

THE SACRIFICE;

—OR—
FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

CHAPTER III.—(Continued).

He opened the umbrella again, and under this respectable old family hearse they walked through the dark, lonely paths; he felt the violent trembling of her hand, and pressed her arm closer to him.

"When can I see you again, Lora?" he inquired.

"I don't know," she replied.

"You don't know, Lora? But you ought to know. Up to this time I have been to see you only rarely, and for a moment; but after this I will not leave it any longer. Listen to me; I am not fond of secrecy, it is unworthy of us both; we love each other, and why should not all the world know it? Once again, Lora, I beg you to let me speak to your father to-morrow."

"No, no," she said firmly; "it is impossible."

"Then how long must I wait?"

"Till I will—let you know."

"Lora," he began, "if you only knew how so deeply I never think of anything but you, now. To-day I was thinking of the time I first saw you in church, at your school-mate's wedding; you stood so plainly before my eyes in your white dress, with the violet wreath in your golden hair. Lora, there is nothing in the world to compare with you."

They had stopped again, and holding the huge umbrella in one hand, he put his arm round her, and his eyes gazed into hers.

"And my little love is so true and so frank," he continued, while she listened with drooping head; "not once did you try to deceive me and play with me, as girls do—I was so sure of your love, though we had hardly spoken a word about it. I only needed to look into your eyes, and then I knew, 'She loves you, the proud, beautiful Lora von Tollen loves you.'"

"Yes," she said aloud, "I love you. He kissed her again, and then went on in silence.

"But when shall I see you again?" he asked again, after awhile.

"When you have spoken to my father and mother," she replied, "and from the window, as usual."

"Oh, Lora!" he said reproachfully.

"Sooner if you will—at the Bechers' ball. Ah, come, do come. It would be so delightful!"

"No," he said shortly, without hesitation. "And I beg of you to stay at home, too."

"I cannot, mamma has already accepted."

"Then write and decline—stay at home, and—think of me."

"Then I should have to invent some excuse, and I do not like to do that for such a trifle as this ball is. Do come, Ernest, it would be so pleasant to me."

"No," he said as decidedly as before; "I will not go to the Bechers' house—and you ought not to, either, for that reason."

"But I must do as my parents wish for the present," she replied shortly; "but I will think of you there."

He seemed vexed for a moment. Then he said playfully, "Go, then, my darling; it is true you are now the daughter of the house. I know that some day you will be all my own, and then one of us cannot do anything without the other. Lora, is it not wonderful, when you think of it?"

Now they were walking fast, beside the river; they passed the dark archway of the old, gray stone gate, and Lora turned into a street that led behind the houses to her own garden. A light from her father's sick-room shone out through the linden trees, across the old city wall.

"Good-night," said the beautiful girl, at the little gate in the wall, taking the key from her work-bag and unlocking it as she spoke. And now she offered him her lips for a kiss.

"I am so afraid," she murmured.

"For you and me? But what could happen to us? Do you mean that I should not be welcome to your parents?" he added proudly.

"No, oh, no! You are my comfort in all my misery. Good-bye, Ernest, until you come—but have patience."

She disappeared suddenly through the garden door. He stood still for awhile as if in a dream, as if he would try to look through the wall; then he turned slowly away. But as he did so the gate creaked on its hinges, and she stood before him again, and caught both his hands in hers.

"I must say it to you, Ernest, I must say it," she said tenderly, "that my heart is full of joy, of the sweetest happiness. As I stood alone there in the garden-path, it suddenly came over me with such force. Tell me, is it true—or have I dreamed that you love me, Ernest?"

He caught her to his breast and kissed her again and again. "Lora, my Lora!" he whispered.

A few minutes after she entered the dining-room, where her parents and her sister were sitting at tea, with such a look of radiant happiness in her face that her father forgot his reproaches for her long stay, and gazed at her in amazement.

"You stayed out so long, Lora," said

her mother wearily. "Has Rudi gone upstairs?"

Not till then did she come to herself. "Rudi?" she said, as she took off her hat. "He did not come with me, he is—oh, yes, he went away somewhere with Herr Becher." As she spoke she looked at her mother with wistful eyes, and bent down over her.

"Don't be vexed, I was gone a good while—but I will tell you about it by-and-by."

