

A Broken Vow;

BETTER THAN REVENGE.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I do hope everything will be all right, Aunt Phipps."

It was Chris who spoke, and he was very nervously buttoning a glove of a suspicious light and tight character. He was speaking to Olive, who sat quietly watching him; they were in a room at the hotel, and in that room a small table was already partly set out for a morning feast.

Of course, the hotel knew all about it. If it had been printed on all the menu cards, and on every wine list, and if each particular waiter had had it stamped upon his napkin, it could not have been known with greater certainty than Mr. Christopher Dayne was to be married that day. With every desire to appear cool and collected and to hide the fact, he had himself proclaimed it, as it were, if not exactly from the house-logs, at all events all over the house itself.

He had got up at an absurdly early hour, and had rung bells violently, and had lost things, and found them again before he had done demanding to know what had become of them; he had already worn a shiny place on a new waistcoat by taking out his watch every half-minute or so, to be sure that he was not late; and he had hung about on the landing outside Olive's door, probably filled with a suspicion that she might be taken suddenly ill on such an occasion as this, and have no one at hand to support her. Every servant in the establishment knew all about it, and was perfectly certain that "she" must be nice; a satirical page of no experience whatever, and a mere babe as to years, was cuffed severely by the head waiter (a large man with a correspondingly large family) for daring to suggest that they might be sorry for it. Altogether a day of days for that small hotel.

"I do hope everything will be all right, Aunt Phipps," said Chris again.

"Why, of course it will," said Olive, looking at him with a smile. "I never saw a boy so excited in all my life. Why, the church won't run away or be burnt down; and Lucy won't forget what day it is, or be late, or anything of that sort; and the breakfast will be ready to the moment. Have you got the ring?"

Instantly, of course, Chris slipped himself violently in various places, and looked with a blank face at Olive. Gradually his face cleared as he fished up the little circlet and held it up with a smile.

"By Jove!—that gave me a turn," he exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, "only fancy turning up at the church, and not being able to finish the ceremony; Lucy fainting, and Odley going into hysterics. Positively frightful; jolly lucky thing you asked about it. How did you feel when Uncle Phipps married you?"

"It—it's a long time ago; I almost forget," said Olive hurriedly.

"It can't be so long ago—because you're still young, you know," said Chris. "Why are you always so sad and queer, Aunt Phipps?" he asked gently. "You're always jolly kind—and sympathetic—and all that—and to-day your eyes are shining, and you look—you look quite young. You don't think me rude, do you, Aunt Phipps?"

"No, of course not," she replied. "You and Lucy always seem to do me good, Chris—seem to bring to me something I never had—or something that I lost years ago. There's a brightness and a sunshine about you that makes the world a better place to live in."

"I should think so," said the boy. "It's a splendid place this morning, at any rate—because all the dreams I ever had about it I'm almost afraid to pinch myself, for fear I should wake up and find that I've been dreaming. Just think what it means; I'm to marry Lucy; we are to go on a honeymoon; and we are to come back to a most splendid little flat, gorgeously furnished."

"On the hire system, Chris," said Olive, with a smile.

"Well—what does that matter?" he asked. "What's the good of spending a lot of money on furniture. So far as that goes, we might have gone into apartments, or have stopped at a hotel, or anything, it doesn't matter a bit where we live, because that isn't the important part. Only, Lucy wanted things that were her own, as she said—or nearly her very own while the instalments have to be paid—and there you are. And you know, Aunt Phipps, there never was such a flat—for convenience—and all that kind of thing."

"It's the most marvellous flat that ever was built in all the world," said Olive, laughing.

"Look at the study, for instance," said Chris, spreading out his hands. "It's all very well for Lucy to say that you've got to shut the door before you can sit down at the desk, and to move the inkstand on to a chair before you've got room to write—but doesn't that show the coziness of it?" It's the very ideal flat for a pair of lovers; do what you will, you can't help sitting close to each other in every room of it."

