

Choice Literature.

One Life Only.

CHAPTER XXIV.

This was Miss Amherst's letter - My DEAREST UNA. - From my dying bed I write these words to you, and I am thankful that I have been allowed to live long enough to receive your letter, and to answer it, for it has proved to me, as I feared it would, that a great wrong and injustice has been done - unintentionally, I feel sure - by Humphrey Atherstone, but which I can now put it in his power to rectify. When you receive this I shall have passed to the realm where alone truth remains triumphant, and you must receive my statement, painful to you as I know it will be, with the implicit belief due to one who is about to stand before the Judge of all, and who has done for ever with this world's sophistries and deceptions. To make my information intelligible, I must go back to my own early history; but I will be as brief as I can, for my strength is failing, and my time is short. The one influence which has had verily an awful power over all my life, from the days of youth and hope to those now closing in the darkness of the grave, has been my indestructible love for Maurice Atherstone. He, too, loved me well - fondly, truly, even unchangingly; but his affection, deep as it was in truth, was absolutely nothing compared to the entire devotion with which I gave myself up in heart and soul to him. Standing where I do on the brink of eternity, I can see that such a love for any mere human being was nothing less than idolatry; but I was too absorbed in it then to question if it were right or wrong, and I became secretly engaged to him, without the sanction of our parents. For there was a deadly feud between his father and mine; one of those old long-standing quarrels founded on mutual insults given and received, which in the last century were seldom washed out except in blood, and even in my later times were allowed to wreck the happiness of families; but Maurice, like his father, was a passionate imperious man, who would not long brook control or delay in the fulfilment of his wishes. After a time he told his father of our engagement, and demanded his consent to our marriage. Then the storm broke. So terrible a quarrel ensued between them, that it ended in Maurice vowing he would never see his father's face again; and he kept his word. He left England to return no more while the old man lived. He asked me to go with him to the Mauritius, and I consented, and would have gone in spite of my father's stern prohibition, had he not exercised his power over me, as I was under age, and deprived me of all liberty till long after Maurice was far away. At that time, without means of my own, I was powerless to resist; but I took a vow in my own heart - a wicked vow - that I would live for Maurice Atherstone, and him alone, and that I would break all other ties, and fling all duties to the winds, if ever the time should come when I could go to him to be his wife. For some years I never even knew where he was, and the letters he wrote to me were destroyed before they reached my hands, as I was warned they would be. At last I heard that he was at the Mauritius, and that his father had caused a false statement to be made to him that I had married very soon after he went there, which had plunged him into a state of despondency and ill-health that had almost cost him his life; and when he partially recovered, he had gone up the country to some lonely place where he had lived ever since in perfect isolation, holding no communication with any of his countrymen, and surrounded only by the native islanders. At the time when I heard this account of him who had been my one thought day and night since our parting, my mother was dead, my father was growing old and feeble, requiring all my care, and my only brother was a helpless cripple, whose whole comfort and pleasure in life depended on myself. To abandon my home under such circumstances was as cruel as it was wrong, but I did not hesitate an hour. I had inherited money of my own, derived from my mother's family, which made me independent. I asked no permission, I made no farewells, but I left my home early one morning when all were sleeping, having told my father and brother that I should do so; and as I closed the door behind me, I said to myself that my motto henceforth should be, "All for love, and the world well lost!" Alas! alas! now at this hour, with the grave opening at my feet, what terrible reason have I to fear that it may not be only this world which is lost, when human love is set up as an idol in the heart to be worshipped with all the powers of life that are due to the service of our God alone! I reached the Mauritius, and through Maurice's banker there, I got a letter conveyed to him, telling him that the report of my marriage was false; that I was true to him, as I had ever been, and that I would be his wife, or that of none on earth. I told him of the vow I had taken on the day of his departure, and said that truly I had lived for him alone through