"I need not have taken so much trouble about the supper for Rudi," said Frau von Tollen, trying to speak playfully. "But you can eat something, Lora?"

"Thanks, mamma, I am not hungry; but I will help you now."

"Where is the rascal gone, confound him!" cried the old major. "Off the very first evening! He has no consideration."

"I don't know, papa."

Katie, who had taken her tea in silence, now exclaimed:

"But I know. They have gone to the summer theatre. Adalbert Becher is studying his part under the old director—well, Lora, you will be glad of it when you come to play with him."

"Oh, I have already refused," was the careless answer.

The major growled out something in his beard, whether approval or disapproval no one could tell. Her mother looked at Lora in surprise.

"I will change my dress in a minute, mamma," whispered the young girl. "I please come up, if you have a moment's time."

She went upstairs to her room, and seated herself in her damp clothes, beside herself with her happiness and her trouble; if she could only get rid of this burden which seemed to overwhelm her! If her mother would only come!

She lighted the lamp and took her sister's letter out of her pocket; and as she read the first lines over again, it seemed to her as if the clear-ray which had just shone into her life grew fainter and fainter, as if this horror which was standing on the threshold was so merciless and so terrible, that it must destroy her youthful happiness. She heard her mother's step on the stairs, and it sounded so weary. She tried to go to meet her, but her feet seemed rooted to the floor. She looked searchingly at her face as she entered, and she saw only worn features, and an expression of disappointed expectation in her eyes.

"Are you still in your wet clothes, Lora? Hurry now, for I want to go to bed early; I feel so tired to-night."

The young girl drew up a chair and put a shawl around her mother's shoulders.

"What is it you want, Lora?" asked the mother kindly.

"I—ah, nothing in particular, mamma. I wanted—I only wanted to see you—the girl was standing before the bureau, with her back to her mother, putting away her hat and veil.

"And Aunt Melitta? Why did she keep you there all the afternoon?"

Then the young girl turned. She saw that she must speak; she, alone, could do nothing.

Frau von Tollen waited for an answer and straightened out the folds of the white bed-curtains, which had got twisted a little. But as Lora did not speak, she looked up at length.

"Lora!" she cried then, "Lora, something has happened—for Heaven's sake, Helen is not ill!"

"No, mamma, no." The young girl knelt down before her mother, and tenderly stroked her face. "No one is ill; no, it is not that; it is only a little embarrassment, a little difficulty that Rudi has got into, you see. Helen wrote to me, she heard of it through her betrothed. My mamma!" she cried aloud, Her mother's face had changed frightfully, and her eye seemed fixed and glassy.

"Debts," she murmured, "more debts!"

"But mamma, it is not so very dreadful," cried Lora, in terror. "Be calm; he is not dead—"

"Show me the letter," demanded her mother.

"No, mamma, I wish I had not told you anything about it."

"I must know everything, Lora. Give it to me."

She caught the letter out of the young girl's hand, and read it by the light of the one poor candle. She groaned heavily once or twice, and then she sat back in her chair in silence and folded her hands in her lap.

"Mamma," said Lora, imploringly, "dear mamma!"

"I know of no way, none," said the unhappy woman.

"Victor must help us, mamma."

"My God!—Victor!"

"Have we then nothing more, mamma, nothing at all? We must help him, mamma; we must."

"Nothing except the trifle that papa has saved up for you children—two thousand thalers; and what is that?"

"Take it, nevertheless, mamma; it is not only Rudolph—"

"And what will become of you and Katie?"

A radiant look came into Lora's pale face.

"Take it, mamma," she whispered.

She wanted to add, "as for me I shall be taken care of—don't be anxious about me, mamma."

The certainty that a strong arm and a true heart belonged to her, came over her again with overpowering force; but she did not make her confession; she would not speak of her own happiness at this moment.

"I will take care of Katie," she stammered.

Frau von Tollen did not hear what Lora said; she was unconscious of her surroundings.

"So much misery, so much misery," she whispered. "Oh my God, what a life I have had! Nothing but care, nothing but toil and struggle for this weary existence! How hard it has been; and what thanks have I had for it?"

"Mamma!" shrieked Lora. She had never heard the patient woman speak before, and it hurt her deeply.

