

The Vicar's Nephew; or The Orphan's Vindication.

CHAPTER IX.—(Cont'd.).

As she looked up, she saw the line in which his mouth had set, it struck upon her suddenly how like the Vicar he was.

"I'm sorry you bothered to go so far for nothing," was he said. "If you had asked me, I could have told you it would be no use."

On his twenty-first birthday Jack received a letter from his uncle, inviting him to the vicarage for the settlement of business connected with the investment of the small property left him by Captain Raymond, for which the Vicar had been trustee. "I have preserved it intact," the letter ran, "for you and your sister; and to that end have covered all the expenses of your minority out of my own purse. Being my next of kin, you will be co-heirs to what little I have to leave; so you had better know how it is invested. I presume also that, after so many years, you will wish to see your sister."

He replied stiffly and politely, declining the invitation. "From my share of what my father left," he added, "I would ask you to repay your gift what you have spent for me; and if anything is left over, to take it for my sister's keep. I will try to repay you when I can what she has cost you. Of the money you speak of leaving to me in your will I have no need."

There the letter ended, with a curt: "Fidelity yours."

For the summer vacation he went, as always, to Shanklin. Helen did not meet him on the platform, and he left the station with a sudden deepening of the grave lines round his mouth. He had been anxious for some time about her health; and he knew nothing short of illness would have kept her in when he was coming.

She was in the sitting-room, the maid told him, lying on the sofa. He had not been well lately, but had insisted on getting up to-day because he was coming. Going into the room softly, he found her asleep, and stood still, looking down at her. The lines deepened again about his mouth; she was more changed even than he had feared.

When she awoke, he kissed her without any sign of agitation, and began at once to talk of ordinary trifles. She looked at him a moment, covertly, and saw that he had understood. "He is doctor enough to see," she thought; "it will be different with Theo."

"When is Theo coming?" he asked. "Next week; the Academy vacation does not begin till Saturday, and he will break the journey at Paris. Conrad wants Theo to see him to hear him. Theo was studying music, and Joachim in Berlin. He was to make his first public appearance in the autumn; and great things were expected of him."

"I am glad to have you alone for a few days before he comes," she went on. "There are several things I want to talk over with you."

"About Theo?" he asked. "He has grown up as you have, dear; perhaps it is the penalty of his type of genius that the possessor, or possessor, of it never can grow up. You will have to be a man for him, as well as for yourself, after."

The sentence was hardly broken off; there was no need to finish it, seeing that he had understood. He sat quite still for a moment; then looked up smiling, defiantly cheerful.

"Yes; it's a bit rough on him, isn't it? Still, some one's got to be a genius, if the rest of us are to hear any music. It was kind of the fates not to curse me with it, as things strike."

She laughed softly and put a hand in his.

"In addition to all other curses? You have brought blessings out of them for an old woman that loves you, my grave and reverend counsellor. Some day a young woman will love you instead of me, and you will grow young with her. I should be glad to see you young once, for five minutes."

"There's no need, where Theo is. He is not just young; he is youth everlasting."

"For Theo?" she sighed under her breath.

"Mother," he said, "you made me a promise last month."

"Yes, dear, and kept it."

He started and looked up.

"You went to London, and—never told me."

"Of course not. It just happened that one of the specialists you mentioned came to Venice last week for a holiday; and I thought I would get the thing over at once, so I got an introduction, and—"

"Who was it?"

"Professor Brooks. I didn't care to write about it, when you were coming home so soon."

"And he—"

"Yes; it is cancer."

She heard the quick stop in his throat as the breath stopped for an instant; then there was silence, and he sat and looked before him, a stone figure, grey and motionless. After a little while she raised herself, and slipped her arm about him.

"Does it shake you, dear? I knew it was that, and I thought—I thought you had guessed too."

He looked round slowly, pale as ashes.

"I had suspected; but to know is different. Does he think—"

"He wants to see you. I told him you were coming, and he made an appointment for to-morrow. He refused to tell me any details; and even the fact itself he told me only because he saw I knew."

Again they were silent. When next she spoke, her voice was lower, and a little tremulous.

