

Happiness Secured

A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER XVII.
HAUNTED BY A FACE.

My right-hand companion during tea is Mr. Denton, who seems from the first to have constituted himself my cavalier, as a matter of course; and neither Len nor Ernest Warden are more jovial or devoted to their respective fair ones than this new-found admirer of mine is to me, and with whom I am afraid I am flirting desperately.

Once or twice Len gives me a look of astonished disapproval, but I pay no regard to it. I have been so often lonely of late that it is an immense satisfaction to me to be petted and made much of by this good-looking stranger with the laughing eyes, of whom I flatter myself I am rapidly making a conquest.

"It certainly is the strangest thing! Do you know, my dear Miss Kendrick, I never was so puzzled and perplexed in all my life!" remarks Mr. Stables, in low, mysterious tones, catching me for a moment alone during the bustle of packing up the tea things, which old Bell is to convey back to the rectory in the donkey cart; "but that face literally haunts me—Mr. Warden's, I mean!" he goes on, in an explanatory tone, as I turn a pair of astonished eyes on his plain, middle-aged face. "Do you know, Miss Kendrick, there is something in the face of your sister's friend that puzzles and perplexes me to such a degree that I positively cannot take my eyes off it!" he adds, staring with the air of a man who has been suddenly aroused from a bewildering dream after Addie and Ernest Warden, who, arm in arm, are strolling away toward the trees. "I feel certain I have seen him somewhere! It is not a face to be easily forgotten, you know; and yet, to save my life, I can't remember where and when!"

"Oh, is that all?" I reply. "Surely there is nothing so wonderful in that?" Mr. Warden is an old resident in Hantsbury; no doubt you have met him there?"

"Scarcely; I was never in Devonshire until a few days ago, when I came down here as curate to Mr. Clitheroe. My life, for many years past, has been spent amid the cares and work of a great London parish."

"You have met him in London, perhaps?" I return, feeling but slight interest in the subject. "Mr. Warden lived there at one time, I believe."

"Oh, that must be in London; but what are the memories that struggle in my brain at sight of that face?" he asks, placing a long, thin finger on his white forehead with a dramatic air that makes me smile in spite of myself. "I shall remember by and by, perhaps," he adds, as Mr. Denton comes up to beg me to be his companion in a stroll. "It will come to me by and by, I dare say. I never forget

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a face that interests me; and it is not often I am so puzzled to place it."

CHAPTER XVII.
A MADWOMAN'S REFRAIN.

THE lengthening shadows on the beds of fern and long, bush grasses at our feet warn us that it is time to think of turning our steps in the direction of the rectory, where the evening is to be brought to an appropriate ending by music and supper.

"But what's the matter with having a song right here?" Mr. Denton inquires, in his clear, Western tones, as we stop for a few minutes' rest in one of the loveliest spots on the ravine road. "Which of you ladies will be kind enough to indulge us with a song?"

"Ah, indeed! Capital idea, sir!" Mr. Clitheroe assents, taking a seat on a huge stone by the wayside, and preparing to make himself comfortable after his own indolent fashion. "There is Lesley Kendrick; now she has just the sweet, pathetic sort of voice that I love to listen to. My dear," he adds, turning to me, "won't you give us one of those delightful old ballads I am so fond of hearing you sing?"

"If one of the gentlemen will sing us something first," I return. "Mr. Denton, there isn't the slightest use in your trying to look modest, old fellow! You know you are a second Orpheus, so pluck up your courage and begin."

"Oh, well, since I must," he replies, as, shrugging his shoulders, he throws himself on the grass and looks at me. "What shall it be?"

ascends from somewhere near, and repeats the sad words, "How can ye chant, ye little birds, an' I so weary, full of care?"

No one speaks—no one moves. There is something so weird, so uncanny, in the voice of the unseen singer, coming upon us, as it does, in such a strange, unexpected way, that, surprised, literally spellbound we remain for the moment staring into each other's faces with eyes that ask the question: Are we powerless to utter.

"Good heavens, just look there!" exclaims Len, starting to his feet, with a look of blank surprise; and, glancing in the direction to which he points, we are staring, with bated breath, at a strange, wild figure, outlined, clear as a silhouette, against the yellow light in the western sky beyond.

At a glance I recognize it. I have seen that gray, disheveled figure twice before, but it was in the old garden at Deepdene.

