

Happiness Secured

A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER XXX.

While That Woman Lives.
"You are cruel!" I reply, as he opens the gate and steps into the path by my side. "Do you know that that last parting almost killed her?—that for a long time we were in dreadful anxiety about her—that we almost thought she would die? She is not strong yet. Another such trial as that might kill her; I believe it would. Oh, Ernest, if you love her, do not expose her to such pain and excitement again. She must not see you—she must not, indeed. You must go away before she knows you are here."

"My poor little girl! And does she care for me like that?" he exclaims, utterly heedless of my entreaties that he will go, a sudden exultation in his tone as he turns a pale, passion-lit face toward the house. "Her heart is breaking for me, then, as mine is breaking for her! Oh, Lesley, it is too hard, too cruel that we should be separated like this, loving each other as we do!"

"Lesley, dear, are you going to stay out there all night? Pray come in out of the cold!"

It is Addie's clear, sweet voice that calls and, to my terror, the slender figure appears at the open door, the dim light from the hall shining behind her, as, shading her eyes with her hand, she stands on the step peering out into the dusk in search of me.

"Go—oh, for Heaven's sake, go!" I whisper. But it is too late even had my companion any intention of obeying my commands, which I doubt.

There is a low, sharp cry. With that first glance into the dusk which has seen and recognised him, and all my efforts to prevent a meeting are defeated.

Releasing himself from the detaining hand I have laid on his arm, he walks straight toward her and takes her almost roughly in his arms.

A few minutes later they are standing together in front of the fire in the little Hanbury lodging, he pleading his cause as he did it once before in the old parlor at Deepdene, and she listening with the same despairing firmness with which she listened before.

"You are taxing my faith too far—it is altogether too much to ask any man to believe," Ernest is saying, with a look that is half bitter, half beseeching. "How can I believe that you care for me when, for the sake of such a restrained sense of duty as this, you can find it in your heart to condemn me to a life of misery?" he asks, looking into her face with more than all the old love and longing in his haggard, suffering eyes.

"Oh, Ernest," she cries, her hands clasped convulsively together as she stands, pale and trembling, before him in the frelight, "you know how willingly, gladly I would sacrifice anything if it could make you happy—my life even!"

"Anything but your scruples," he retorts. "What is the good of your telling me this when the one thing that could make me happy you will not do? Oh, my darling," he adds, in changed tone, "why will you not believe me when I tell you that you are my wife? Do you think I would have come here to-night if I thought there was any sin in my love for you? Do you think I would have asked you to marry me had I not felt myself a free man both in the eye of Heaven and the law? Once more I repeat that mad marriage was no marriage at all! You are my wife, Addie, and by a husband's right I claim you!"

"I cannot feel it—I cannot believe it, much as I long to," she replies, without looking up. "Nothing on earth could make me feel myself your wife while that woman lives. You married her of your own free will and consent, and the fact of her affliction cannot release you from your vows in my estimation. If it does in the world's, I have no right to claim the position that belongs to another. I should live in constant dread of our secret being discovered—of seeing the finger of scorn pointed toward me as a creature who had stolen another woman's husband."

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its reach," he replies, a sudden hope leaping to his eyes. "I came here to-night with the fixed purpose of entreating you to come away with me at once to Australia, to America, anywhere, so that we can learn to forget that woman's existence, and be happy and at peace together. You are wretched without me, dear, as I am wretched without you," he goes on. "I can see that this misery is killing you as it is driving me mad. Let me save you from such a life, my pet. Come with me, and I will make you happy. I will work for you night and day if necessary. There is nothing I would not do to win back the old, sweet smile to your face, the light to your dear eyes. Oh, my love, my darling!" he cries, stretching his arms toward her, "pity me! Come to me. What is it that holds us asunder? A shadow—less than a shadow! What is there to keep you away from me?"

"My duty!—my own self-respect," she returns, shrinking back from the outstretched arms with a look of pain on her white face that wrings my heart. "Oh, Ernest, do not try to rob me of the one solitary bit of consolation I possess—the consciousness that I have done right."

"Right!" he almost hisses between his firm, white teeth, his arms dropping despairingly to his sides as he looks at her; "I am sick to the soul of the detestable plea! If you have ceased to care for me—if I have lost all power over you—tell me so at once; but do not mock me with the pretension of a love that will yield

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nothing to save me from despair." "You are unjust! You know—I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more," she quotes, in a pitifully tremulous voice.

