was cleared up, and his pathway so ready, Dr. Cyril rubbed his hands in eager anticipation of the delights of his future life.

He had naturally been very sorry to hear of what he surmised to be the awful end of Rene, and the solicitor's story had made him give evidence of his grief—but great wealth and the enormous possibilities which showed themselves to him when he found himself wealthy all in a moment, soon caused him to think more lightly of Rene's alleged pitiful death.

It was a great sorrow of course, and even now when he thought of it, he felt dimly conscious of his heart beating and a lump rising in his throat, but as the holder of the Oakleigh estates he felt elated and important.

An aching head or an empty stomach will drive away all recollections of a departed friend and the strongest and most perfect love ceases to exist when "pain and anguish wrings the brow."

And so the Doctor had decided to take over his new possessions. His mind was now relieved of the possibility of Rene's advent and he felt a certain amount of comfort in his decision. Having made up his mind what to do there was no need for further contemplation on the matter.

He therefore drew up his chair to the roll-top desk which stood in the middle of the room and sat down as if preparing for a lengthy task. The desk was littered with papers, prescriptions and formulas and these he pushed on one side to give himself more room; this done he commenced to write, but he had hardly commenced before the door was hastily opened and a nurse presented herself.

"Can you come at once sir, to see a new case which has just arrived? A young woman, half famished, just been knocked down by a vehicle. Seems to be suffering more from exhaustion than from the accident." The nurse spoke very jerkily.

"Alright," replied Dr. Cyril. "I will be with you in a moment."

The nurse withdrew and with an impatient shrug of his shoulders the Doctor shut the desk with a slam and proceeded to the accident ward in answer to the nurse's summons.

Dr. Cyril looked at his patient with a perplexed and an aghast countenance. Her face was strangely familiar to him. The features seemed to remind him of the days of long ago. The pallid countenance still strained with worry and pain yet retained a sweetness which awoke tender memories in the mind of the Doctor.

The woman's ragged garments had been removed and her neck was laid bare. Around the white throat was a chain of plain gold from which hung a locket.

Vague doubts filled the mind of Dr. Cyril. The woman on the bed was still unconscious. She was weak, famished and exhausted.

He turned to the nurse who was standing near the bed awaiting instructions.

"Go to my room, nurse and bring my stethoscope for me, will you?"

The nurse proceeded to carry out the request and immediately she had departed the Doctor pounced upon the locket, opened it and gazed inside.

"Mr. Oakleigh! Good God!"

The startling truth came home to him. He had half suspected something of the kind when the features of the unfortunate woman struck him as being familiar, and now thoughts of the past surged through his brain. Here was Rene Oakleigh by his side, almost dead; the girl he loved, and yet the girl who now stood between him and a fortune.

He took note of her condition. He could see without the aid of any of his instruments that his patient was as near to death's door as it was possible to be.

The nurse returned with the stethoscope which she handed to the doctor. After a moment's scrutiny of his patient, Dr. Cyril stood erect.

"It will be a miracle if she lives," he said to himself, "a little neglect and she would die."

Dr. Cyril was seated in his room with his elbows on his knees and his head supported with his two hands. His thoughts were of Rene Oakleigh and of the fortune which would have been his had not the poor girl put in such an unwelcome and untimely appearance.

What was he to do? Should he tell her of the fortune which awaited her; should he nurse her back to health, and give unto her the inheritance which was her's, or should he—?

It was very awkward this sudden appearance of Rene. He had thought she was dead and he wished now that she was dead—and yet he was not altogether sure that he did. He had been assured of her death previously, but somehow he had not really satisfied himself that this was the case. He would have liked to have benefited by the old man's will and he would have liked it to so have happened that Rene should have turned up some years after he had been installed in his new estates, but this had upset his calculations. At the eleventh hour he had been thwarted. His ambitions had been within an ace of being realised and now his desires were to be shattered and laid low. He would be cut out of the inheritance—what should he do?

