

THE SACRIFICE;

—OR—
FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was true Lora's condition had suddenly improved. Whether it was her great strength of will which had banished the fever, or whether the illness was only the consequence of her terrible excitement, however it may have been, she awoke, after a short sleep, to full consciousness, and then fell asleep again. Frau von Tollen was able to return home the next day without anxiety, and Lora sat in her boudoir and gazed at the fire.

She was, indeed, strangely pale and still; she made no answer to the sympathetic inquiries of the anxious mother-in-law, who appeared in her room in a rustling black silk, corded with jet, and with a lace berbe on her dyed brown hair, after her maid had inquired if the young Frau Becher would receive a visit from her "mamma."

A low "Yes" and "No" were all the answers that Lora made.

But her talkative mother-in-law scarcely noticed it. She spoke with emotion of the excellent qualities of her Adalbert, and of the estimation he enjoyed in the great world. In New York, almost all the fashionable world of Fifth Avenue had sighed for the honor of being taken into her family; but he was such a good son, he loved his mother so deeply! "It shall be a German!" he said, like his mother; and as all his mother's hopes were fixed on ending her life in Germany, he had come here with her. And now he has found his happiness here too. "Ah, Germany! One never knows what it is to have a country until one is in a foreign land. You may believe me, child, Adalbert never could have fallen in love with an American."

During this flood of words, Lora had taken a crochet-needle out of a little work-bag, and began to work.

"For Heaven's sake, you must not do that! It will make you so nervous!" screamed Frau Elfrieda, snatching the work from the hands of the astonished Lora. "What do you want to do it for? Let other people crochet; Adalbert would be furious if I should allow it!"

She laid the work on a little table, near a charming copy of the "Nile" of the Vatican, which stood on a pedestal covered with blue velvet.

"That Berlin decorator really had very queer ideas," she began again, in her shrill voice; "how could he put a group like that in a lady's boudoir? That is an ogre, isn't it, Lora? Those poor little babies that are scrambling over him so unsuspiciously—really it makes your heart beat—and the monster looks so harmless, too. Oh, oh! It is tasteless, my darling, to perpetuate such a thing in marble."

The young wife's eyes opened for a moment in amazement, and the corners of her mouth twitched a little; then she dropped her head. This was the woman with whom she was to spend her life!

"I think we had better dine together till Adalbert comes back, dear child," continued Frau Becher, looking through her lorgnette at an oil painting over the lounge. "You need not trouble yourself to keep a separate table; and Sundays your relations can dine with me—your mother and your aunt and the little one. They are not likely to have every day such—"

She cleared her throat and looked at Lora's old writing-table which was placed in the deep bay-window, and on which all the little ornaments were placed which she had brought with her from her little Mansard room.

"Dear me! how dull, how naive all these little things are!" she cried. "When I was first married I had plenty of such little souvenirs of my girlhood; but one so soon gets over sentiment of that kind in America. Really they are charming little knick-knacks; and what a funny little blotter! Didn't Adalbert give you one of Russia leather, darling? No? Then I will."

Lora sat perfectly still. She wished for nothing but quiet, but that she did not get for a long time. Aunt Moffa also appeared on the scene. And when Lora expressed a wish to breathe the fresh air, the carriage came round and Frau Becher sank down on the satin cushions beside her daughter-in-law, and spread the fur-lined robe over them both.

And Lora would so gladly have walked and walked through the loneliest ways in her old, coarse leather boots, that she knew were in the closet at home, only to fire herself out, to be alone, only once to meet him and to be able to outbid him not to despise her, but to have compassion on her as a victim!

This was the one thing the young wife now had to long for.

When she had wandered about her mother's garden in the snow, the weary, brooding spirit had found no relief save in the desperate resolve to die; and then she had thought she must first claim his forgiveness. There was time enough if she should die the day before her husband's return, that would be soon enough. First, she must speak to him; that gave her strength, made

her observant, and steeled her energies.

She gradually became aware that she was watched, that every act of hers was closely observed.

It was very remarkable that she could not stir a step out of the house without her mother-in-law happening to be going the same way. The ubiquitous lady accompanied her when she went to see her mother; she even went to walk in the park, on clear winter days, when Lora declined driving, and puffed snidingly along, beside the slender black figure, with a locomotive-like majesty, in her costly fur-trimmed cloak and her diamond ear-rings, which flashed in the sunlight.

At first, Lora had thought it mere chance, but at length her eyes were opened; her husband had charged his mother to watch her.

She made one or two attempts to leave the house quietly in the twilight.

In vain. Once the maid met her on the stairs and raised a great outcry, a madam's going out in the dark alone the second time she found the park gate locked; and as she was going to call the gardener, whose house stood near the gate, Frau Elfrieda, having hastily thrown on her hood and fur cloak, came trundling along the garden-paths here. She wanted to go to visit her mamma, no doubt; and Frau Becher didn't she tell her? there was the horse and carriage. "Ah, and the gate is locked? To be sure—oh, yes, my love—I gave orders for it, you know. It gets dark so early now, and with no man in the house—I am—so timid."

Lora turned without speaking, and walked back to the house.

"Won't you go with me, then?" screamed her mother-in-law after her.

"No," she replied coldly; "I wish to speak to mamma alone."