"Mamma, don't talk so. I will do everything for you—you should not say such things. I love you so—"

"Yes, you, you! But what is to become of you? I cannot sleep at night for anxiety at the thought of what will happen when your father dies. O God! your father will not survive it, Lora; he must not know it."

At this moment the house door-bell rang below and a merry whistle sounded on the stairs, and then Katie's voice:

"Well, Rudi, how did you enjoy the summer theatre?"

"Run down," said Frau von Tollen, "and tell Rudi to come up to me before he goes to papa."

The young girl obeyed. Her brother was teasing his little sister in the dining-room. He had taken both her slender hands in his. "Kneel down," he said playfully.

"But I will not!" screamed Katie.

"Let me go, Rudi; you have made friends with Adalbert Becher, and so I can't bear you any more—"

"You are a goose," he said; "Adalbert Becher is not so bad."

"Rudolph, mamma wants to speak to you before you go to papa," interrupted Lora, in a hoarse voice. She stood in the door like a statue.

"What's up?" he yawned, wrinkling up his forehead.

"Helen's betrothed has written all about it," she said.

"He gave a low whistle. 'Ah! Does papa know?'"

"Oh, no," replied Lora bitterly.

"Where is mamma?"

"In my room."

"Forward, then, with courage!" he said ironically, going toward the door.

"What is the matter?" inquired Katie.

"Nothing," replied Lora.

"Dr. Schonberg grew quite enthusiastic over your favorite poet in the literature class to-day, Lora. You know him. He read us something from his new book. He reads splendidly; you ought to have heard how delightful it sounded from his lips."

"A little boat floated down the stream, a bride and bridegroom sat therein."

"A bride and bridegroom," repeated Lora, going from the window to the big porcelain stove, in the opening of which a tea-kettle was hissing.

"How red you are, Lora!"

"Am I? Didn't papa call? I wish you would see."

"See yourself," pouted Katie. "Papa is so very cross, and I have had quite enough of it already to-day."

Just then Rudolph appeared; he looked vexed, and demanded his cap, which he could not find.

"Are you going out?" asked Lora.

"I have made an appointment with Becher."

"I think papa hoped you would stay with him to-day, at least."

He made no reply, but left the room, still looking for his hat; he seemed to have found it in the hall, for he left the house immediately.

"Lora," said Katie, "you know they are going to have a supper with the actresses."

"Be silent," replied Lora.

"I heard it from old Diecks, who carried the invitations and got the champagne ready; that little blonde lives with her."

"Be silent," repeated Lora, blushing deeply, "that is not a thing to interest us."

"Not me, perhaps, but—you."

"For shame, Katie!"

"But why shouldn't Rudi amuse himself?"

"Katie, how can you talk so?"

"It is so horribly dull here, Lora. I don't blame him if—he only wouldn't go with Adalbert Becher—"

"For the last time I ask you, what can it be to us, Katie?" exclaimed Lora indignantly.

"Perhaps it may be something to us, nevertheless, Lora."

The girl crossed the room and stood in front of her beautiful young sister.

"Lora," she said, with sparkling eyes, "if he should ever dare, give him a box on the ear."

"Who? What?"

"If Adalbert Becher should want to marry you, the horrid—"

Lora smiled suddenly.

"You may be quite easy, Katie."

"I am anxious about you, Lora; he is so persistent, and—he is in love with you—desperately in love."

"For pity's sake, Katie, do be quiet. Will you please go to papa for me, little one? I must speak to mamma."

Katie ran out of the room, this time really obedient. Lora slowly followed. Then she heard the major's voice, upstairs.

"Will none of you look after your mother?"

Lora flew upstairs. "What is the matter with mamma?" she cried anxiously.

"What is it?" thundered the major. "She is ill; she has one of her old nervous attacks. May the devil fly away with the whole of you!"

Bang went the door, while the daughters flew to their mother's little bed-

room and bustled themselves about the sick woman, who, cold as ice lay shivering on the bed, making slight moans.

"Don't be frightened," she whispered, her teeth chattering as she spoke, "don't be frightened, children; it will soon pass off."

But Lora spent the whole night by her bed, rubbing the hands of the sufferer; she knew very well the cause of the illness.