And then evil came to his mind—let her die—what mattered it? He was in attendance upon her. He knew her case. He knew that to cause her death would not be the slightest trouble. In fact to neglect her would bring about the end. He could send her to the grave without the slightest suspicion; she would die unknown and uncared for, no one would be the wiser and he would get the estates. Which was it to be? Must he stand aside and relinquish all his desires and chances for a better and fuller life? After going so far and getting within an ace of stepping into the dead man's shoes, must he stand aside? Must he go on in the same dull way in the hospital for years and years until the end? A dull life of monotony, ceaseless toil, treating all manner of complaints and diseases, hearing the groans and imprecations of dying and delirious persons—or must he act now at once and make a bold bid for what he had already almost claimed as his own?

Must he instal himself in the place which he felt sure he could fill with ease and grace, where he could live a life of comfort and enjoyment, untroubled with financial matters, and with the remainder of his days to use as he wished?

He would decide. He would make up his mind at once. He pushed the button of a small electric bell which was on the side of the fireplace. Almost immediately a nurse appeared. She was the same nurse who had brought him the stethoscope.

"I will attend the new patient in 'A' Ward myself, nurse—on no account must any of the

other doctors see her. It is a very serious case and requires delicate treatment."

The nurse withdrew.

(To be concluded next week.)

PLEASE TELL US.

Who is the Irish Canadian widower from our Hospital who asked a lady to allow him to carry her parcels on the street in Spring Gardens, and when leaving her forgot to hand her the goods and has not done so for two weeks? If they are left at the office (registry) will be returned to rightful party.

Who is the C.A.M.C. private who left his supper on a table in a cafe to go home with a lady and then returned and finished his meal?

Why Sergt. Forster was glad to get back to the hospital, although most of the patients are glad to get away?

How the boys like their permanent passes? Let's hope they won't abuse them.

What became of all the cake from Billy Oatham's wedding? Does Blunt know?

How Sergt. Martin got the introduction to the school pupils with their golden hair hanging down their backs?

How Billy Oatham likes being called "Daddy?"

Why the Canadian private who tries to appear as an officer cannot be civil when he enters Buxton shops? And does he think he secures better attention by bullying?

Who is the batman who set his watch back one hour Saturday night instead of forward, and what did his captain say when he was called too soon?

Who was the batman who got up half an hour before reveille went and did not know the time was altered?

How many others got fooled in the same way?

Why Sergt. Henderson takes a four mile jaunt (via Lover's Leap) every night? Is it for recreation or is there "a little bit of fluff" at the end of the journey?

How Alexander felt when he discovered after getting dressed and going to the kitchen for his breakfast that it was only 10 o'clock at night?

Did we actually see Sammy Redfern escorting another batch of charmers through "B" Ward last week?

What Lilly would say if she knew Freddie H. had been showing two lovely lassies, the beauties of the hospital?

Was it a tempest in a teapot or a tempest over a teapot which engaged the attention of the sister on "A" Ward?

Why Scotty Wells did not order the soda-water for himself?

Is it a fact that Two-Bit-Bill has been offered an engagement with the Metropolitan Opera Company, to sing his sensational success, "We're goin' to th' 'Amburg Zoo?"

What the "D" Ward patient felt like when he was apprehended in the act of hypnotizing a man from "B" Ward.

Who tickled Corpl. Cummings in the rib?

How Billy Oatham enjoyed his honeymoon?

Who was the patient who threw an envelope at Lulu's feet on Sunday night?

Does Private Dow know anything about it?

What about the postcard Lulu sent him?

Who was the young lady who said she would like a chance to shake hands with "Little Willie?"

Why is it that we get so few contributions to this department?

Will Phillis G. please accept our thanks for her contribution?

How the Sergt.-Major enjoyed his auto ride on Sunday afternoon, and who were his lady friends?

Was it the one he took to the picture show on Tuesday afternoon, and what yoes Sergt.-Major Williams think of it?

Who is the young lady who asks the telephone operator to get her through to "Bobby" as quick as possible?

Who was the young lady who asked the telephone operator to put her in the Quartermaster's Store when she was almost half a mile from the hospital?

How many rabbits did our Physical Instructor shoot on Monday? Why did he say 35 when he only brought two home?

What Sergt. Quigley said when he had to work an hour extra on Saturday night?

What attraction a member of the "staff" finds in railway carriages on Sunday mornings, and what the girl says when she comes to sweep the carriage?

Who was the sergeant who drew a crowd on Spring Gardens the other day, and what was it all about?