"There is one thing I have to say to you, and I want you to remember it all your life. You have been to me without knowing it, the consolation for a bitter grief. It is the way of a mother, I suppose, to create out of her brain the dream son that her soul desires, and to find, when she is old and weary, that the son she has created out of her body is different; better, may be, but to her a stranger. It is not for me to reproach the fates because they have given my boy artistic genius and the limitations that sometimes go with it. But you, who have no blood of mine, have been the other son, the child of my secret hope; and I shall go more lightly to meet death because I have seen the desire of my sight, a son that I can trust."

For all answer he slipped down and knelt beside her, his head against her breast.

"I have to trust you," she lingered passionately on the words. "I can trust you; and Theo will be safe. If I had not found you, I should have had to die—think of it!—and leave him alone."

Jack lifted up his head suddenly, and she saw how white he was.

"And aren't you leaving me alone?"

Theo—Theo will have me; and what shall I have? What else have I got in the world but you? What sort of life have you ever had? And now—"

He pulled his hand away from hers and went out hastily. Jack's sudden break-down had set her heart throbbing with affright; it was so unlike him.

For his part, lay face downwards on the grass under the laurel tree. At last he gathered himself up, tramped to and fro in the garden for a while, and came in at the verandah door with his everyday face.

"Mother," he said, "I'm going to tie up the jasmine; and I asked Eliza to make some tea and help you get to bed. You mustn't overdo yourself."

The next day he called on Professor Brooks, and heard the details of the sentence with an unmoved face.

She might live a year, or even more, the professor said, or perhaps only a few months; one could not tell much beforehand with internal cancer. "If she were my mother," he added gently, "I should not wish an operation."

"Then you think she will suffer very much?" he asked. The professor hesitated.

"It depends. Perhaps not so much as in many cases, if it goes quickly; but cancer is always cancer, and it may—"

He stopped, with a sense of wonder at the stolid face. "Is that callousness?" he asked himself, "or self-control?" Then he saw the little sweat beads break out on Jack's forehead, and thought, "Poor lad!"

The next week brought Theo, like embodied sunshine; a creature innocent of death and grief. Helen had written to him at Paris, telling him he had been ill and was "not quite strong enough to get about," so he was prepared to be met at the station by Jack only, and to find her on the sofa when they reached the house.

"My mummy, what do you mean by falling ill the minute we go away? Is it to provide Jack with an opportunity to try his hand at doctoring? That's carrying maternal devotion a bit too far. And to grow so thin, to be so much hungry and get well before the bright weather goes; we want to take you boating, you know. Wait, I've got something outside that'll make you well to look at."

He ran but into the passage, then came back with a huge sheet of Annunciation lilies filling both arms, and heaped them all over the sofa.

"Did you ever see such glorious ones? I stopped at Havre on the day, and the peasants were bringing them in to market for the Madonna's images in church, so I got a barrowful for my special Madonna."

And carried that load all the way from Havre? And the violin too?"

"Well, mummy, people carry lilies and musical instruments in heaven, don't they? And the water was like heaven to-day, with white sea-birds instead of swan, and shiny fishes wriggling and jumping for sheer delight, like the souls of the good people after they die. Why, Jack, how seedy you look! Too much dissecting, is it?"

Jack was standing still, looking out into the blossoming garden, as he wondered how much more of this a man could bear.

"Oh, I'm all right, thanks. Don't you think the lilies should go in water?"

"Yes; they'll want a big bath-tub, won't they? Mummy, you look sweeter than ever; you ought always to be half buried in lilies."

As he stooped to lift them Helen caught his arm and drew him down beside her, resting her cheek against his.

"Kochanku moi!" Her eyes shone with a light which only Theo's presence wakened in them; her voice had a deeper tone than her native speech, like the souls of the good people after they die. Why, Jack, how seedy you look! Too much dissecting, is it?"

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will neither of us tell him. Let him have this one summer without a cloud. Remember, he comes out next autumn, and it might shake his nerves, and spoil his playing; and the first concert means so much. There's no reason why he should know. I—I don't have the pain very often yet; and he goes back to Germany in September; he won't find out before then."

Jack stooped down and kissed her gravely. "As you like, mother. It shall be our secret, yours and mine."