Toward morning she started out of a light slumber. She heard steps on the stairs—uncertain, heavy steps. She got up softly and opened the door a little—she recognized her brother in the gray morning light; his cap was put on awry, and he looked strangely pale, and as he crossed the threshold of his room he staggered, and had to support himself by the door-post.

"Lora turned back into the sick-room with an expression of disgust on her face. Shivering, she wrapped herself in a shawl, and sitting down on a little stool at the foot of the bed, she laid her head on her mother's cushions. She did not awake until a hot hand was laid on her cheek.

"You must look after the house, Lorchen," said the weary voice; "if I feel better at noon I will get up. Poor child, you must be very tired!"

(To be Continued.)

PERSONAL POINTERS.

Notes of Interest About Some Prominent People.

M. Jean de Reske is said to be the only professional singer who has ever sat at the Czar of Russia's dinner-table.

The King of the Belgians is one of the largest landed proprietors in the world. In addition to his thousands of acres in Africa and in Belgium, he owns two estates of considerable extent in France.

A resident Irish landlord, with an estate of 30,000 or 40,000 acres, many quaint stories are told of Lord Antrim's devotion to his own affairs. Someone in great trepidation once told him that somebody else had seen the Earl driving three cows along the road, and he asked Lord Antrim's authority to contradict a story so derogatory to his dignity. "The man was under a misapprehension," replied Lord Antrim; "it was not three cows, but two cows and a bull."

Only one lady in England can boast that she has twice married a duke. That lady is the present Duchess of Devonshire, whose first husband was the late Duke of Manchester, and who, on his death, was fortunate enough to be offered another—and even greater—Duchy as her portion by the well-known head of the Cavendishes, who had long admired and recognized her talents and beauty. By her acceptance of the hand of the Duke of Devonshire the Duchess gained an honor almost unique in modern history.

The German Emperor is the subject of an anecdote which is certainly sufficiently characteristic to appear true. During one of his forest excursions, on the occasion of the visit of the Czar of Russia, William II. was about to light his cigar, but found he had forgotten the knife that he used to cut off the end. The Czar was no better provided, so one of the forest keepers stepped forward and proffered his own. The Emperor used it and then returned it, saying, impressively: "Take back your knife. It is now an historical relic."

Here is a story of Princess Metternich, who was recently invited to dinner at the Hofburg, The Austrian Emperor at ways dines at 5.30, and the Princess found herself without an appetite at such an early hour. Her Imperial host, noticing that his fair guest was eating nothing, solicitously inquired if the Princess were ill. Receiving a negative answer, the Emperor insisted on knowing the cause of the Princess's abstinence, and to the consternation of all present received the following reply: "It is only because I am not accustomed to eat between meals."

The Duke of Beaufort maintains the largest hunting establishment in the kingdom. He is a typical M.F.H. of the best sort, immensely keen to show sport, thoroughly conversant with everything pertaining to hounds and foxes, and highly popular with the farmers and other landowners. All this is shown by the fact that the Duke is able to hunt a country of nearly 800 square miles six days a week without a hitch of any kind. Hounds have been kept at Badminton from time immemorial, and a Duke of Beaufort has always been in the mastership.

The consolidation of Messrs. Powers and Weightman and Messrs. Rosengarten and Sons, the biggest chemical firms in the United States, and hitherto the keenest rivals, has been effected by Mrs. Walker, Mr. Weightman's daughter, who practically conducted the business. When Mr. Weightman died he left \$100,000,000, and the business to Mrs. Walker, who became the richest woman in the United States. Mrs. Walker has two hobbies, the collecting of lace and Napoleonic relics. The consolidation effects a practical monopoly in the United States of sulphate of quinine and morphia.

"Don't you remember me? I was in your class at school!" said the enthusiastic girl, meeting an old friend while shopping. "Oh, yes," said the haughty one, adjusting her lorgnette; "but that's a long time ago; you're in a different class now."

Judge: "You must not be so frivolous and facetious while giving your evidence. It is altogether unsuitable."

Witness (sighs): "I'm very sorry, my lord, but I can't help it; it's hereditary; my father was a judge."

Mother: "Your schoolmaster can't be such a mean man as you make out. I notice his son has all the toys he can possibly want. Why, these are what his father takes away from the other boys."

THE TRAGEDY OF A QUEEN

THE LADY MIN AND PRINCE PARENT FEUD IN KOREA.