"Built on purpose, I've no doubt," said Olive gravely. "I was only sorry, my dear boy, that you had to furnish it as

you did; but one can't always get in one's money easily," she added, without looking at him. "There are certain—certain formalities, you know—and it didn't seem quite worth while spending a lump sum—did it? But we'll keep up the instalments, and it will be just as though you had bought outright."

"Of course it will," he replied. "Besides, I don't mean to depend on my fortune only; I'm going to work. Just as soon as ever this honeymoon is over we're going to settle down to real steady things."

"That's brave," she said. "Don't depend on the fortune only, Chris; stick to work."

"But the fortune is all right—isn't it?" he asked, with just a faint shade of anxiety. "You know you said—"

"I know what I said, Chris—and the fortune is all right," replied Olive. "It's nearly time we went; and before we go I want to give you a little wedding present—something to go on with—give me your hand."

He stretched out his hand, and she put into it an envelope. "There is a hundred pounds, Chris," she said slowly. "Don't be reckless—and don't forget to work. God bless you!"

She turned away abruptly, and looked out of the window. In her heart was one despairing thought; in her eyes a great fear. Too late now to go back; too late to expose the fraud, and dash down this boy's house of cards. This was the last of the money, save for a few pounds—and she had told him that the fortune was all right. How was she to go on?

"It's awfully kind of you, Aunt Phipps," said the boy slowly. "It seems stupid, I know—but I was getting just a bit nervous about the money—and just a bit short, too. Thank you again, Aunt Phipps." Then, seeing that she did not move or speak, he said softly, "I'm awfully sorry you had such a bad time when you were younger—I'm sorry to think that there should ever have been any sadness in your life, I mean."

She turned round with a bright face. "No sadness to-day, Chris, if you please," she said. "This is Lucy's day—a day of sunshine. Come along, as you are not responsible for your actions to-day, I must look after you. And may I beg that you will not go downstairs two or three at a time; it is most undignified, although it may please the waiters."

Hidden away at one corner of a very old and staid square in Chelsea is a church. Goodness only knows how it ever got there; that is to say, whether the church decided to settle near the square, or whether the square grew round the church. Be that as it may, the church has a little strip of ground beside it, with a few old tombstones and some patriarchal trees. Occasionally on Sundays an old man unlocks a door grudgingly, and rings a bell—that is, when he doesn't forget; and they dig up another old man from somewhere, and he preaches to as many people as care to come. After that they shut the church up again, and the ancient bell-ringer probably goes back to bed. On this particular day somebody managed to convey to this old man that there was to be a wedding; and they got him out of bed, and dressed him with some violence, and sent him, in a condition between surprise and sleep, down to the church. Even then he would not have believed it, but that the other ancient one also arrived to perform the ceremony. And gradually the bell-ringer grew interested.

In the first place, even if you are a bell-ringer and belong to a church, you don't get a bridegroom like Christopher Dayne every day. The way in which he harassed that unfortunate old man, and asked questions, and declared that the church clock was wrong, and that he was certain they hadn't made a note of the particular event of that day, and would come to-morrow or some other time, was really enough to have turned the ancient one's hair greyer than it was. Although he had a vague idea that something in the nature of fees would presently be forthcoming, he was decidedly grateful to think that even weddings did not last for ever; and that he would presently be able to shut up the church again.

He changed his mind, however, a moment or two later. For someone came in out of the sunlight outside and advanced toward the church towards where the impatient young man was waiting. Someone so dainty and so wonderful that the old man rubbed his eyes and looked about him, and realized, as everyone else had done long before, that this was no ordinary wedding. Indeed he stood watching her as she came down the length of the grey old place with her eyes fixed always on the boy, and began to think it was rather a pity they didn't have weddings of this kind every day. He quite regretted that he had not fixed his hand at a pear or two on the bells.

Martha Blake came with her, and was to give her away. He looked at her as she went on a step or so in advance of him; he could not take his eyes from her face. There was no ache in his heart to-day; all that was done with,

He realized now that, as if from the beginning, this thing had been mapped out and arranged; he stood outside the story. The boy was everything; the love that had come into her life, while she was still little more than a child, meant Chris, and Chris only.