the long years of our separation, though I knew not even in what part of the world he was, and that so soon as I had learnt how he had been driven by that cruel falsehood to a wretched solitary home, I had come to share it with him if he would, and for his sake had abandoned all who had a right to claim my love and care in England. I sent this letter, and counted the days which I was told must intervene before my messenger could bring me back an answer from the solitary region where Maurice lived. On the very first morning when it was possible a reply could reach me, the door of my sitting-room at the hotel was opened, and Maurice Atherstone himself stood before me. Even now, in this awful hour, when the chill of death is curdling round my heart, I can recall the rapture of delight that thrilled my whole being when I looked upon his face again, for it was the last moment of happiness my life has ever known. I flew towards him, and for one instant - only one - he clasped my hands in his as if he could never let me go, and then almost flung himself away from me, while he exclaimed in a tone that pierced me with its remembered anguish even now, "Too late, Catherine! too late! Why was I ever born to be your misery

and my own?" This was his history, when he gathered courage to tell it me. He had believed the report of my marriage, and it had maddened him. He rushed away from the presence of men, wandering among the Lills, getting what rest he could under the trees by night. Fever ensued, and a Malay family of the wealthier class took him into their dwelling, and nursed him through a long illness, till he was quite recovered. During the whole period the leading idea in his mind was the desire of a revenge on his father, who had wrecked his happiness. He believed me lost to him, and when he saw that the beautiful daughter of his Malay host had learned to love him, he recklessly resolved to marry her, and let the proud old Atherstone discover, too late, that there could be something in the shape of a daughter-in-law worse for him than an Amherst. He accomplished his purpose, taking care that all formalities which could make the union valid should be rigidly performed. But the fact of the marriage was not made known in the town, for it was performed by a passing clergyman, a college friend of Maurice's, who almost immediately after left the Mauritius for Ceylon, where he died; and Maurice himself continued to live in the Malay home of his wife among the hills. Partly from the wayward inconsistency of passion, and partly because as he came to know more of the Malay girl he had married, he saw the miserable folly of the step, he never after all announced the fact to his father. One year after his marriage a son was born to him, and then he would have openly avowed the birth of an heir to Atherstone Abbey and all its fair estates, had it not been that the child was weakly, and little likely to live, while a terrible calamity supervened in an attack of brain-fever which seized his wife, and left her hopelessly and violently insane. He had never loved her, but her father had died shortly after their marriage, and he could not abandon either her or her child to the mercy of strangers. He had remained up to the hour when I met him once more, in an existence by the side of the madwoman which was nothing less than a living death, and without a gleam of consolation save in the love he bore his child. It still lived, but was so delicate and sickly that he had not the slightest expectation of seeing it survive many months, and although he had had it duly registered and baptised by the name of Edward (that of his brother, Humphrey's father), he did not think it worth while to take any other step, such as he might have done had he expected it to live long enough to inherit the lands of his ancestors. Una, I must not linger over the hopeless desolation into which I was plunged by this revelation; but, bitter as was my suffering, I can truly say that my worst anguish was in the thought of the miserable ruin which had fallen on Maurice Atherstone. To rescue him from his terrible position became the one only hope I had in life, for I well knew that I myself must see his face no more, as the husband of another woman. Yet still would I live for his happiness, if I had power to compass it, and strangely enough the way to do so was opened to me then and there. The very next mail brought him the news of his father's death, and the urgent summons of his agents in England to return and take his place as possessor of Atherstone Abbey, where the widow of his brother and her young son Humphrey alone remained. His heart was yearning for his home. The idea of announcing his marriage had become perfectly hateful to him, and it seemed quite unnecessary so far as his child was concerned, for it was apparently dying of the malaria of the country. Yet he was too good and noble to abandon the poor insane woman, who was lawfully his wife, and had I not been there I know not to