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"ECHOES of the Past;

OR, The Recompense of Love!"

CHAPTER XXV.

"In 'Home, Sweet Home?' cried Lady Wynthaw. "My dear!"

"It is not so unlikely as it sounds," insisted Lady Edith. "I know a clergyman who happened to lose his place while he was reading the service and found he couldn't repeat the creed without the book, though he must have read it hundreds of times."

"Beautiful voice she has!" remarked one of the guests. "Shouldn't wonder if she makes a sensation and scores a big success in London when she gets there."

Lord Chesterleigh nodded, but absently; he had been trying, while the others had been talking, to recall the memory the girl had awakened.

Clive did not linger after the meal was over, but left immediately; he felt that he could not play his accustomed part with Edith, could not be so vile a hypocrite as to receive her caresses, with Mina's sad voice ringing in his ears, her face haunting him.

The contest continued with unabated ardor, and the day of the poll arrived. The most frantic efforts were being made by the supporters of all three candidates, and Clive's friends were so absorbed and excited in their endeavors that they did not notice the lack of enthusiasm which he suddenly displayed.

On the night before the election Mr. Broddy and Koshki addressed a meeting in the same part of the town in which Clive was speaking, and the designations, "traitor," "fraud,"

"sham friend of the people" were hurled with redoubled vindictiveness against Mr. Clive Harvey. Clive passed of the crowd which Koshki was addressing in the open air, and paused a moment to listen. Koshki, who was on his legs at the moment, caught sight of him and pointed a tremulous "dirty finger at him.

"Yesh; I tell Mr. Harvey to his face that he's a deceiver. Once a fraud and a traitor, my friends, always a fraud and a traitor. Let his friends, the aris-to-crats bevahr, or he's betray zem as he hash betrayed ush!"

There were groans and hisses, but Clive smiled—rather wearily—and passed on. It was not until he had got out of sound of the raucous voice that Koshki's words took to themselves a significance. Was the man not speaking the truth? Was not he, Clive, "betraying his friends," going to desert Lady Edith? The thought made him groan mentally.

The following day Lady Edith, accompanied by as many other ladies as the carriage would hold, drove from polling-station to polling-station, and was received everywhere with cheers which drowned the few ungallant hisses. Clive was busy, too, trying to persuade himself that he was keeping on the result, but knowing all the while that he did not care whether he lost or won.

In a scene of the wildest excitement, in an uproar which was quite like "old times," as Lord Chesterleigh said, the mayor stepped out on the balcony of the town hall and announced the poll. Mr. Clive Harvey had been elected with a majority of nearly five hundred, and was declared member for Brimsleigh.

Amid the cheers, the yells, the curses of the mob, Clive came forward to propose the usual vote of thanks to the mayor. Graham seconded it in a manly little speech; then Mr. Broddy's voice was heard in the midst of

the mob, where he was surrounded by his friends.

"I declare that the election has been won by trickery!" he shouted hoarsely.

"Yesh!" cried Koshki. "By lies and trickery. But let Mishter Clive Harvey look out for himself. Our hour will come—and sooner than he thinks! I, Koshki, friend of the working man, tell him—"

The rest was drowned in the cheers and yells of the victorious party, which, when Clive appeared at the door of the hotel, proceeded as usual to carry him, at the risk of his life and limbs, on their shoulders to his committee-room.

Lady Edith and Lord Chesterleigh followed in the carriage; but it was not until they all met at the Grange that she could whisper her loving congratulations.

"I am so proud, dearest!" she said, as she leaned against him. "But I knew you would win. Is there anything in which you could fall?"

With a heavy, accusing heart, he laid his hand on her head; it was well that she could not see his face.

"I owe my success, in great measure, to you, Edith," he said.

CHAPTER XXVI.

For other various reasons, best known to themselves, the candidates, whether victorious or vanquished, always bolt from the place in which they have been fighting the day after the election, and Clive found it necessary to go to London on the day after the poll; he had promised to speak for a political friend who was still fighting one of the London districts. The Chesterleighs were to follow in a day or two.

When he arrived at his rooms, he found a pressing letter from the man who was yet in the throes of his candidship, and Clive, welcoming the necessity for further work in which to absorb himself, made an apology for a dinner with a chop, and set out for the place of meeting. He had a hot time of it from friends and foes, and, declining his fellow politician's invitation to supper, walked through the warm and stuffy streets, wearily and sadly, brooding over the problem of his engagement.

