

## Happiness Secured

### A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER XXXV.  
ROBERT FULLER'S HISTORY.  
"Quite," he returns, looking at me a little doubtfully. "Why do you ask?"

"Because there are times when I am horribly afraid that I shall—times when I cannot understand myself!" I respond. "When I am smitten with a miserable fear that the feeling I have for you is not—not exactly what it ought to be!" I stammer, as I think of all I have ever heard and read of the feverish intensity with which the mighty passion of love is said to sway poor human lives, and by the side of which my calm and tranquil affection for generous, kind-hearted Charley Denton seems to me but as "water wine."

"But why should you feel this?" he asked. "I thought you were beginning to care for me a little," he pleads, as earnestly as if it were his life he were pleading for.

"With all my heart and soul!" I reply, as earnestly as I feel. "It is not that—it is not you—but myself that I mistrust! Believe me, I am not worthy of you!" I add, with a sense of guilt, as I think how much I am receiving—how little I am giving in return!

"Allow me to be the best judge of that," he smiles. "If I am content, surely that is enough—and I am content—more than content, dear! Only tell me one thing, Lesley: Would you be sorry if anything were to happen to separate us now?"

"Sorry!" I repeat, looking up at him in surprise. "Why, I should be miserable! I could not bear to give you up! There is nobody to care for me as you care; and yet I know that I do not love you half so well as you deserve—as I feel that it is in me to love!" I mentally add. But some impulse I can neither understand nor resist checks the words on my lips.

"Then I am satisfied," he remarks, with a smile that lights his face into a look of infinite happiness! "I am willing to wait, secure in the belief that, once you are my wife, all the rest will come in Heaven's own good time! It would be different if I had a rival," he goes on, drawing my head to his breast. "In that case I might, perhaps, be tempted to despair; but as it is, I feel assured that the day will come when we two shall stand soul to soul, as hand to hand." Thank Heaven, if you do not find it easier to love me, you do not find it easier to love any one else!

I do not answer him except by a sigh. He does not know—he never will know, I hope; but it is this very question that troubles me: Is there no one else in all the world whom I could have found it too fatally easy to love?

CHAPTER XXXVI.  
SAD NEWS—A DYING REQUEST.  
WHAT if it had been Doctor Fuller, with his plain, grave face, who had wooed me for his wife, instead of gay,

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good-looking Charley Denton?

But, alas! Why should we always covet the things we cannot reach? And with a mighty effort I strive to put the suggestion away from me. It is folly—nay, worse than folly, now that I know his history—to yield for a moment even to the thought! And yet my heart is aching within me, as many a sorrowful heart has ached before, to the sad refrain: it might have been!

The barrier of a miserable marriage stands between us; and even had it not been so, like poor Helen, I might have moaned: "It were all one that I should love some bright, particular star, and think to wed it!"

Not under the circumstances would he have cared for me, I tell myself for the hundredth time. I blush with shame and bitter humiliation of soul as I think of the madness of which I have so nearly been guilty—the madness of loving a man who is not even free to give me a thought in return.

It is Charley's desire that our marriage should take place on the same day as Len and Rita's; and, when once my consent is given, the consciousness that I am striving to do my duty—that it is in my power to confer happiness upon the man who loves me—comforts and supports me as nothing else could.

Because I cannot reach the same of happiness for which my heart craves, shall I cast aside as worthless all other blessings that come in my way? I am asking myself one morning, as Charley comes in and catches me with a snatch of song on my lips.

A little display of gaiety, which he is evidently disposed to interpret in his own way, for he takes me in his arms and bestows a very loverlike kiss on my lips.

"And now, girls, get on your bonnets!" he exclaims, as we enter the room in which Adelaide, looking ill and listless as usual, sits reading. "It is a positive sin to stay in the house such a day as this! I am going to take you both for a drive. The fresh air will do you good!"

"Do Addie good, you mean," I laugh. "I'm very well already, thanks, so I don't quite see how I am going to be better. But, all the same, I am delighted to get Come, Addie, put on your things."