"Which means that you are firm in your determination to send me away, I suppose?" he asks, searching the shrinking face with his haggard, wistful eyes. "But remember, if you bid me leave you now, it is for the last time. If you send me away to-night I will never trouble you again. If we part, we part forever! And if you ever hear that any evil has happened to me—that I have gone to the bad—you may take the consoling thought to your soul that it is you who have driven me to it!"

With quivering lips, she looks at him with all her tortured soul in her eyes, but she does not speak.

"Once more, Adelaide, what is it to be?" he asks, his face hardening as that handsome face has never hardened to her before. "You hold my fate in your hands! With one word you must decide it! What is that word to be? Stay, or good-by?"

"Good-by!" It is all she says; but, putting aside the pleading little hand she offers him, he takes her in his arms and holds her to his heart in silence, his miserable, despairing eyes devouring every feature of the poor little face that lies for a moment on his breast. Then, with a long, deep sigh, he lets her go, and, turning to the door, is gone!

Impelled by some sudden impulse, I follow him. There is something in his face that frightens me. He looks like a man who has lost all control over himself—who ought not to be trusted alone, with the evil spirit that possesses him—and, just at the gate, I come up with him.

"Ernest!" I cry, hardly knowing what I am about to say or do, "won't you speak to me before you go? Won't you wish me good-by?"

"For Heaven's sake, leave me alone," he returns, throwing my hand almost roughly from his arm. "What do you want with me, Lesley?" he adds, as, undeterred by his repulse, I slip my hand through his arm and cling to it tightly.

"I want to know where you are going—what you are going to do, Ernest!" I reply.

"I don't know, and I don't care; I am too miserable ever to care about anything any more!" he exclaims. "Many a man less miserable than I am has put a pistol to his head and blown his brains out! If you hear that I have done something of the kind, you need not be surprised!"

"Don't be ridiculous, Ernest," I reply, with an affection of contempt I do not feel; for melodramatic as the threat sounds, I know that it is very real. "You talk like a stage hero in distress. Why should you think of putting such an insupportable bar as death to your happiness? Don't you see that, so long as you both live, there is hope?" I add, casting about in my mind for some means of comfort. "Any day release may come. That woman at Ivy Cottage cannot live forever. She looks ill. She may die."

"Die! Not she!" he cries, with a bitter, little laugh. "Death will have nothing to do with such as she—she would have died long since if it would! Time and again she has attempted her own life, but help was always at hand. I have saved her more than once myself; for, glad as I would have been to be rid of her, I did not want the crime of murder on my soul!"

"No, nor of self-murder," I say solemnly. "Oh, Ernest, do not leave me so miserable as this! Promise me that you will do nothing rash or wicked!"

For a moment he stands looking at me in silence. Then, grasping my hand with a "Not if I can help it. Good-by, Lesley! Heaven bless you!" he is gone.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A Terrible Suggestion.

It is the twenty-ninth of October, and Miss Clitheroe's wedding morning.

Everybody is dying to see the bride in her wedding finery; but it is not the beautiful Parisian dress and veil of which we have heard so much that is exciting my curiosity. It is the bridegroom I want to see—the man on whom I have come to look as the evil genius of the Kendricks. And yet, for some mysterious reason, much as I long to witness the ceremony, I feel a strange reluctance

"I Need Hardly Say

how thankful I was to get out alive, and fully made up my mind that I would write and tell you how useful Dr. Chase's Ointment was," writes a survivor of the Gallipoli Peninsula campaign. "We found that it afforded instant relief from poison from shrubs and bushes, and got to using it for all manner of minor wounds and grazes."

about making any such admission even to Adelaide.

Of the family at the rectory we have seen nothing since the first announcement of the marriage.

The bride-elect, I am told, has been in London most of the time, selecting her trousseau under the auspices of the fashionable Lady Woodvyl, who is to grace this morning's ceremony with her aristocratic presence. And not even Flo has had the hardihood to call upon us. Weak and frivolous-minded though she is, she has still the grace to feel ashamed of her sister's conduct, I suppose.

But whatever the cause of her absence, neither Addie nor I are at all disposed to complain of it.

Nor do we break our hearts over the fact that, among the many invitations sent out, none have found their way to us—for the same reason, perhaps, that has kept the Clitheroes away from us ever since the formal announcement of Gwendolen's approaching marriage to the man who seems born to defraud us of our rights.

