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**THE HEIR**  
 OF  
**Lancewood**

CHAPTER LI.

The two strangely united in death were laid in the beautiful grounds of Nutwell church, while the unhappy mother lay battling with death.

On Lady St. Just's recovery there was no need to tell the secret, nor to reveal who it was that tried to save her son from drowning, and in so doing lost his life—no need to tell the sin of her life-time.

What Vivien St. Just suffered in her illness was known only to herself and Heaven. She recovered in time, and in time another little son was born to her, but she never lavished on another child the passionate love she had given to little Arthur. It was four years after Arthur's death that the little boy came, and she named him Adrian, after her noble husband—Adrian Neslie of Lancewood. But she never told him of his title that was to be. She did not hold him as an idol to be worshipped, but in the dewy summer evenings, when she wandered by the riverside, she prayed that he might make a good man and be kept from sin.

She was never the same again. She recovered from her long illness; she had a lovely little daughter who grew up the picture of herself. She took her place in the world; she fulfilled every duty; she was a model wife, a true lady, a true friend, a noble mother—but she was never the same again.

In her room at King's Rest hangs the picture of a lovely laughing boy with a noble face and sweet, dimpled cheeks—a picture that she shows to no one, but before which she likes to stand in the twilight or when the sun throws a golden light on it. Underneath is written, "Arthur Neslie, heir of Lancewood," and in the green churchyard at Nutwell there rises a marble monument—a broken column—bearing the name of Henry Dorman, telling how he died. There was no need to reveal who Henry Dorman was. The secret lay dead and buried—the sin of a lifetime was ended.

As years passed on and all things prospered with him, Lord St. Just gradually forgot the tragedy. Francis was to have King's Rest, Adrian to have Lancewood, and his lovely young daughter was to be richly dowered. He was himself one of the most popular men in England, and it pleased him that rich and poor great

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and small, high and low, should unite in praising and blessing his wife. They said her charity was without bounds, her goodness without parallel.

"What are you thinking of, Vivien?" asked her husband one day, long after these events.

She looked at him with her beautiful, dark, mystical eyes.

"I am thinking," she said, slowly, "how strange it was that, after pretending Oswald was drowned in a river, he should be drowned in a river eventually."

"Try to forget," advised Lord St. Just, for he knew not what better counsel to give.

Did she forget it? People said she must be happy. She was beautiful, wealthy, good. She had a devoted husband, lovely children. She held a high position; she was blessed by every one who knew her. But her face, beautiful with a calm, unearthly beauty, has a whole story in it—that story is The Sin of Her Lifetime.

THE END.

**"ECHOES of the Past;**

OR,

**The Recompense of Love!"**

CHAPTER II.

I can't cut you off with a shilling, because I do not possess, at this moment, that useful coin; but I would suggest that, while this insanity of yours lasts, it would be as well if you avoided your people and Eaton Square, and confined yourself to your new friends. Good-bye, my dear Clive. I wish I could bid you God-speed; but the hackneyed benediction would be so completely inappropriate, that I really must refrain from uttering it. The only hope I can express is, and I do so devoutly, that you will soon be clothed and in your right mind. When you return to this desirable condition, we shall all, of course, be glad to see you. Until then—Don't let me detain you. Good-bye."

Clive possessed that which is a rarity in these days, a warm heart; and he felt the parting from his father and his brothers, Adolphus and Bertie, very keenly; but he had put his hand to the plow, and he was not the man to drop it and slink home to Eaton Square, crushed and beaten.

The money he had inherited from his mother provided him with only a small income; but, notwithstanding

a somewhat riotous time at Oxford, his tastes were very simple, and he cheerfully settled down in a couple of rooms in a back street in Chelsea, and as cheerfully denied himself the familiar luxuries of Carlton dinners, Bond Street clothes, and shilling cigars. Of course, he was ambitious; every man who is worth his salt desires to make his mark on the age in which he lives; but, strange as it may seem in these pushing, self-seeking days, Clive's ambition was subordinated to a genuine desire to help the people whose cause he had championed.

To-night he had scored a great, an amazing success; he had put his foot on the first rung of the ladder which leads to great things; the applause, the cheers were still ringing in his ears; but sweet as they were—and why shouldn't they have been?—the few words of praise from his leader, and from Lord Chesterleigh especially, were sweeter to him. His thoughts turned toward Lady Edith. He was not a susceptible man, but it would have been impossible that he should not have been struck by her youthful grace and beauty. His keen eye—and Clive Harvey's eye was very keen indeed—had noted the indications of the girl's proud and haughty spirit; but he was not inclined to dwell upon them; for, you see, she had been very gracious to him. She had smiled upon him, as the youngest woman of her class knows how to smile when she wants to be sweet and to favorably impress a man. Her voice had softened when she spoke to him, and her words were still present with him.