"Not to-day, dear," she begins. But her objections are overruled. Neither

Charley nor I will take any refusal, and a little reluctantly she prepares to comply.

"I believe you would live out of doors if possible, Lesley, and compel me to do the same," she declares.

"Of course; gypsy fashion," I return. "Wait until I am rich enough to indulge my vagrant proclivities, and I'll invest in a real gypsy caravan, and live down shady lanes, and out on breezy commons. If you are not too proud, Mr. Denton," I add, sweeping him a mocking curtsy, "I will invite you to dinner and any of your friends, only don't bring too many; the cooking capabilities of a three-legged pot are limited, you know."

"Hope you are fond of stew," interposes Len, looking up from the Times. "Rather doubt the possibility myself of cooking much else in that highly primitive and picturesque utensil."

"And not afflicted with a weakness for chairs and tables," laughs Addie, glancing back at us from the open door as she quits the room. "You will have to sit on the grass, and dine off a fallen tree stump, remember."

"I've fared worse than that in my time," Charley returns. "And I am bohemian enough to be happy even in a gypsy van—if my darling were there!" he adds, as a servant enters.

It is a telegram for Len; and, as he reads the brief message it contains, his face assumes a look of such blank surprise, of utter bewilderment, that my attention is drawn to him in a moment.

"Oh, Len! what is it?" I ask, with

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apprehension of evil. "As it had news? Whom is it from, dear?" "Whom?" he repeats, with an absolute gasp of astonishment. "Good Heavens, Lesley! Why, it is from Ernest Warden!"

"Thank Heaven!" is all I can say—"oh, thank Heaven he is not dead!" "Dead—of course he isn't dead! Whoever thought he was!" was poor, ignorant Len's amazed reply. "A fellow like Warden—six feet something or other in his stockings, and big in proportion—doesn't 'shuffe off his mortal coil' without some sort of provocation; and what had Warden to die for, I should like to know? But that is not the perplexing part of the business. The telegram is from Devonshire—from Ivy Cottage, of all improbable places on the wide earth—and has references to the most unlikely of people. Just listen to this, Lesley:

"Come at once. Your friend Doctor Fuller is dangerously hurt, and wishes to see you."

"That is what puzzles me," Len pursues. "What has the doctor to do with Warden? What, above all, took him to Ivy Cottage?"

I do not answer. Sick to the heart, I turn away to hide my quivering lips and deadly pallor, wondering where and when this miserable tangle is to end.

Only too well do I know what has taken Robert Fuller to Ivy Cottage; for, in one sudden flash of enlightenment, the whole deplorable truth comes home to me!

"The misery of calling that wretched woman wife belongs to another and more unfortunate man than Ernest Warden," he said to me that day that I went to him in my trouble; and only too easily can I guess the name of that most unfortunate man of whom he spoke!

I see it all—plainly as the light of day! The reputed Mrs. Lennox and Ernest Warden's demented charge is Doctor Fuller's deserting wife—the woman whose evil conduct has shadowed a noble life and embittered a naturally loving and generous nature!

No wonder that the story of Adelaide and Ernest Warden's ill-fated love should have touched his heart with so keen a pang of reminiscence! No wonder he should have told me that he was the one man in all the world who could remove the phantom barrier of a bigamous marriage that has held them apart so long.

"I must be off at once!" Leonard exclaims, breaking abruptly in upon my thoughts. "There is a train to Devonshire in about an hour, I think. Poor Fuller! I wonder what in the name of misfortune could have happened to him?"

"Len!" I exclaim, following him up to his room, whither he has gone to make a few hasty preparations for his unexpected journey, "promise that you will write and tell what has happened as soon as you get there?" I add, forcing the words through my lips, that feel stiff and drawn with the sickening apprehension that chills my heart!

"I promise. I shall do that, of course," he replies. "You will feel anxious, of course; I know I do myself. Poor Fuller! he's been a good friend to us; and I wouldn't have had anything to happen to him for the world! But I can't, for the life of me, make out what could have taken him down to Ivy Cottage! Why, Lesley, do you know anything of all this?" he asks, in sudden surprise, as glancing up from the little bag into which he has been throwing a few necessities, he catches a momentary sight of my face.