what desperate deed he might have been driven. But now was my time to give him my life as I had vowed, though to my own utter misery. I went to him, and asked him to entrust his wife to me. I would remain with her at the Mauritius, and tend her carefully as if she had been my sister, while he might return to Atherstone to take his rightful place, and enjoy a civilised life once more in his own old home. He could not resist the temptation of so great a release, and he accepted - letting me see plainly enough that if his poor wife's miserable life should come to the speedy close he anticipated, he would then return to claim me as his own. This is more than twenty years ago, and now - such is the irony of life - his Malay wife yet lives, a helpless idiot, while he has long been dead, and I am dying. Maurice went, and he took his sinking child with him, because he could not bear that it should die in any arms but his. He did not expect it to live many hours after he left the shore. One only condition I made, in a sort of vengeance on my own weak heart, which I felt still clung to him too fondly, married though he was: I stipulated that there should be no sort of correspondence between us; he was never to write to me, nor would I write to him, unless it were to announce to him the death of his wife. I compelled him to accept this condition - and he did. We parted then for ever. I never heard from him; I never knew how he fared in this sad world till the day came, long years after, when I saw the announcement of his death in the papers. Una, now comes the revelation which I fear will be so terrible to Humphrey Atherstone, and for his sake, to you. When I heard that he had succeeded to his uncle as sole and rightful heir, I concluded, of course, that Maurice's own son had died, as had been expected, on the voyage home. Indeed, it had never occurred to me that he could survive, judging from the suffering state in which he was when he embarked from the Mauritius with his father. But, so soon as I read your letter with the account which it contained of him whom you call "Edward, the Malay," the whole truth flashed upon me only too clearly, and I saw unmistakably that he is in truth none other than Edward Atherstone, the legitimate inheritor of the Abbey and all the estates of his ancestors. The chain of events is perfectly plain to me. You say that "Edward" was brought as a child from the Mauritius by Maurice Atherstone. He took no child with him but his own son. I saw the vessel weigh anchor, while he stood on the deck with the boy in his arms, and

the ship was to touch no shore till it reached England. Doubtless the sea breeze revived the child, so that he still lived when they reached home; but Maurice probably expected that he would not live to grow up, and therefore said nothing of his parentage, for I know it was his purpose never, if his child died, to reveal the marriage, which he felt to be a disgrace to his family. Having once concealed the boy's relationship to him, it would become daily more difficult for him to own to it, and months and years rolled on, and the child's strangely evil propensities revealed themselves in painful contrast with the noble qualities of his reputed heir and nephew Humphrey, to own him would become a task almost beyond the power of a man so proud as Maurice. The marriage of his son to a gipsy girl must have greatly increased his unwillingness to let the children of such a union represent in future years the noble race of Atherstone. Yet I believe he must have intended to do justice at the last, and that the suddenness of his death alone frustrated his purpose. Probably some half intimation of the truth, made in his last moments to his nephew Humphrey, rendered him to a certain extent doubtful of his title to the estates, without his having a sufficient knowledge of the rightful possessor to restore them, and this will account for all that has been mysterious in his conduct; while on the other hand it is probable that Edward had gained from his father some idea of his claim, without any certainty, and that the effort to find documents explaining it was the cause of his continual lurking round the Abbey, of which you tell me, and which must have been done with the view of stealing into the house unseen. This, however, is certain - Edward Atherstone is the legitimate possessor of his father's house and lands, and I have been allowed to live long enough to do a last service to him who was the one love of my life, by restoring his son to his rightful home. I leave it to you, Una, to reveal the truth to Humphrey Atherstone. Your tenderness will soften the pain of the disclosure, for I can see but too clearly how deeply you love him. It will be bitter to him, no doubt, and to you, for his sake. Yet to me, in this awful hour, it seems worse than folly to give a thought to the perishable possessions of this mortal world, while still it is possible to gain an entrance to that abiding city whose Builder and Maker is