"The Princess comes into the sunshine to-day," he whispered, as he saw her step from the grey shadows of the church into a broad band of light that fell all about her and enveloped her.

"Yes—into the sunshine," she whispered in reply, with her eyes still fixed straight before her.

Odley was there, with her gray hair pushed into something of order under a new and startling bonnet; Odley with a very serious face, and with eyes only for her darling. As a matter of fact all eyes seemed to be fixed upon that little figure, standing in the sunlight in front of the old clergyman, and leaning, with wide solemn eyes fixed upon his face, to the beautiful old words that meant so much to her. Chris found the ring at the proper moment, not without some agitation—and so it all ended happily. It was only in the vestry, when names were being signed and other important details entered into, that Odley broke silence in a whisper to Marlin.

"I'm thankful I never listened to any of those words that was spoken to me at different times," she said. "Much better as it is; I should have borne a day like this. Yes—it's all for the best, Mr. Blake; if I had been persuaded I should only have had to keep the man afterwards, there wouldn't have been any of 'em that I've known; I'd have had to do the endowing."

They were to go straight from the church to the hotel for the breakfast; Lucy was already dressed for her journey. So they all went back again in a most informal fashion; it was but a short distance, and they had plenty of time. It fell out that Olive and Martha Blake walked together.

"You should be a happy woman to-day, Mrs. Phipps," said Marlin. "You see it has all come right—hasn't it?"

"I hope so, Mr. Blake," she exclaimed. "Yes—yes—I am a happy woman. You've always believed me to be stern and strong, and calm and cool, haven't you? Well, to-day I'm light-headed and light-hearted; to-day I am nearer to happy tears than I've ever been in all my life. Does that surprise you?"

He looked into her face for a long moment in silence. "No," he said at last, "it doesn't surprise me in the least. There is something about you, Aunt Phipps—you see, I call you by the name everyone calls you—something about you I haven't fathomed yet. Looking into your eyes to-day, I seem to be looking into the eyes of someone waking up—coming out of a long and troubled sleep."

"That's just what it is," said Aunt Phipps, in a low voice.

The breakfast was a very merry one. All the waiters expected from, and even the sarcastic pageboy melted at sight of the bride and evidently began to have dreams regarding the future. Once or twice during the meal Olive Varney found herself thinking involuntarily of the future was to hold for the young people, and of how that promise of the coming of the fortune that did not exist was to be fulfilled. But the new Olive Varney stirring in the old one told her, recklessly enough, that on this day of all others such thoughts were out of place; so many difficulties had been overcome, in such astounding ways, that it was surely possible some new way could be found now. She strengthened herself with that new strange thought—strange for her of all people in the world—that love would teach her what she did not at present understand.

At the very last moment, amid all the bustle and excitement of departure, it happened that Olive was left alone in the room for a moment, with the remains of the feast spread out forlornly on the table. At the moment it seemed more difficult than ever to face that problem of the future; now that all the laughter was done, and the last handshakes had been given, and they were gone, the world seemed suddenly desolate and hard. And then it was that the door opened quickly, and Lucy came in.

It was not in Olive to make advances; that had never been her way. She stood quite still, watching the girl; and for a moment Lucy seemed repelled. Then, with a little exclamation that was half a laugh and half a sob, she ran forward with her hands outstretched. And all in a moment, was gathered close, close to the lonely heart of the other woman.

"My dear—my dear!" murmured Olive. "I didn't know you cared."

"You seem to be the one great friend we have in the world," said Lucy. "And I wanted you to know—you specially—how happy I am!"

For a long minute after the door had closed again Olive stared out of the window through a curious mist. And in that minute there came back to her the words she once had said beside her dead father:

"Even as he robbed and ruined me and mine—so in the time to come you shall rob and ruin her who bears his name. You shall humble her to the dust, as he humbled me."

She shook her head, and seemed by that action to shake the tears out of her eyes; she laughed softly, and went out into the sunshine.

(To be Continued.)

The Farm

WHAT WEEDS DO.