Prince Won and Caused Assassination of the Woman He Had Raised to the Throne.

Kingly marriage in Korea is neither more nor less of a lottery than it is elsewhere, only the method of challenging fate is different. All the eligible maidens of the kingdom were bidden to the palace, and then happy Prince Charming made his choice of course. No! That is the way it is in the fairy tales, but not in real life, not even in Korea, which in former days, at least so closely bordered on fairy lands. All the maidens selected by the Provincial Governors of the kingdoms assembled in the tea pavilion outside the palace by the lotus pond. They stood attentive to please, as the unwed King, followed by the court, walked in and out inspecting the bevy of beauty who appeared, according to the ancient Korean custom, with bare breasts.

NO METHOD OF CHOICE.

Suddenly, at a signal from the Court Chamberlain, all the aspirant brides sat down, or more exactly speaking, squatted upon embroidered cushions, which had been carefully arranged in circles for this crucial moment. All the maidens squatted gracefully, of course, it goes without saying, because they were all highly bred maidens worthy of a King's hand and couch, but a second later one of them, for the moment happiest among women, sprang in the air, as though stung by an adder. No, that could not be, as her face was suffused with smiles, and a joy which even Oriental etiquette could not suppress reddened her cheeks.

A moment later this maiden of the Min family had aloft in her golden hand, with triumphant gesture a rigid goblet, placed by fate, as some said, by the Prince Parent, as all knew, in the cushion on which she sat. Twenty years later the Queen of the Mins was murdered and her mangled remains drenched with kerosene were burned not 100 yards from the palace pavilion, where, by the ordeal of the goblet, directed by the Prince Parent, she had been proclaimed Queen. While the hand that struck down the defenceless woman was that of a Japanese hireling, there never has been any doubt in the minds of those whose knowledge of crime and death in the Korean Court that in each instance, at the marriage and at the midnight murder, the guiding spirit and the directing hand was that of the ruthless Prince Parent.

THE REAL RULER.

The story of Korea during the twenty years between the Queen's marriage and her murder is simply the story of the feud to the death, and after, between the Prince Parent and the Lady Min, whose strong will, much to the dismay of the Prince Parent, asserted itself well before the remains of the marriage feast were cleared away. It has been said that Korea never had a King, but that the Min family ruled through the Queen, who was devoted to their interests. In the course of the Queen's reign then, as we may properly call it, the life and the death of politics was the feud between her and the Prince Parent. That he survived to die in his bed a few years ago shows that an adroit old fox the National Grand Duke really was. In the skirmishes of assassination which took place between him and the reigning lady, determined to rule, her father and two brothers were killed, and her nephew, though cut to pieces by a hundred swords, survived.

THE BOMB IN COREA.

Nor is it to be supposed that the National Grand Duke escaped quite scathless. On one occasion a bomb placed under his sleeping stove blew him high in the air. The bones in both his legs were broken by the explosion or the fall and he was never so spry as he had been before. Mentally, however, his murderous temper remained to his dying day. After this failure to convert the Prince Parent into an ancestral tablet, and give him a Seoul name, the Mins, and perhaps it is fair to say, the Queen, tired of mere lethal weapons which had proved so ineffectual, and resorted to strategy and spoils.

DIED TO SAVE HER BOY.

What happened on that fateful night of October 8, 1895, has been related many times and in many ways. The essential facts are that Japanese troops surrounded the palace grounds and held the populace and the loyal troops in check, that Korean troops trained and offered by Japanese broke down the gates, and that a horde of Japanese soldiers, together with a number of Soshi, or unattached adventurers, rushed in, and under the guidance of men attached to the Japanese Legion, made their way to the pavilion where the Queen slept. Her Majesty, aroused by the tumult in the city, had apparently a fair opportunity to escape. Indeed, it is reported that she had already found a safe refuge in the vast park, when her maternal instinct, her idolatry for the imbecile boy whom the Japanese would not proclaim Emperor, brought her back to the palace, where she met her death.

Mrs. McDuff: "This paper says that mice are attracted by music, but I don't believe it." Mr. McDuff: "Why not?" Mrs. McDuff: "Because I never see any mice around when I play the piano." Mr. McDuff: "Well, that's no reason for doubting the paper's statement."