God. Shall not I, who squandered all my life on an earthly love, knock at its doors in vain? And now, Una, farewell, till we meet before the great white throne. CATHERINE AMHERST. To the very last word of this long letter Una Dysart read on, and when she came to the close where the signature had been traced, scarce, legibly, by the stiffening fingers of the dying woman, she let it fall from her relaxed grasp, while her head sank upon her hands, and Humphrey's name passed from her lips in a low wailing cry. (To be continued.) The Bass Rock. This remarkable island rock is situated off the east coast of Scotland, near the mouth of the Firth of Forth. It is about two miles from Canty Bay, Haddingtonshire, and opposite the ruined castle of Tantallon. Rising abruptly to the height of 420 feet above the level of the sea, it presents to the visitor one of the most striking objects in entering the mouth of the Firth. About a mile in circumference, and nearly round in shape, it is inaccessible on all sides except the south-west, where it shelves down to the water, and even there landing is difficult, and almost impossible when there is any swell. About half-way up the southern slope of the rock are the remains of an ancient chapel, pointing to an early date, and associated with the introduction of Christianity into Scotland. At the base of the same slope, clinging, as it were, to the sides of the precipice, are the mouldering walls of a fortification in which numbers of the Scotch people were incarcerated during the reign of the Stuarts. The first mention of the Bass in ancient records is in connection with one of the religious hermits, who at a very early period, driven probably by persecution, or by the wars between the Picts and Scots, selected it as his place of retreat. The name of this hermit of the Bass was St. Baldred. He was of Scottish descent, and flourished at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, having died in the year 608. The ruined chapel of the Bass is said to mark the place of Baldred's humble cell, but there is reason to believe that it is of comparatively modern date. It would appear that the island at one time formed a parish, and that the "parish kirk in the Craig of the Bass" was consecrated in honor of St. Baldred in 1642, when it is more than probable the structure was first erected under the patronage of that notorious enemy of the Reformation, Cardinal Beaton. The earliest proprietors of the island on record were the ancient family of the Landers, who from this were usually designated as the Landers of the Bass. A charter of it from William de Lambert, Bishop of St. Andrews, in favor of Robert Lander, dates as far back as 1816. According to Henry the Minstrel, Robert Lander accompanied Wallace in many of his exploits. In the aisle of the lairds of the Bass, in the old church of North Berwick, a tombstone once bore the following inscription in Latin-Saxon characters: "Here lies the good Robert Lander, the great Laird of Congalton and the Bass, who died May, 1811." The crest they assumed from it was characteristic - a solan-goose sitting upon a rock. It does not, however, appear when the Bass began to be used as a "strength" or fortified place. The first we hear of it having been thus employed is in the year 1406, when it afforded a temporary retreat to James, the youngest son of Robert III., before embarking, under the guardianship of the Earl of Orkney, upon that ill-fated expedition which resulted in his being taken by the English and detained nineteen years in captivity. That even at this early period there was a castle or some fortification on the island is a supposition strengthened by another fact. On the return to Scotland of the young prince, afterwards James I., in

1424, we are informed that Walter Stuart, eldest son of Murdoch, Duke of Albany, who had acted as regent, was arrested and "sent prisoner to the Castle of the Bass." That the Bass continued as one of the strongholds or fortresses of old Scotland during the sixteenth century we have abundant evidence. Boece describes it as "a castrum in Lothian, fortified by nature in the most extraordinary manner, being situated on a very high rock more than two miles from the shore, and surrounded on every side by the sea." In 1581 James VI. paid a visit to the Bass, and seems to have conceived a strong desire to obtain possession of it for the crown. It is said he offered the laird whatever he pleased to ask for it, upon which Lander replied, "Your Majesty must either resign it to me, for I'll have the old brag back again." Shortly after this, however, it fell into other hands. But in the course of events the old rock was destined to suffer a radical change both in regard to masters and inhabitants. Having fallen into the possession, first of the Laird of Waughton, and after into that of Sir Andrew Ramsay, Provost of Edinburgh, it was in October, 1671, purchased from the latter by Lauderdale, in the name of the government, to become a state-prison. "The