Weeds injure the farmer chiefly in two ways. First, by offending his idea of the beautiful, says Vernon H. Davis, Assistant Professor of Horticulture, Ohio College. This injury is an important factor in the value of the land; and furthermore, it is one that is felt by the whole community. A farm with weeds is not only less valuable itself, but it makes every other farm in the community less valuable. Second, by the crop loss. This is the loss that receives the most common estimate. The farm's profits are lessened in a number of ways, the most important of which are the following:

(1) Weeds rob the soil of moisture. The amount of water that must be taken up by the roots of any plant and exhaled out into the air through the leaves is enormous. Experiments have shown that for most of the cultivated grasses from three to five hundred pounds of water must actually pass through the plants to produce a single pound of dry matter. In seasons of drouth, when there is scarcely enough moisture to supply the cultivated crops, it is easy to understand the injury done by the presence of a large number of additional weedy plants. This is doubtless the most important of the weed injuries, for it must not be forgotten that the moisture in the soil is the all-important thing. Ask the average farmer why he cultivates his corn and he will say "to kill the weeds," when, as a matter of fact, it is, or should be, for the purpose of conserving the moisture in the soil. The weeds are killed as an incidental matter. A perfectly clean cornfield needs cultivation as well as a weedy one.

(2) Weeds crowd the cultivated plants, depriving them of light and space in both soil and air. If corn or wheat are planted too thickly they cannot develop properly, because the plants do not get enough sunlight, and the roots do not have sufficient feeding space. Similar results will be apparent if the extra plants are weeds.

(3) Weeds rob the soil of food elements required by other plants. While there is usually more than enough plant food for all plants in almost every soil, the amount in a readily available form is limited, and the greater the number of plants among it is divided the slower and less vigorous will be the growth of all.

(4) Weeds harbor injurious insects and diseases. The overgrown fence rows and ditches furnish most ideal places for many of these troublesome enemies to live through the winter.

(5) Weeds sometimes injure by killing farm stock or by rendering their products unsalable. Mountain laurel, wild parsnip, and a few other plants found as weeds in certain localities sometimes kill stock outright. Wild onion, a very serious weed in some places, often renders milk and its products unsalable.

(6) Weeds render certain products of the farm unsalable. Weeds in hay reduce its value, and the presence of weed seeds in commercial farm and garden seed not only reduces its value, but opens the way for introduction of a weed pest into a new locality, from which it can, perhaps, never be eradicated.

Other injuries will suggest themselves, but these are, perhaps, the most important.

RAPE FOR YOUNG CHICKS.

As a succulent, fresh and palatable form of green food, one on which chicks and old fowls, also, for the matter of that, thrive and do well on, rape answers the purpose most admirably. It is relished and devoured eagerly by birds of all ages, and poultrymen, who are sometimes at a loss to know just what to provide in this line, should spend a few cents, for it is cheap enough, with a reliable seed house, and grow a small crop for their maturing birds. Many who have limited space for their flocks, have often been puzzled over this question of green food. For them we would suggest the following plan, which is a record of ours, and which we think a very good one.

The difficulty in providing chickens with green food, lies in the fact that they will eat while there is green in sight, unless, of course, they have unlimited range. The aim is to provide a constant supply. Take three boards, say 12 inches wide, by 6 feet long, 1 inch thick, using one for the bottom, the other two for the sides. Nail together securely, and fill in the ends with pieces 1/2 inches by 12 inches, then fill up with good earth to a depth of six inches, sow your seed, after which the top should be covered with a fine wire netting. Through this the birds will be able to just keep the tops of the juicy plants nibbled off, and if watered occasionally, if the summer is dry, the supply of green food will last all through the summer. The baby chicks, of course will not be able to get at the rape in a box of this kind, but the rape can in that case be fed to them and, of course will grow much quicker. The rape could be started in a hot bed and thus be available long before it could be planted in a box. When different breeds of chicks are kept in separate runs (as they should be) one or two boxes placed half way between the two runs, would provide for all they would eat, but enough for them to get along with more would be desirable.