And yet it had almost ceased to be a problem, for he felt that there was only one course open to him—the honest, straightforward one. He

must tell Lady Edith the truth.

The meeting had been held in a hall in one of the back streets of Chelsea, and Clive found himself at the turning leading to Benson's Rents. It was natural enough that he should be drawn in the direction of the spot where he had experienced the happiest moments of his life; and he passed under the archway and walked toward the house in which Mina had lived.

As he did so, he heard a step behind him, and looking round—for he had learned that it was as well to keep an eye on your slum neighbor—he saw that it was Quilton.

"Why, Quilton!" he said.

Quilton nodded. "Congratulations—" he began; but Clive cut him short.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, then he checked himself with a sense of self-reproach; he had clean forgotten the woman Quilton had so kindly offered to befriend.

Quilton nodded again. "Yes," he said as if he had read Clive's mind. "She's very bad; sent for me."

"I'll go with you," said Clive.

Quilton stopped and gazed before him.

"Better not," he said.

"Why not? I shall not disturb her," rejoined Clive. "I am ashamed to say that I had nearly forgotten the poor creature. Yes; I'll go with you."

Quilton's face grew like a mask, and he was silent for a moment; then he said with an air of impassive resignation:

"Very well. I'm a little tired of playing at Fate; it's a foolish game and a losing one."

"I don't know what you mean," said Clive.

"Probably not; but you may presently. Come in."


They entered the house next the one in which the Burrells had lived, and Clive followed Quilton up the stairs. The door of one of the rooms was opened to them by a respectable, motherly old woman, to whom Quilton spoke a word or two.

"She's about the same, sir," said the woman. "I'm afraid she's sinking fast. Will you please to come in? She made me send for you, sir."

They went into the room and Clive saw the woman propped up with cushions in a chair. She was much emaciated, and looked, as the woman in charge had said, as if she were dying. For a moment or two the dark eyes gazed up at Quilton as if she did not recognize him, but suddenly she said, in a weak, hollow voice:

"You have come, Henry. I—I wanted to see you, to tell you that I am dying."

Quilton did not contradict her, but responded with a nod. She must



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have seen behind his mask, however, for she said, with a sigh:

"You've been very good to me—better than I deserve. Who is this?" she asked, turning her heavy eyes on Clive.

"A friend," said Quilton.

"Does he know?" she asked, not eagerly, but wearily, almost indifferently.

"Not yet," said Quilton. "You'd better tell him."

"Why?" she asked, with a sigh.

"You made me promise to keep the secret."

"Yes," said Quilton; "but I've changed my mind, so far as he is concerned. Shall I tell him, Juanita?"

She made a gesture of assent with her head, and Quilton, with a wooden countenance and almost as wooden a face, turned to Clive and, without a word of preparation, said:

"This is Lady Chesterleigh, Mr. Harvey."

Clive did not start; he scarcely felt surprised; why, he knew not. He received the information without a sign or a word.

"Lady Chesterleigh," said Quilton. "She is his first wife."

Then the ghastly significance of the statement began to dawn on Clive, and his face paled.

Quilton nodded, as if again he had read Clive's mind.

"Yes. His first wife—this lady—was alive when he married the second time," he said. "Of course he was ignorant of the fact. She left him in a moment of jealousy, quite unfounded and unreasonable jealousy and she contrived to have a report of her death conveyed to him. Why, you ask." He smiled grimly and glanced at the woman. "When jealousy turns love to hate—"

"I never loved him!" broke from the woman's white lips. "I married him for all he could give me, rank, money—"

"And she surrendered these as well as her husband," said Quilton gravely, unemotionally. "Somebody says jealousy is as strong as death; anyhow, it's stronger than self-interest and common sense." He paused a moment and then added, as if in explanation: "Lady Chesterleigh is Spanish. You know now why she was at Palace Gate and in Grosvenor Square. Why she did not publicly declare her rank and publicly demand her rights she knows better than I do."

"I was ashamed at times," said the woman. "At others I—I wanted revenge; but my courage always failed me; and now I know—he—she meant Quilton—has made it clear to me—that the fault was mine, and that I should be silent to the end. But for my child—but you will take care of her, Henry?" She broke off listlessly.

(To be Continued.)

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