use," says Kirkton, "the king made of it was to make it a prison for the Presbyterian ministers; and some of them thought when they died in the prison, as Mr. John Blackadder did, they glorified God in the islands." The reign of persecution had commenced. The prisons and tolbooths of Scotland were filled to overflowing; it was found necessary to provide more accommodation for the increasing number of delinquents, and the Bass, from its proximity to the capital, its security, and perhaps its dignity as a castle, was selected as a fitting receptacle for the leading men, more especially the Presbyterian ministers. A slight survey of the ruins of the fortress, as they now stand in naked desolation, is sufficient to corroborate the testimony of the prisoners, and to show that they had little reason to congratulate themselves on the selection of their marine prison house. Placed near the base of the overhanging precipice, it must have formed a sort of tank or reservoir for the perpetual dripping from above, while it was washed by the spray from below, and entitled by its position to the full benefit of the eastern blast. What is still pointed out as "Blackadder's Cell" is a dormitory about seven feet by eight, situated on the ramparts, with a small window facing the south. In speaking of his father's place of confinement, one of Blackadder's sons says: "The Bass was a bare, cold, unwholesome prison; all their roofs ordinarily full of smoke, like to suffocate and choke them, so as my father and the other prisoners were necessitated many a time to thrust head and shoulders out of the window to recover breath." At the time of the invasion by William of Orange, the rock, garrisoned by Charles Maitland as deputy governor, held out in name of the exiled king until 1690, when it was surrendered into the hands of the new government; but, strangely enough, it again fell into temporary possession of the adherents of James. A few daring young officers, who had been taken prisoners at Cromdale and sent to the Bass, formed a plan for surprising the place, which succeeded. Being supplied with provisions by their friends on shore, and receiving reinforcements from abroad, they contrived, with a courage and perseverance worthy of a better cause, to hold their ground for several years. At length, irritated by the pertinacity of the rebels, William dispatched two ships of war, which, aided by smaller vessels, cut off their supplies and reduced them to the necessity of capitulating in April, 1694. After the surrender an order was given to the commander-in-chief to demolish all the fortifications and buildings of the Bass, and to remove the canon and ammunition - an order which, not having been fulfilled at the time, was finally carried into execution, by the command of King William in 1701. Five years after, the Bass passed into the possession of Sir Hew Dalrymple, to whose lineal descendant it now belongs. The rock is let for a considerable sum annually to the landlord of the solitary little inn at Canty Bay, who employs a number of hardy Scotch peasants to kill the sea-fowl, which swarm in dense masses on the cliffs. The solan-geese are to be found here at certain seasons of the year in immense numbers, and other aquatic birds, which give the surface of the rock quite a snowy appearance in the distance. The down is valuable, and the eggs of the solan-geese are also in request, being considered a great delicacy. "Baird's Goose," a small projecting ledge, is the only foothold on that part of the Bass for the wild fowl coming up the Firth. From this point the sportsmen fire at the birds that circle round the summit of the rock. A boat is stationed below to pick up the game as it falls. Bass Rock has long been a resort for travellers who enjoy the weird and gloomy scenery that abounds on the coasts of Scotland. Not many years ago a visit was made to the Bass by four gentlemen whose names have long been conspicuous in literature - Dr. McCre, Jun., Hugh Miller, and Professors Fleming and Balfour - which resulted in the joint production of an entertaining little volume, entitled *The Geology of the Bass Rock*, from which a large portion of the material for this article has been gathered. Among the forms of insect life there is a little creature known to naturalists which can gather around itself a sufficiency of atmospheric air, and so clothed, it descends into the bottom of the pool; and you may see the little diver moving about dry, and at his ease, protected by his crystal vestment, though the water all around be stagnant and bitter. Prayer is such a protector; a transparent vestment - the world sees it not; a real defence, it keeps out the world. By means of it the believer can gather so much of heavenly atmosphere around him, and with it descend into the putrid depths of this contaminating world, that for a season no evil will touch him, and he knows when to ascend for a new supply. Communion with God kept Daniel pure in Babylon. - Dr. James Hamilton.

