

The Sacrifice of Enid

CHAPTER X.—(Continued).

M^{R.} WESTLAKE looked around, then said slowly: "Good gracious! Office furniture! Absolute necessities! According to you and Haselfoot. In my time costly vases and clocks and pictures weren't absolute necessities. But no doubt you know best. Now, my boy, I must speak seriously to you. Is she a thorough good girl and a lady?"

"She is both," replied Ronald warmly.

"I know what this sort of thing means; these—ahem!—these necessities wouldn't have been put in for an ordinary young woman. It means you are in love with her. Are you going to marry her?"

"I am in love with her, and I would marry her to-morrow, but she will not marry me," said Ronald with some bitterness.

"Refused you? Why?"

"Because she is engaged to another man."

"Well, you know, I shouldn't have made any objection, for you are your own master, but it isn't the right sort of marriage for you, though I'm sorry for you, my boy. Lady Eva Godalming would have you to-morrow."

"Hang Lady Eva Godalming!" said Ronald, who began to think he had been tried long enough and was anxious for his father to go. "You won't make my affairs public, I suppose."

"Not a word, even to your mother. She would never forgive the girl. It's a pity she won't let us ask her to the house; she must have a dull life enough."

"I don't think she is dull. Now I must really ask you to let me go on with my work or I shall have to stay late to-night. I am overwhelmed with work."

He had in reality been writing most of the letters he usually gave to Mary. "They must put up with my spider scrawl and e's and a's and o's," he said to himself grimly; "I made no arrangement to send everyone typewritten letters."

CHAPTER XI.

His Arrival.

M^{ARY} felt her heart beat as she walked up the steep road to the station, which was on high ground overlooking all the adjacent country. She was early, and as she stood on the platform she looked down on the village and saw the tall factory chimney. Would he, her lover, consent to work there? He must do so; there was no choice in the matter.

She waited ten minutes only before the train came in, but the time seemed as if it would never end. Her heart thumped as the carriages were drawn up beside the platform. A few passengers alighted, and now her heart sank. Where was her lover?

But a tall man came towards her and put out his hand, saying: "How do you do?" He wore a tweed suit and round hat; he had somewhat long reddish hair, beard, and moustache, and he wore spectacles.

"I—" she stammered, and then said hurriedly: "Give up your ticket and follow me."

When they had descended the long, steep steps and the other passengers had passed them she exclaimed:

"Oh, Horace! At last! I did not know you."

"I don't wonder at that in these beastly things."

They turned away from the station and walked beneath overarching trees. When completely in shelter he took her in his arms and kissed her a great many times.

"Now," she said, "take off your spectacles and let me see your eyes."

He did so. For a single moment she shrank from him, for there was a hunted, shifty look in them which she had never seen there before. Then she remembered the hardships he had endured, and blamed herself exceedingly. They entered into earnest conversation.

"Go as a mill hand this afternoon!"

By MRS. HARCOURT-ROE

Author of "A Man of Mystery," "The Silent Room," Etc.

he said at length. "You cannot mean it."

"But I do mean it. Horace, dear, don't you see this is almost a matter of life and death," and she poured arguments into his unwilling ears.

"Well," he said at their conclusion, "I suppose I must as you insist upon it, and you have been very clever so far. But I don't see the necessity myself. Am I to do disgusting menial work?"

"I should have thought you would have been glad to do anything," she replied with gentle reproach. "I entered as a mill hand myself—for your sake."

"Yes, you have been very good, I must say."

As he spoke she could not forbear from wondering if he really understood the sacrifice she had made for him.

"Now," she said, "pray pay attention to me. As soon as I received your telegram this morning I went into the village and engaged a room for you—one room, a poor common one. You must live there, and you must live apparently at the rate of your wages, which may perhaps be very small. But I will give you as much as I can spare out of mine for extra comforts."

"I thought you said you had secured a desirable opening for me."

"And so I have. A most desirable one, under a good master, whom you must do your utmost to serve. For my sake, dear, try to avert suspicion. Work hard at whatever is given you to do. It will only be for a time, you know. And, above all things, bear in mind that your name is Henry Jackson. Pray do not forget. I have bought a suit of working clothes for you, and directly you go back you must put them on. Also you must buy your own food. Here is money."