For answer I bury my face in my hands and burst into tears.

"Why Lesley, little woman, what is it all about?" inquires Len, coming toward me in unmistakable perturbation of mind. Len is not easily thrown off his balance; but I do not belong to that tearful sort, and this passionate, little outburst of mine seems to have astonished him in exact proportion to its unexpectedness.

"Tell me, dear," he adds, "do you know anything about it?"

"Yes," I reply, "I know all about it—or I think I do, at least. But it is a long story—too long for me to tell you now! Oh, Len, go at once, dear! Think, he may be very ill! Only be good to him; remember what a good friend he has been to us! And whatever has happened to him, it was in our interest that he met his misfortune; it was for Addie's sake, though she does not know it, that he went down to Devon."

(To be continued.)

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## Cable News.

### WAR REVIEW.

The British and French armies continue to cut their way into the German lines on various sections of the lower part of the battle line in France notwithstanding the bad weather which has caused somewhat of a slackening in the violence of the operations. Field Marshal Haig's forces have materially encroached upon Cambrai and St. Quentin, while further south the French armies are pressing eastward on the old Noyon sector towards Lafer and Leon, and northward from Soissons in an auxiliary manoeuvre with the same objectives in view. Between the Vesle and the Aisne River where the American troops are fighting with the French, additional ground has been gained by the Allies' forces. The British now are standing at Villeneuve, six miles from St. Quentin having carried out an advance of over a ten mile front on the general line of Epehy, Rosbecourt and Pernauff. To the north the greater part of the German rincourt Wood, one of the German strong points barring the way to Cambrai has been captured. So rapid has been the British advance along this portion of the front that they are now in the position they held before the big German drive of last March. In these positions the Germans are offering stout resistance to further progress by the British. Gradually the French are working their way around the St. Gobain forest north of Soissons, in the movement of aims at the outflanking of Lafer and Leon, and all the German positions east of this region. They have reached the outskirts of the village of Servais on the north edge of the forest, and two and a half miles from Lafer, while a short distance to the north they have taken the village of Mennessis on the St. Quentin Canal. This latter gain brings the French within little more than eight miles of St. Quentin. North of the Aisne near Soissons the Germans are fighting hard to keep the French in check, realising that the gain by them of much more territory in this region in conjunction with the manoeuvre that is in progress around the St. Gobain forest will place the entire German defence line eastwards towards Rheims in a critical position. Near La Faux and to the north of Celle-sur-Aisne the Germans have delivered strong counter attacks but the French everywhere have maintained their ground. The Germans also are reacting somewhat south of Ypres, especially in the region of Ploegheert, where the British are threatening the capture of Armentieres. Counter offensive manoeuvres here and east of Wulverghem were broken up by the British during the first week of September. Field Marshal Haig's forces have taken more than 19,000 prisoners and large quantities of stores. That further big events are on the programme of the Entente Allies in the prosecution of the war is indicated by the fact that Newton D. Baker, the American Secretary of War is again in France for a war conference.

### ENEMY OFFERING INCREASED RESISTANCE.

LONDON, Sept. 8. On the southern portion of the battle front our troops have now entered the area of the defence systems constructed by us prior to the German March offensive. The enemy is offering increased resistance among these prepared defences and sharp fighting has taken place to-day at a number of points. Our advanced troops are pressing forward, and have gained ground in the direction of Vermand, Rosbecourt and Epehy. Local hostile attacks were repulsed south of Ploegheert and east of Wulverghem. On the remainder of the British front there is nothing of special interest to report. The number of prisoners captured by the British troops in France during the first week of September exceeded 19,000.

### NEW FRENCH ADVANCE.

LONDON, Sept. 7. The French have advanced on a 20-mile front to an average depth of two miles and at some places to a depth of four miles. They occupied Terguay without opposition. They have pushed east of this village to the railway and Canal. North of the Ailette the lower forest of Coucy is entirely in French hands as well as Barisis, which was captured in heavy fighting notwithstanding the stubborn resist-

### J. J. ST.

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