Scientific and Useful. GRAHAM BREAD. Make the sponge as for other bread, and with white flour, and when ready, mix with Graham flour. Work it well, let it rise well, then bake. Do not put in any sugar; it injures the taste of the bread. COFFEE CAKE. One cup of butter, one cup of brown sugar, one cup of molasses, one cup of coffee, prepared as for the table when cold, five cups of flour, one teaspoonful of soda dissolved in some of the coffee, two cups of raisins, after being pitted, cloves and cinnamon. TO CLEAN CORALS. Soak it in soda and water for some hours. Then make a lather of soap, and with a soft hairbrush rub the coral lightly, letting the brush enter all the interstices. Pour off the water and replenish it with clean water constantly, and then let the coral dry in the sun. CRACKED HANDS. Many people are martyrs to this affliction, their hands cracking on the least exposure to cold air or bleak mist. A correspondent of one of our exchanges who had suffered for years in this way, states that he has found common copal varnish a perfect cure. We are glad to give publicity to this simple remedy in the interests of suffering humanity. RAW BEER It is asserted, proves of the greatest benefit as a diet for persons of frail constitutions. It is reported that physicians are now administering to consumptives a diet of finely chopped raw beef, properly seasoned with salt, and heated by placing the dish containing it in boiling water. This food is given also in cases where the stomach rejects almost everything. TO HOUSEWIVES. An English paper, the *Builder*, has the following - our housekeeping readers can easily try the experiment: A correspondent states that he has made the simple discovery that hard waters are rendered very soft and pure, rivaling distilled water, by merely boiling a two-ounce phial, say in a kettleful of water. The carbonate of lime and any impurities will be found adhering to the phial. The water boils very much quicker at the same time. The knowledge of this fact will prove a boon to housewives and laundresses. TO PREPARE A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE. Take a half-cup each of best Java and Mochaibo, half an egg and shell, and a little cold water; mix well together; have coffee-pot hot; pour into coffee a big quart of boiling water; beat briskly. Let it boil fifteen minutes, just so you can see it bubble in the pot. Be careful and not allow it to boil over. Set it on one side three minutes, and then it will be ready for the table. This makes four cups of the best coffee you ever drank. If too strong, use three-quarters of a cup. PRINCE ALBERT'S PUDDING. Beat to cream half a pound of fresh butter, and mix with it by degrees an equal weight of pounded loaf sugar, dried and sifted; add to these, after they have been well beaten together, first the yolks and then the whites of five fresh eggs, which have been thoroughly whisked apart; now stir lightly in half a pound of the finest flour, dried and sifted, and, last of all, half a pound of jar raisins, weighed after they are stoned. Put these ingredients, perfectly mixed, into a well-buttered mould; serve it with punch sauce. When a mould is used, slices of candied peel should be laid rather thickly over it after it is buttered. A GOOD CEMENT. A good cement for mending almost anything may be made by mixing together litharge and glycerine to the consistency of thick cream or fresh putty. This cement is useful for mending stone jars or any coarse earthenware, stopping leaks in seams of tin pans or wash-boilers, cracks and holes in iron kettles, etc. I have filled holes an inch in diameter in kettles, and used the same for years in boiling water and food. It may also be used to fasten on lamp tops, to tighten loose nuts, to secure loose bolts whose nuts are lost, to tighten loose joints of wood or iron, loose boxes in wagon-hubs, and in a great many other ways. In all cases the articles mended should not be used till the cement has hardened, which will require from one day to a week, according to the quantity used. This cement will resist the action of water, hot or cold, acids, and almost any degree of heat. BREEDING AT THE NOSE. There are two little arteries which supply the whole face with blood, one on each side; these branch off from the main arteries on each side of the wind-pipe, and running upward toward the eyes, pass over the outside of the jaw-bone, about two-thirds of the way back from the chin to the angle of the jaw, under the ear. Each of these arteries, of course, supplies just one-half of the face, the nose being the dividing line; the left nostril is supplied with blood by the left artery, and the right nostril by the right artery. Now supposing your nose bleeds by the right nostril, with the end of the fore-finger feel along the outer edge of the right jaw until you feel the beating of the artery directly under your finger, the same as the pulse in your wrist; then press the finger hard upon it, thus getting the little fellow in a tight place between your finger and the jaw-bone; the result will be that not a drop of blood goes into that side of your face while the pressure continues; hence the nose instantly stops bleeding for want of blood to flow; continue the pressure for five or ten minutes, and the ruptured vessels in the nose will by that time probably contract so that when you let the blood into them they will not leak. Bleeding from a cut or wound anywhere about the face may be stopped in the same way. The Creator probably placed these arteries as they are that they might be controlled. Those in the back of the head, arms and legs are all arranged very conveniently for being controlled in like manner.