This time, instead of disappearing in that vague, mysteriously spectral way that impressed me so deeply at the time, she comes slowly, silently into our midst, until, having gained the side of Ernest Warden, she throws her long, gaunt arms about his neck and locks up into his face with the half-timid, half-clinging fondness of a scolded child.

"Dear love," she murmurs, as, speechless with amazement, we all stand round looking helplessly on, "why did you let them sing my song? Why, oh, why, did you forget your poor, poor love?"

Something—a muttered imprecation it seems to me—breaks through Ernest Warden's firm, white teeth, as with a look of horror, of unutterable loathing, he glances down on the pallid face and gray hair straying in wild disorder over the woman's breast.

There is a dangerous look in his eyes, a suppressed rage in his face, that makes me shudder in the warm, summer night as if an icy breath had swept over me.

"Maud," he says, at last, the hot blood that came surging up over his neck and face receding, leaving him white to the lips; "what are you doing here? What can Mrs. Martin be thinking of to suffer you to wander about like this? Come," he adds, disengaging himself from the clasp of those long, thin arms, "you must go home; you ought never to have left it."

"Ah!" she exclaims, looking pitifully around as if addressing herself to space and vacancy, "he does not love me any more! Ernest—my love, my life—is false, and my heart is broken! To think," she adds, with a pitiful, little wail of pain, "that all the glory and brightness of life could be so easily clouded over! There is no more happiness, Ernest—no more for you or me, either! The shadow of the past has darkened it forever!"

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ed. I hope none of you ladies were very much startled," he adds, a little hesitatingly; "but there was really nothing to be alarmed at, for, although her mind is quite gone, she is perfectly harmless."

"Where does she live—to whom does she belong?" I ask.

"At Ivy Cottage. Can't you guess, Lesley?" Ernest returns. "It is the unknown Mrs. Lennox, about whom your curiosity has been so often excited. Will you all kindly excuse me for her long, gaunt arms about his neck and looks up into his face with the half-timid, half-clinging fondness of a scolded child."

Nothing more is said by any one about that startling apparition on the ravine road; but, in spite of the rather too palpable efforts of some of the party to look and act as if nothing had happened, the spirit of enjoyment has evidently fled.

It is a gloomy ending to an afternoon that began so brightly. A feeling of depression seems suddenly to have taken possession of us, one and all, and it will be rather a relief when the time for separation arrives. I think, and, disgusted with their serious faces and monosyllabic replies, I slip away and step out, through the long, French windows into the fragrant twilight of the dewy lawn.

"If I had entertained a hope of Mr. Denton's following me, it is not gratified."

"Miss Clitheroe is entertaining him in the library with a long dissertation on church architecture, or something equally prosaic; but I am not left many minutes alone, for all that. A step sounds behind me, and, turning toward the newcomer, I am a little surprised to behold Mr. Smiles."

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Cable News.

BRITISH LINE ADVANCED. LONDON, Aug. 15. The British line has been advanced slightly east of Raincoast in the district northwest of Chaulin, on the Pleary battlefield, to-day's war office statement announces. Since August, when the Allied attack in Pleary began, the British and French have taken prisoners to the number of 30,000.

FRENCH MOVING AHEAD. LONDON, Aug. 15. The French have captured all the high ground on the Lassigny Massif, and are working down the north and eastern sides, so that a full retirement of the enemy in that sector is probable, according to advices received this afternoon.

CZECHO-SLOVAKS IN DANGEROUS POSITION. LONDON, Aug. 15. The Czechs in Siberia are in a dangerous position and are liable to be cut off altogether, says the correspondent of the Times at Vladivostok. Only a fraction of those between the Volga and Lake Balkal are armed and all are deficient in every sort of equipment. They are cut off from the Far East and it is impossible to learn what is happening to them. The correspondent says there is much apprehension concerning them in Vladivostok. In an editorial the Times emphasizes the urgency of hastening Allied action. It says that the Czechs have been driven back from the Ussuri and also have suffered reverses in Eastern Russia. It is imperative, the Times declares, to send help to Western Siberia through Harbin, whence the Times says Lake Balkal ought to be reached in moderate strength within a reasonable time.

GIVING ENEMY NO REST. WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE, Aug. 15. (By the A.P.)—In addition to a continuous harassing fire from the artillery, the Germans are suffering at the hands of the British air forces. Tons of bombs are being dropped on them day and night and transports in towns and villages behind the line have been hit. Bridges across the Somme at Peronne and elsewhere have been bombarded heavily. Prisoners captured are un-

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