

Almost before the carriage stopped, Will alighted and ran up the steps to the hall door.

"What has happened? Is there bad news from the Cape?" he asked the servant, who threw open the door.

"Yes, sir," said the man, in a subdued tone. "We've lost our young Lord."

"Lost him! He is not dead?" cried Will Ayre, incredulously.

"Dead, sir. Shot and stabbed by those beastly Zulus. I beg pardon, sir, but we were all so fond of Lord Raybourne, and it's mighty hard upon every one of us, that's all."

The man drew his hand across his eyes, and his voice took a huskier tone.

"When did the news come?" demanded Will, not noticing that his mother had left the carriage, and was listening to every word.

"Only this morning, sir. Somebody telegraphed to his lordship, and then the papers came with the list."

"Are the family at home?"

"Only his Lordship and Lord Norman, sir. Lord Raybourne now, I should say. Her ladyship and Lady Sybil are at Blundell visiting Lady Vane."

"Could we see Lord Winterdyne, do you think?" asked Lady Emily, quickly.

"I—I don't think so, my lady, but I'll enquire. He is very much broken down. It came so unexpected; and it was so cruel."

"It is, indeed, terrible," said Will, huskily.

"Did you say the list was out? Is there no mention of Lieutenant Ayre?"

"No, sir, not that we've heard, anyhow. If you'll come in, please, I'll tell his lordship you are here."

He ushered them into the darkened drawing-room, drew up one of the blinds a little way, and tried to tell his master.

"Mother, is not this frightful? It was always Clement we feared for. Somehow Raybourne, with his easy going ways and his strong common sense, seemed far removed from danger," exclaimed Will, as he restlessly paced to and fro the room.

"It will kill Lady Winterdyne."

"You do not know her, Will. She will bear it

with more fortitude than her husband. I cannot help thinking most of all of your poor cousin."

"Do you mean Evelyn? God comfort her. I think of her too. It will be a fearful trial to her," Will replied, hoarsely.

"Mother, I cannot but wonder at the doings of the Almighty. Why should Raybourne, in his manly strength, in the very outset of his usefulness, be taken and I left?"

His mother faintly smiled.

"The Almighty pities the loneliness and bitterness of a widowed mother, Will, that is all," she answered, and for the moment he felt himself rebuked. Perhaps, in his warm love for his cousins, he had not at all times given to his mother the consideration to which she was entitled. Before he could reply the door was swiftly opened, and Lord Winterdyne entered. They saw that he had received a terrible blow. His hand, as he extended it to Lady Emily, trembled like a leaf, and his face looked grey and worn in the dim light.

"Dear Lord Winterdyne, this is fearful!" Lady Emily said, with a quickness of sympathy which amazed Will. "We had no idea. We ought not to have asked to see you, but the news is so overwhelming. Will Adela have heard this morning?"

"Oh, yes. I am just preparing to go to Blundell. I do not quite realize it yet. It seems so short a time since the boy left us, and he was so strong, so full of life."

Lord Winterdyne sat down as he spoke, and passed his hand wearily across his brow. William Ayre looking on, passionately wished that he had been able to offer up his life instead of the brave young soldier upon whom so many hopes were built. He was full of pity for the grey-haired father, and yet he thought most of all of the fair girl who had so soon lost the lover of her youth.

"It seems cruel to ask you particulars, Lord Winterdyne," he said in a low voice. "But we know nothing. We had not got the latest morning papers when we left. Is there any news of my cousin?"

"He is wounded, though not seriously. He escaped the first massacre—it was nothing less—and took part in the defence of Rorke's Drift. That will make the world wonder when particulars come

to hand. Harry was shot down early in the engagement. It seems he went forward with Glyn, trying to intercept the enemy at a narrow pass. Later particulars may somewhat exonerate those in authority, but in the meantime it must appear to all who read that our men were simply set up as targets for Zulu gun and assegai."

He spoke with a bitterness which was excusable.

"My heart bleeds for his mother and for that poor girl," he said, beginning to walk to and fro to keep down his rising agitation. "I am thankful that we let no foolish pride or prejudice stand in the way of his heart's desire, and that he sought and won her love before he went; away and yet, perhaps, it would have been better to have left her fancy free."

"No, no," said Will, impulsively.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost," he added, with a sad smile.

"Well, well, perhaps so. I am glad to have seen you. It relieves one's mind, and I was feeling terribly alone. I shall be stronger to meet Lady Winterdyne and the poor girls. I expect to reach Blundell about five o'clock. Yes, I shall take your kind messages."

"Good-bye."

"It is hard for you; but you have other children, Lord Winterdyne," Lady Ayre said, as she bade him good-bye. "There will be many others who have lost their all, and you have comfort in his stainless memory; that is much."

"It is—it is everything. I know that will sustain his mother as nothing else could. I believe I can truly say that I am glad it is my son rather than Clement Ayre. His mother has had many sorrows. Hitherto our life has been singularly free. We must not rebel."

It was a fine spirit in which to accept so great a sorrow. Lady Emily's eyes were wet as she hurried out to the carriage.

"I had no idea, Will, that Lord Winterdyne could be so unselfish," she said, when they drove away. "It is a great deal to say that he would give up his own son rather than Clement, but, I daresay he was thinking of Sybil too."

(To be Continued.)



RUINS OF OLD HOUSE NEAR MONTREAL WHERE IT IS SAID THE ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION BETWEEN AMHERST AND VAUDREUIL, (1760) WERE SIGNED.