For old birds, rape is a fine food, it can be sown broadcast and allowed to

attain full height, before the fowls are permitted to feed in it, and then every other day is all it will stand, unless of course the patch is very extensive. The smart fencer is then advised to grow box patches of rape, or larger patches if he can, the larger breeder is reminded of its value. Try, and see for yourself, as others have done.

DAIRY NOTES.

Keeping a record of his cows makes a better dairyman of any farmer.

If a cow is to be kept clean the stall where she stands must not be too wide. A good cow should hold out well. She should give a good flow for months out of the twelve.

Don't breed the cows to any size that happens to be available. Remember the bull is half the herd.

The calf is a baby. Too many farmers forget this and treat the calf as they do the older members of the herd.

Dairying is a science that is being more thoroughly studied to-day than ever before. It has in it a great deal more than most people dream.

Dairying brings in constant income. The man who sells crops of any kind has to wait until he can market his product once a year. The dairyman has an income nearly or quite fifty-two weeks in the year, or more.

The care that the better gets the first few times she is milked determines in a large measure whether she is going to enjoy the milking operation. The kicking cow is not born—she is made that way by the owner or milkster.

As soon as the calf will eat dry ground feed begin to feed a small quantity, and increase it as the calf grows in the power to consume and digest it. At this point one must use his judgment, and no rule can be given.

The dairy steer does not make as good beef as the best steer.

Keep down the dust in the stable during the milking operation.

It is more profitable to have four cows of great producing power than to have eight cows of ordinary producing power.

ROYAL SPINSTERS WELL OFF.

Bachelor Princesses Need Not Enter Cloisters Now.

Daughters of Royal families who remain single from choice or because no proper suitor is forthcoming have by no means a hard time of it now—adays and need not seek the cloister as old time unmarried princesses used to do. The English Royal spinster, Princess Victoria, is a great favorite with both her father and mother, and it is not likely that she will ever leave them now. The same income has been allotted to her as her married sisters receive, so she is independent and need not marry for a money settlement as some of her aunts were obliged to do. Her very delicate health renders a somewhat quiet life necessary, so she travels very little and avoids all excitement.

Royal spinsters are increasing in numbers in all countries. They now have a position that was impossible only a few generations ago, and they generally find plenty to occupy them in the world.

The venerable Prince Regent of Bavaria, who has long been a widower, has his household looked after by his eldest daughter, who is by no means young, and has never married.

The King of Saxony has a spinster sister who is his devoted companion, the Princess Matilda, who is quite 45. There has been no thought of a marriage for her for many years past, and as she is independent in regard to income her lot is pleasant.

Duke Robert of Parma left a number of unmarried daughters, and the Duchess has not yet succeeded in finding matches for any of them. Some of them are well advanced in the thirties and the others are coming on apace. They all lead busy, happy lives, and are not in the least disturbed by their failure in the matrimonial market.

A very great lady at present is the Archduchess Maria Annunziata of Austria, now in her thirty-second year and still unmarried. She holds the position of deputy Empress, which may be hers for many a year. The Emperor Francis Joseph is a widower, and his nephew and heir-presumptive has contracted a morganatic marriage, so a change of sovereign need not immediately affect the standing of the Archduchess, who may continue to act as now till a real Empress comes.

Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein is another spinster and it is difficult to see how her home could be managed without her. It is not in the least likely she will ever marry.

PUZZLING THE POSTMAN.

Probably the longest address ever written on an envelope is that which is stated by the Indian papers to have been put on a letter dispatched by a Mohammedan prince to his nephew in India.

If the Almighty pleases, let this envelope having arrived at the city of Calcutta in the neighborhood of Kuloolah, at the counting-house of Sirajood-din and Allad Khan, merchants, be offered to, and read by the happy light of my eyes, of virtuous manners, and beloved of the heart, Mian Sheikh Inayat Ali, may his life be long. Written on the 10th of the Hegira of Ramazun in the year 1266 of the Hegira of our prophet, and dispatched as bearing. Having with-cut less of time, and the postage and received the letter, you will read it, and having read it, you will read it, and considering it forbidden to you, you will know that it is a strict injunction. An excellent or says that it may not cost any more to feed two than one, but it costs ten times as much to dress them.