It was apparent that he was very dissatisfied. "Dear," she said entreatingly, "I know these things are hard. But other things are harder still. It is time for us to go to the village now."

She talked to him as if she were soothing a child until she left him at the door of his lodgings. He had returned, and she had expected to be joyful, but only pain was in her heart. And what would the end be?

At half past two she returned to the office and apologized for being late.

"I did not expect you so soon," said Ronald, "and there is not much for you to do. What about Mr. Jackson? Did he arrive?"

"Yes, and he is coming to see you shortly."

"I have spoken to Simpson; there will be no difficulty about employing him."

"You are very good."

CHAPTER XII.

His Conduct.

I^N the course of an hour Henry Jackson made his appearance, in working garb. Ronald looked him well over, and addressed a few questions to him. At the end of them he came to three conclusions—that the man was a gentleman, that he was in very delicate health, and that he disliked him extremely. He was fair enough to attribute this dislike partly to the fact of his being a successful rival.

His hands were white; gentleman's hands without doubt, although there were some ugly marks on them. And then Ronald remembered the nature of his previous work.

"You are a tailor, I believe?" he said.

"A tailor!" echoed Jackson hotly. "I am not a tailor."

"Your friend, Miss Williams, informed me that you were. She is usually accurate in her statements," said Ronald coldly.

Jackson controlled himself and said: "To a certain extent she is right. I

did work at tailoring for a little while. Hateful work I thought it."

"Perhaps you think all work hateful?"

"I believe I do. But I must do it all the same. If you will employ me," he continued with evident effort, "I will do my best."

"You must begin low down, of course. I cannot put you over the heads of old hands; neither would you understand the work. I suppose you can pick up things quickly?"

"I believe I can."

The nature of the employment and rate of wages was now entered upon. Jackson was to begin his work forthwith.

"It is usual," said Ronald dryly, "when you are in this mill to address me as sir. I merely mention it as advisable."

"Very good, sir," said Jackson with a scowl.

He was placed in Simpson's charge, and his work given him, which was to watch the rags seething in the water-troughs and assist in stirring them. It was easy enough to do, and he performed it well. After the factory closed he met Mary, who walked with him away from the village.

"After this," she said, "I will not meet you too often. But there is so much to say, so much to plan. How did you get on with Mr. Westlake?"

"Oh, well enough, I believe. He made me furious once or twice, though. What possessed you to tell him I was a tailor?"

S^{HE} felt a sense of repulsion, but resolutely put it away from her.

Why should not a tailor be respected, she explained.

"And," continued Jackson, "he informed me I was to call him sir."

"Of course you must."

"A cad I suppose, without a grandfather; a paper man! Times are hard."

"Mr. Westlake is a gentleman," said Mary with displeasure.

"Oh, is he? It doesn't make much difference."

"I am compelled to ask you, dear, to remain within doors a good deal for a short time."

"And what am I to do?"

"Read. I will lend you books. I would rather people did not see us together until we are married."

"And when will that be?"

"As soon as we can see our way in safety. I had thought it would be now, but I find that it is impossible for many reasons."

"And what are we to live on? Your money?"

"I had only a little—a few hundred pounds. I have spent it all, but I am saving up every penny I can to take us abroad. After that surely we can earn our own living, I as a typist, you in another capacity," and she told him of what her work consisted now.

"You are a great deal better off than I am."

She looked at him with something of amazement. What had she done that she should not be well off? But she made no answer; she was aware that he did not see things in their true light now; every excuse must be made for him.

On leaving him she met Simpson.

"So a new hand has come, recommended by you," he said, for Ronald thought it advisable to mention this, lest the fact of her meeting Jackson should excite comment.

"Yes, an old friend of mine." And then she pleaded for forbearance on his behalf should he fail in his work at first. "Scold him yourself," she said with a smile, "if necessary, but don't let Mr. Westlake think he is of no use unless you know he is of no use."

"How you do get round me, my dear!" said the old man. "I'll keep him up to his work, I promise you, without bothering the master. Though there ain't much as goes on in the works or about the hands that the master don't know, and he'll very soon put Jackson down at his true value. Which ain't

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