Much as I have heard of him, I have never yet seen the master of the Priory; and my curiosity concerning him is so great, that I finally decide upon going to the church under any circumstances.

The fact of our having received no invitation to the wedding need not prevent me from "assisting" at the ceremony in the character of spectator. I decide, as, with the casual remark that I am going for a walk, I slip on my hat and jacket, and set in the direction of the pretty, picturesque old church of Forton, to which crowds of people are wending their way in all directions.

So much the better, I think, as I enter the porch in the wake of a group of gossiping matrons and giggling girls, all intent on the chance of getting a good look at the wedding party.

Among such a number of people no one will be likely to notice me; and, slipping a piece of silver into the hand of the sexton, I am escorted to a seat in the quaint old gallery, from which I have an excellent view of all that is going on.

The beautiful old church is crowded in every part. I am just in time, it seems; for, as I take my seat, there is the sound of wheels, a little buzz of expectation among the crowd, a craning of necks toward the entrance, and the bridal party begin to arrive.

A bishop, imposing in lawn sleeves, stands on one side of the altar, and poor Mr. Smiles—looking very thin and meager, I think—in full canonicals on the other. The bridegroom, attended by his best man and a brilliant company from the Priory, are already marshaled to their places. But before I have time to single out the man I have come here especially to see, there is a visible sensation among the expectant beholders, and the next moment the sacred edifice is pervaded by a suggestion of flowers, of shimmering satin and pearls, of white gloves, of laces, of smiles, of fluttering fans, and rustling of trains; and the bride, looking like a dream of loveliness, a vision of golden hair, of orange blossoms, and snowy veil, is passing up the aisle, her long train supported by a lovely group of children attired as pages, followed by a bevy of elegantly dressed bridesmaids.

(To be continued.)

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WAR REVIEW.

Along the western battle front the Germans continue to give ground. The Entente Allies, daily, are of events accentuate the superiority of the German high command to hold back the aggressive forces two months ago great salient projected into the Allied line. It has either been flattened or arrested in its progress. In the west, some instances the Allies have driven in wedges and seriously menace the enemy. The Marne and Picardy sectors are virtually all reclaimed the wings of the present Allied offensive are not in a manner that bodes ill to the Germans. In the north the wing of the Lys salient southwest of Ypres is gradually being under your feet. Field Marshal Haig's forces, following the fall of Kemmel the Allies has been moved further forward until it now rests almost upon the Marais-LaBassée road, less than seven miles southwest of Arras. By the wiping out of this salient the menace to the Champagne has been overcome. In the southern wing north of Soissons French and American troops continuing their progress notwithstanding the violent opposition of the enemy. The villages of Leuven and Crecy au Mont have been captured and in crossing the Ailette a force of seven miles gained in the wooded west of Coucy le Chateau, through which passes the railroad line, running from Chauny to Laon. Large numbers of prisoners have been taken in these operations. From Arras southward to the vicinity of Noyon the British and French troops have made further remarkable gains, gauged both by the extent of the territory delivered from enemy hands and its strategic importance for further manoeuvres. Personnel the last important town in German hands on the Somme River, has been captured by the British who have passed on eastward and northward with steady strides, notwithstanding the resistance of the enemy. Bouchemin and Hancourt and the high ground adjacent to them are all in British hands and Field Marshal Haig's men have arrived at the outskirts of the St. Pierre Vaast Wood. Further to the north other towns have been taken including Bullecourt which last week changed hands several times in violent battles. The Canadian and Australians were in the forefront of manoeuvres throughout this region and did gallant work. Considerably more than 2,000 prisoners have been taken by the British, and a few guns also have been captured. To the south where the French are operating against the Germans along the Canal du Nord, there have been violent artillery duels. Even south of Peronne at Epeneourt the French have forced another crossing of the Canal and two miles northeast of Neuf they have captured the village of Bouilly Petit. Unofficial reports are to the effect that the British have reached the outskirts of Lens, the famous coal mining town north of Arras, and that confagurations are visible behind the lines in the neighborhood of Lens and as far as Arras. These fires are taken as an indication that it is the intention of the Germans to retire in this general region. The German war office admits the relinquishment of territory between Ypres and LaBassée, declaring that the movement was for the purpose of shortening the German line, and that it was carried out without the knowledge of the British.

PERONNE CAPTURED.

LONDON, Sept. 1. (By the A.P.)—Peronne, the railway centre at the bend of the River Somme, which was taken by the Germans in their offensive of last



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