She did not hear that Frau Becher called after her. She sat upstairs in her little room, with clenched hands and angry tears in her eyes. She was literally a prisoner. A feeling of helplessness raged overpowered her; she had never felt like that before, and she was frightened at herself. And then up came Frau Elfrieda, with her sugary smiles and her shrill voice.

"I have sent the carriage for your mother; my poor little mouse shall have her own way. It is quite natural that you should have a great deal to fall over with your mamma. Would you like to have your dinner up here alone? Heaven forbid that I should disturb you! You cannot think that of me. Make yourself perfectly comfortable. I am just finishing to-day with an interesting romance, do you know, where I account poisons his wife with powder and riz. Just fancy, what an idea! To think that such things can happen! But my darling, I will say good-night! Adieu, wiedersehen!"

And she kissed the young wife, without seeming to perceive that she had rather rudely turned her face away and left the room.

A quarter of an hour afterward Frau von Tollen arrived; she looked pale and agitated. When she saw Lora on the lounge, with flushed cheeks and bright eyes, she said, "Oh, heavens! thought so; you are ill, Lora."

"No, I am quite well, mamma."

"Indeed! Then you might have come to me, Lora. I have got a headache this evening, and I am sure it is wonder."

Lora was silent and looked at her mother, who lay back languidly in her chair, with dark rings under her eyes brought there by care and grief.

"I have been looking for a house whole afternoon," continued Frau von Tollen, declining the bottle of eau de Cologne which Lora silently offered, "and have found nothing. The cheap ones are too poor; we could not live in them; and the better apartments have risen in price so in consequence of rumor that a regiment is to be quartered here, that I might as well stay where I am, if the landlord had not raised our rent, too. And I had just got home, had taken off my boots and sat down before the stove, and was thinking you would be sure to come to me, when the carriage drove up."

"Stay with me this evening, won't you, mamma?" said Lora.

"I cannot, Lora; Katie does not know where I am, and will find no tea where she comes back."

"I will send for her. Where is she?"

"Where she always is now, at Frau Schonberg's."

Lora, who had her hand on the bell, turned and looked at her mother. "Are the Schonbergs?" came hesitatingly from her lips.

"Yes."

"And she goes there so often?"

She told the maid who entered to send a servant across the street, to ask Fraulein von Tollen to come to tea.

How did it happen that Katie went to the Schonbergs every day? Lora walked up and down the room, pondering over the answer to this question while her mother's eyes wandered over the luxurious room. If Lora would only reconcile herself to her fate, she

fraud to himself, and was dressed he struck the best burglar and knocked him round. The leader of the band to his comrades not to kill him and they required the key. Mr. Brault put a heavy blow on the man's head, sent him reeling to the floor, and carried him down stairs and left him three minutes to open the door. Mr. Brault fumbled at the combination. Then, making the excuse of the loss of blood prevented him, he was knocked down, carried up stairs again. One man left to guard him, while the other blew open the safe with nitroglycerine and decamped with \$2,400 in cash and over \$800 in gold. Napierville, midway between Montreal and the United States border, and it is thought robbers got across the border.

JURY ACQUITS TRAINMEN.

Conductor and Engineer of the Caledon Wreck Go Free.

A despatch from Brampton says: After listening for four days to a mass of technical and other evidence, the jury who have been trying the engineer, George Hodge, and Conductor Malvern Grimes on a charge of negligence in connection with the terrible railway disaster which occurred at the Horsehoe Curve, near Caledon, on September 3rd, returned into court at 8.45 on Saturday night with a verdict of "not guilty" against both defendants. The announcement of their verdict was the occasion for one of the most remarkable outbursts of popular enthusiasm ever witnessed in the old Court House here. Although both of the defendants are strangers in Brampton, there has been marked sympathy shown by people of the town and district on their behalf. They are young men; and both seemed to feel the seriousness of their position. Hodge, especially, was looking pale and worn from the first, and his pallor increased as the trial progressed.

GOOD CROPS IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Secretary For Agriculture Issues Annual Review of Season.

A despatch from Halifax says: The Secretary for Agriculture has issued the annual crop review for Nova Scotia. His report shows that despite unfavorable weather, the large crop has been housed in a fairly satisfactory condition. He estimates the yield of potatoes in the province at 6,000,000 bushels, the hay crop at estimates at 70,000,000 tons. The value to the farmers approximately of seven of the products mentioned is \$16,857,000. Taking an average crop as 100, Principal Canning estimates the crop yield of Nova Scotia as follows: Hay, 90 per cent.; oats, 100; wheat, 95; barley, 95; potatoes, 110; corn for ensilage, 90; manures, 95; buckwheat, 99.

FRENCH CANADIAN BIRTH RATE.

More Than Double That of Other Races in Montreal.

A despatch from Montreal says: The annual report of Dr. L. Laberge, Medical Health Officer for the city, was issued the other day. He states that in the year 1906 the death rate of the city was 1.32 per 1,000 of population, being 1.32 less than that of the previous year. The birth rate of the last year is returned at 37.35 per 1,000 of population, or 1.54 per 1,000 more than in 1905. The birth among French-Canadians was 47.66 per 1,000, while that of the other races was 21.63 per 1,000.