

# LILIAN, THE HEIRLESS.

When Cecilia had read so far, she raised the incense, though without any very great mingling, and seeing it was from some unknown friend of Tran's at present in Russia, skimmed lightly through the earlier portion of it, until at length a paragraph chained her attention and killed at a stroke all life and joy and happy love within her.

"By the bye," ran this fatal page, "did you not know a man named Arlington? tall, rather stout, and dark; you used to think him dead. He is not, however, as I feel against him, yesterday by chance and he said: 'Yes, several. I had only a minute or two to speak to him, and, as he never drew breath himself during that time, I had not much scope for questioning. He appears possessed of many advantages—pretty wife at home, and of money, nice place, unlimited power. You will see him shortly in the old land, as he is starting for England almost immediately.

And so on, and on, and on. But Cecilia, then or afterwards, never read another line.

Her first thought was certainly not of Cyril. It was a sick, covering fear—a horror of any return to the old loathed life—a crushing dread lest any chance should fling her again into her husband's power. Then she drew her breath a little hard, and thought of Tran, and then of Cyril, and then she told herself, with a strange sense of relief, that at least one can die.

But this last thought passed away as did the others, and she knew that death seldom comes to those who seek it; and to command it—who should dare do that? Hope dies hard in some breasts! In Cecilia's, the little fond flame barely flickered, so quickly did it fade away and vanish altogether before the force that had assailed it. Not for one moment did she doubt the truth of the statement lying before her. She was too happy, too certain she should have remembered that some are borne to misfortune as the sparks fly upward. "She had lived, she had loved," and here was the end of it all!

All night long she had not slept. She had indeed lain upon her bed, her pillow had known the impress of her head, but through every minute of the lonely, silent hours of gloom, her great eyes had been wide open, watching for the dawn.

At last it came. A glorious dawn; a very flush of happy youth; the sweeter that it bespoke a warm and early spring. At first it showed pale pink with expectation, then rose with glad hope. From the east, faint rays of gold rushed triumphantly, and entering the casement, cast around Cecilia's head a tender halo.

When happiness lies within our grasp, when all that earth can give us (alas! how little it is within our grasping, how good is the coming of another day—long, perfect day, in which to revel, and laugh, and sing, as though care were a thing unknown! But when trouble falls upon us, and this same terrible care is our only portion, with what horror, what heart-sinking, do we turn our faces from the light and wish with all the fervor of a vain wish that it were night!

The holy dawn brought but anguish to Cecilia. She did not turn with impatience from its smiling beauty, but with tears gathered slowly, and grew within her sorrowful gray eyes, until at length (large as was their home) they burst their bounds and ran quickly down her cheeks as though glad to escape from what should never have been their resting-place. Swiftly, silently, ran the little pearly drops, ashamed of having dimmed the lustre of those lovely eyes that only yesterday morning were so glad with smiles. Sitting now in her bed-room, forlorn and desolate, with the cruel words that have travelled all the way across a continent to lay her peace throbbing through her brain, she leans Cyril's well-known step upon the gravel outside, and springing to her feet as though stabbed, shrinks backwards until the wall yields her a support. A second later, ashamed of her own weakness, she struggles herself, smooths back her ruffled hair from her forehead, and, with a heavy sigh and colorless face, walks down stairs to him who from henceforth must be not counted as a lover. Slowly, with lingering steps that betray a broken heart she draws nigh to him.

Seeing her, he comes quickly forward to greet her, still glad with the joy that has been his during all his walk through the budding woods, a smile upon his lips. But the smile soon dies. The new blackness, the terrible change he sees in the beloved face sobers him immediately. It is vivid enough even at a first glance to fill him with apprehension; hastening to her as though eager to succor her from any harm that may be threatening, he would have taken her in his arms, but she, with a little quick shudder, putting up her hands, prevents him.

"No," she says, in a low changed tone, "not again!"

"Something terrible has happened," Cyril says, with a conviction, "or you would not so repulse me. Darling, what is it?"

"I don't know how to tell you," replies she, her tone cold with the curious calmness of despair.

"It cannot be so very bad," nervously, "nothing can signify greatly, unless it separates you from me."

A mournful bitter laugh breaks from Cecilia, a laugh that ends swiftly, tunelessly as it began.

"How nearly you have touched upon the truth," she says, miserably; and then, in a clear, hard voice: "My husband is alive!"

A deep silence. No sound to disturb the utter stillness save the sighing of the early spring wind, the faint twitter of the birds among the budding branches, as already they seek to tune their slender throats to the warblings of love, and the lowing of the brown-eyed oxen in the fields far, far below them.

Then Cyril says, with slow emphasis: "I don't believe it; it is a lie! It is impossible!"