Who is the N.C.O. who, recently arrived, wants to know where the hour has gone to that we were supposed to get back October 1st?

Who is the lady who sent in the following: "What noise annoys an oyster? A noisy noise annoys an oyster. What's the Prize?"

And what kind of prize does she expect?

Who is the lady who phoned to Sergt. "Anderson," and told him that while the Canadians imagine the girls of Buxton are in love with them they are really disgusted with them?

Who is the sergeant-major of the R.E.'s who allowed one of the Canadians to cut him out of his girls?

And did the girls go on the principle that one sergeant-major is as good as another—and "a darn site better?"

Who is the Canadian who was so slow as to let a young lady ask him for a kiss, and then only gave her a little peck?

And would the young lady rather have some other Canadian who knows how to kiss? If so, consult the heart specialist.

He came home late from the mill at Oldham and entered a home smelling as only a home can smell after a heavy day's washing. The good woman had retired so Tom sat down, ate his supper from the basin on the table, and retired also.

"Did tha find the supper to tha liking, lad?" she asked sleepily.

"Aye, I did an' all! I supped a lot. I liked the liquor verra well, but had a fine job wi-tripe."

"Tripe," cried his wife—"tripe!"

"'ee, tripe—in basin on table."

"Well, well! If tha's ate what was in basin tha'll have to buy thafsel new collars 'n' all, 'cos tha's eaten collars and starch! The supper was on plate in oven."

A high church official in Rome protests most vigorously against the costume of the Roman women this summer. "They go about," he says, "dressed like tight-rope dancers, short skirts, high-heeled boots, transparent stockings, bare necks and arms." Needless to remark, while on this subject, it is not necessary for a woman to be in Rome to do as the Romans do.

The way to success lies thro' swinging doors,

And the lobby is always full,

Some get in by the door marked "Push,"

And some by the door marked "Pull."

B. CRESSINGTON,
THE QUADRANT,
Cigar Merchant & Tobacconist
High-class Cigars, Tobaccos and Cigarettes.

Agent for Lowe's, Barling, and B.B.B. Pipes.

F. BROADBENT,
3, MARKET STREET, BUXTON.

Stationer, Newsagent, & Tobacconist.
Fancy Dealer.
HAIRDRESSING AND SHAVING ROOMS.
Umbrella Repairing a Speciality.

C. P. BANNISTER,
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
Baker and Confectioner

FAMILIES SUPPLIED. Orders called for daily.
No. 1, LONDON RD., BUXTON.

L. SKIDMORE,
Tobacconist, Stationer and Newsagent.

London and Provincial Newspapers and Magazines promptly delivered to order.

23, TERRACE ROAD, BUXTON.

H. ORAM & SONS
FISH, POULTRY, GAME,
AND ICE MERCHANTS.

12, SPRING GARDENS, BUXTON.
TELEPHONE 22

HOLME AND ASH,
Ironmongers

AND
Agricultural Merchants,
MARKET PLACE, BUXTON.
Established 1825. Nat. Tel. 208.

R. B. MORTEN & SON,
The Buxton Creamery,
CROMPTON PLACE, BUXTON.

National Phone 460.

Butter, Eggs, and New Milk fresh from our own farm daily.

THE DEVONSHIRE LIBRARY LTD.,
COLONNADE, BUXTON.

You can get the best makes of FOUNTAIN PENS at the Devonshire Library, in the Colonnade. Also NOTE and LETTER CASES.

THE DEVONSHIRE LIBRARY LTD.
DUNCOMBE,

Spring Gardens Post Office,
TOBACCONIST,
MILITARY REQUISITES.

EDWIN WHITE,
F.S.M.C., D.B.O.A.

WATCHES and JEWELRY
OF ALL KINDS,

23, Spring Gardens, Buxton.

KIRKLAND & PERKIN,
Coal Merchants,
BUXTON.

Tel. 68.

FISH & JOULE,
Tel. 221.

High-class Family BUTCHERS, and Purveyors of Home-fed Meat.

13, SPRING GARDENS, BUXTON

Pickled Tongues, Calves' Heads, Corned Beef.

Orders called for and prompt delivery guaranteed

Printed for the Officers of the Buxton Canadian Hospital by the Buxton Herald Printing Company.