Both father and daughter had given him a cordial invitation; should he avail himself of it? He had got to regard himself as an outcast from the exalted sphere in which they moved; would it be wise to go back to the flesh-pots of Egypt; would it be prudent to place himself in the way of temptation; had he not better stick to "the people" with whom he had cast in his lot?

Pondering these questions, he had wandered on down Victoria Street and into Pimlico, so lost in thought that he paid no heed to the direction which he had taken; and suddenly looking round, he found that he had strolled into one of the shabby streets leading off the main thoroughfare. The street was nearly deserted, though it was not very late—the House had risen early—and the public houses were still open. A drunken man, who was cheerfully zig-zagging home, nearly collided with Clive; he hiccupped an apology, which he made with difficulty while he supported himself by clutching Clive's arm; and it was characteristic of Clive that he did not push the man away from him with impatience or disgust; for the Radical aristocrat had learned to tolerate and even to pity that which he loathed.

A little farther on, a sleek cat scratched at a door and mewed plaintively, looking up at Clive and saying quite plainly: "You're taller than I am; do ring the bell, or I shall be shut out all night!" So Clive stroked the cat and rang the bell. As he walked on, he heard the sounds of music, and, turning a corner of the street, came upon a public house. It was a quiet one, no doubt "used" only by the inhabitants of the shabby, seedy houses, and outside the curb stood a man, a diminutive hunchback, playing a violin, and playing it well. Beside him stood a young girl singing. It was not a strong voice, but it was so sweet a one, and with such signs of careful training, that Clive stood on the other side of the street and listened. The girl's back was turned to him, and she wore a shawl over her head, so that he could see no part of her face; but he was struck by a certain grace in her figure and her attitude. She was standing with her head slightly thrown back, her hands loosely clasped in front of her; and, as she sang, the slight, girlish figure moved almost imperceptibly to the rhythm of the music.

Clive felt the pathos of her presence and the sweet, low voice, and he crossed the road and stood just behind the pair, so that he might hear the song more distinctly. It came to an end presently, but the girl stood without changing her attitude until the hunchback touched her gently on

the arm. She started slightly, and, drawing her shawl about her face, looked round, and, seeing Clive, came toward him with a little tambourine extended, while the hunchback went into the public house to collect contributions.

Clive dropped half a crown in the tambourine; without raising her eyes, the girl made him a graceful little curtsy, and was turning away when Clive involuntarily spoke to her. Involuntarily, because he was more touched by the sight of her face than he had even been by the grace of her figure. It was a singular face, strangely out of keeping with the shabby surroundings and her humble calling. London is full of pretty girls, and they are almost as numerous in the slums and the byways in Pimlico and Whitechapel as they are in Mayfair; but this girl's face was not merely pretty; for, though it was not yet quite beautiful, it was rich with the promise of a natural loveliness.

In the pure oval of its contour, the dark-gray eyes, the long lashes, the soft, almost black hair, and delicately shaped lips, there was a suggestion of Italy, or even of warmer Spain; but Clive knew, even before she spoke, that she was not foreign, and there was no relation between this girl with the downcast eyes and the timid demeanor and the overripe Italian young lady who accompanies the street organ.

"You sing very well, my child," he said; "but your voice is not strong enough for the streets; and I am afraid you will spoil it."

Up to the present she had, when she raised her eyes, looked past and beyond him, as if she were moving and acting in a kind of dream; but at the sound of his voice, she met his gaze with a little startled look and a suggestion of fear in a half-shrinking movement; and Clive was sorry that he had frightened her by addressing her. He felt that it would be kind to walk away at once; but with a mistaken idea of reassuring her, he said: "I hope you are going home now. It is getting late. Perhaps you have had a bad day—I know what that means—let me give you a little more; your singing is worth it."

She looked down at the coin in the tambourine, no doubt expecting to see a penny, and she colored vividly as Clive dropped another half-crown on the parchment. Her lips moved with a whispered "Thank you," and with a swift, grateful glance up at his face—a face good to look upon at that moment, for it was full of a strong man's pity and tenderness—she was moving away, when the hunchback came out of the public house, and, limping quickly toward them, caught her arm, and, looking angrily and suspiciously at Clive, muttered:

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