

She moved her chair close beside him and took his hand. She wore a plain blue print dress and nursing apron; her beautiful hair, with its golden lights, was piled in large waves on her well-poised head; her complexion had not suffered from her confinement to the house, and was as fair and radiant as usual. He looked at her approvingly.

"You look very nice. You do your hair ever so much better since I told you how."

"I take great pains with it to please you."

"Yes; I can't bear an untidy woman near me, even if she were as pretty as you are. I wish you could be dressed as you ought to be, and seen by everyone, as I thought once you would have been when you married me."

"Never mind that, dear."

"But I do mind. I mind everything. Lying here day after day and looking at the walls with their big flowered pattern, and the neat lodging-house furniture (satin walnut at five guineas the set) isn't very exhilarating. I must think of something, and now that I am weaker my mind is on the go the whole time."

An overwhelming compassion was in Enid's heart as she looked at her husband's wasted cheeks and thought of what he might have been; but she could not put words to her thoughts, although she longed to raise him to higher things.

"Enid," he continued, finding she was silent; "it hasn't been much of a life. Is it quite certain it's nearly over?"

She took both his hands. "The doctor says so, dear," for at her urgent entreaty he had at length consented for a doctor to be summoned.

"I wish now that I had never left the prison. You won't let them take me, will you?"

"How is it possible they should take you, dear? Who could connect the naval officer that entered these rooms with—Horace Cornwallis?"

"Well, I don't suppose they would. But don't leave me, Enid. Somehow I haven't enough nerve left in me to die. People talk about it being so easy to leave this world when you are weak and ill, but that's all nonsense. It's ever so much easier to die when you are well. If it's true that the result of all our actions follows us into another world, what sort of a life shall I have? I am afraid, Enid, I am afraid."

THEN she remembered that this was the man whom once she had loved with her whole heart, for whose sake she had given up comfort and friends, and braved untold dangers, and with this remembrance a power not her own seemed to overshadow her. Her lips were suddenly opened.

"We all have sinned, dear; some more than others. But you know very well who it was that suffered for us."

"And you believe it is true?"

"True?" she repeated, her voice ringing, her face lighting up. "I am sure it is true. Think of what others have experienced—men sin-stained and heavily laden."

"What have they experienced?"

"Let me tell you what one man experienced when he was dying—Laurence Oliphant."

"I have heard of him. But he was a good man."

"He was. But listen to what he has left on record: Christ has touched me. He has held me in His arms. I am changed—He has changed me. Never again can I be the same, for His power has cleansed me. I am a new man."

"If I could feel like that I should be glad. But Oliphant did a lot for other people. I'm afraid I haven't much good to look back upon."

That was true. His had been in reality a miserable, wasted life, though outwardly full of pleasure. Self had been the predominating aim of his life, and now that he was dying Self brought him no comfort. She knew that even if he repented of his past misdeeds, which had been many and great, he had only the last days of a life to offer, and her heart sank within her.

But the divine power which seemed to have taken possession of her now influenced him. She talked to him

feeling that her words were not her own.

"So you think there might be a chance given even to such a fellow as I am?" he said at length.

"I do. I am sure of it."

He lay back exhausted. She gave him milk and brandy, and he went to sleep, awakening apparently much better. But his mind still dwelt on the subject of their conversation. His first words were:

"It will be a very uncomfortable thing to become thin air, or a sort of essence, for I suppose that's what it will be."

"Oh, no," replied Enid warmly; "have you not read what Swedenborg says?"

"What do I know about Swedenborg?" he asked impatiently.

"He was a clever, practical civil engineer in Sweden. But he had visions as St. John had, and says he constantly conversed in another world with spirits, all of whom had bodies the same as we have, although spiritual ones, with greatly extended powers. Does not St. Paul tell us that there is a spiritual body?"

"I'm glad to hear of it. I thought it meant a sort of impalpable ether—if I ever thought anything about it. If these things are true, why was I brought up as I was, without even hearing religion mentioned, except to be laughed at as 'cant'? It's either true or it's false; and, for myself, I believe it's true."

"You may be quite sure, dear, that every allowance will be made for what in the beginning was not your fault."

"I hope so. I don't say I repent. I don't say anything, but I should like to think, as a drowning man, that a rope might be thrown me."

"Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come,"

repeated Enid softly.

But there was no response.

CHAPTER XXVI.

His Escape.

THERE was a sound of loud talking as Ronald Westlake approached the house where Haselfoot and the Cornwallises lodged.

Ronald had considered that all danger must be over now, and thought that he might at all events call on Haselfoot and ascertain a few particulars concerning his friends upstairs.

But at the sight of the group at the door his heart failed him. Involuntarily he stood still, for two of the men were policemen and the third the warder from Princetown.

Mrs. Carter, her broad face very red, was confronting them, gesticulating in her excitement.

"Which I say and mean that you are talking nonsense. The only lodgers I have are two naval gentlemen, and one of them is very ill and can't be disturbed. Go away! You must mean some other house."

"I should like to see this naval gentleman who is so ill," said the warder. "Is he a very good-looking young man?"

"Well," replied Mrs. Carter, dubiously, "there may be those who call him handsome, but I can't see it myself. And as to young, he's forty-five if he's a day. Too old for his beautiful wife, who is a saint on earth, if ever there was one."

The mention of the beautiful young wife was quite sufficient for the men, who had wavered for a moment. They forced their way in and encountered Haselfoot, who, hearing the voices, had come out. He had just returned from a cruise, and had had no news of the lodgers upstairs.

"You are harbouring an escaped convict here," said one of the policemen.

"I am doing nothing of the kind," replied Haselfoot hotly. "I would not do such a thing. What are you talking about? Why, it would be as much as my commission was worth."

"But you are. We have reason to suppose that the man upstairs is an escaped convict. We have discovered that you took him in your ship and disguised him on landing. You and this gentleman"—pointing at Ronald,

"As you like it"

"SALADA"

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