"It is true. I feel it so. Something told me my happiness was too great to last, and now it has come to an end. Alas! alas! how short a time it has continued with me! Oh, Cyril!" smiting her hands together passionately, "what shall I do? what shall I do? If he finds me, he will kill me, as he often threatened. How shall I escape?"

"It is untrue," repeats Cyril, doggedly, hardly noting her terror and despair. His determined disbelief restores her to calmness.

"Do you think I would believe a story on certain grounds?" she says. "Colonel Tran wrote me the evil tidings?"

"Tran is interested, he might be glad to delay our marriage," he says with a want of generally unworthy of him.

"No, no, no. You wrong him. And how should he seek to delay a marriage that was yet far distant?"

"Not so very distant, I have yet to tell you," with a strange smile, "my chief reason for being here to-day is to ask you to receive my mother-to-morrow, who is coming to welcome you as a daughter. How well Fate planned this tragedy! To have our crowning misfortune fall straight into the lap of our newly-born content! Cecilia," vehemently, "there must still be a grain of hope somewhere. Do not let us quite despair. I cannot so tamely accept the death to all life's joys that must follow on belief."

"You shall see for yourself," replies she, handing to him the letter that all this time has lain crumpled within her nervous fingers.

When he has read it, he drops it with a groan, and covers his face with his hands. To him, too, the evidence seems clear and convincing.

"I told you to avoid me. I warned you," she says, presently, with a wan smile. "I am born to ill luck! I bring it even to all those who come near me—especially, it seems, to the few who are unhappy enough to love me. Go, Cyril, while there is yet time."

"There is not time," desperately, "it is already too late." He moves away from her, and in deep agitation paces up and down the secluded garden-path; while she, standing alone with drooping head and dry miserable eyes, scarcely cares to watch his movements, so dead within her have all youth and energy grown.

"Cecilia," he says, suddenly, stopping before her again, speaking in a low tone that though perfectly clear still betrays inward hesitation, while his eyes care fully avoid her, "listen to me. What is he to you, this man that he says is still alive, that you should give up your whole life for him? He deserted you, deserted you, left you for another woman. For two long years you have believed him dead. Why should you now think him living? Let him be dead still, and buried in your memory, there are other hands—slowly, and still with averted eyes—"other homes; why should we not make one for ourselves? Cecilia—coming up to her, white but earnest, and holding out his arms to her—"come with me, and let us find our happiness in each other!"

Cecilia, after one swift glance at him, moves back hastily.

"How dare you use such words to me?" she says, in a hoarse, stifled voice; "how dare you tempt me? you, who said you loved me!" Then the little burst of passion dies; her head droops still lower upon her breast; her hands, coming together, fall loosely before her in an attitude despicuous of the deepest despondency. "I believed in you," she says, "I trusted you. I did not think you would have been the one to inflict the bitterest pang of all." She breathes these last words in accents of the saddest reproach.

"Nor will I!" cries he, with keener contrition, kneeling down before her, and holding his face in a fold of her gown. "Never again, my darling, my life! I forgot—I forgot you are as high above all other women as the sun is above the earth. Cecilia, forgive me."

"Nay, there is nothing to forgive," she says. "But Cyril—unsteadily—"you will go abroad at once, for a little while, until I have time to decide where in the future I shall hide my head."

"Must I?"

"You must."

"And you—where will you go?"

"It matters very little. You will have had time to forget me before ever I trust myself to see you again."

"Then I shall never see you again," replies he mournfully, "if you wait for that. My true love hath my heart, and I have here. How can I forget you while it beats warm within my breast?"

"Be it so," she answers, with a sigh: "it is a foolish fancy, yet it gladdens me. I would not be altogether displaced from your mind."

She lays her hand upon his head as he still kneels before her, and gently smooths and caresses it with her light, loving fingers. He trembles a little, and a heavy, dry sob breaks from him. This parting is as the bitterness of death. To them it is bad, because it is forever.

[To be Continued.]

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8 00 A. M.—For Fredericton Junction connecting there with train for Bangor and points West, and for St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton and Woodstock and for St. John.

10 50 A. M.—For Fredericton Junction, connecting there with train for Bangor and points West, and for St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton and Woodstock and for St. John.

3 20 P. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points East.

—ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON—

10 20 A. M.—From Fredericton Junction and St. John.

2 40 P. M.—From Fredericton Junction, Bangor and points West, and from St. Stephen, Houlton and Woodstock.

50 P. M.—From Fredericton Junction, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock, and from St. Stephen, St. John, and from Bangor and points West, and from St. John.

7 30 P. M.—Express from St. John.

—LEAVE GIBSON—

6 50 A. M.—For Woodstock and points North.

—ARRIVE AT GIBSON—

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