CHAPTER X.

So the holiday-time passed, and Theo suspected nothing. His mother's weakness and inability to take the pleasure trips he had planned for her were a sore disappointment to him; his sweet and sunny nature could not care for enjoyment which might not be shared with others, and he had religiously saved up his few superfluous coins "to take mother about in the summer." Not being able to do this, he spent his money on hot-house grapes and peaches for her.

For them it was a hard summer; at times, indeed, so hard that Jack's courage would have failed him but for the indomitable patience of Helen. The disease had not yet reached its most painful stage; but there were already many long, sleepless nights, when Jack would sit with her, reading aloud or, if she was too tired to watch him, he would sit there, often she entreated him to leave her and go back to bed. "I shall be quite comfortable," she would say, secretly dreading the lonely horror of the night, yet fearing lest the want of sleep should injure his health.

"Let me have all I can of you, mother," he would answer softly; and she would submit with a little sigh of relief to the long, sleepless nights.

Day would come at last, and with it Theo, light-footed and radiant, carrying down trails of honey-suckle to wreath the foot of her bed. "Have you had a good night, mummy?" Sometimes he would notice Jack's haggard face. "You work too hard, old fellow," he would say. Once he came up behind him in the garden and slipped a hand through his arm; a wonderful hand, strong and slender, with the live finger-tips of the musician. "Jack," he said, "I've been worrying about you. I believe you have some trouble."

Jack paused a moment, then looked up with his grave smile. "A little trouble, do you think? My dear boy, I'm just an ordinary cart-horse; I can't get out of my harness to fall in like you artists."

The holidays over, Theo went back to Germany. Helen had persisted in keeping the truth from him. "But, mother," Jack said at last; "he must know some time. Don't let it come with a shock at the end. And—Germany is such a long way off."

"That's still time; let him have his first concert in peace. We can send for him when I get worse. And when he does come, don't you keep the bad sights from him. I have seen a person dying of cancer, and I don't want Theo."

"Mother!" Jack broke in, "that is not fair. You stand with a shield in front of him, and he will never learn to live."

"He will learn soon enough—afterwards."

"Afterwards—and you will go lonely this last winter."

"Not lonely, dear, when I have you. Oh, yes, you have me, of course; but I'm not Theo. Mother, you have been sacrificed all your life; and now at the very end—"

"I would not be just for me to hamper his development. I have no right to take him from his life; I must let him live; that is for mothers whose sons have no genius."

Jack stood on the floor, his teeth set. "Then thank God I have no genius!" he said at last. She drew him down to her and kissed his forehead.

"Even I may thank God for that." (To be continued.)

THE SERBIAN TRAGEDY.

Lord Milner Says Britain Did Not Act at Proper Time.

Lord Milner, in the British House of Commons, during the recent debate, said: "Take the case of Serbia. That is the most heart-rending tragedy of all in this awful war. Even at this hour, while we are sitting here, horrors are being committed in Serbia, and there is more widespread desolation being caused there even than what we have been familiar with in the case of Belgium."

When the proper time comes for the full consideration of the question of Serbia, I am prepared to maintain my propositions. One is that if we had prepared in time against a contingency which for months past was, to say the very least, a likelihood, it would have been possible for us, six weeks ago to give Serbia such an amount of material assistance as would have enabled her to have resisted the combined attacks of the Central Powers and Bulgaria, with reasonable prospects of complete success, and at the same time we should have saved Greece with us. My second proposition is that those preparations not having been made, even so when the Greek crisis came and Greece left Serbia and the allies in the lurch, it would have been possible, even then, for us, if we had acted with the greatest alacrity and determination, to put such a force into Serbia, in conjunction with our allies, as would not, indeed, have saved the country from invasion and from being partly overrun, but would have enabled at least a great portion of the Serbian army to fall back upon its lines and maintain itself for an indefinite time in the south and southwest part of the country.

HOW SCIENCE MAY CONQUER DISEASE

MOST DEADLY ENEMY IS THE TUBERCLE BACILLI.

Man's Most Hideous Enemies, Often Invisible, Literally Seek to De- stroy Him.

Since man found he must struggle for existence he has realized that to continue the struggle he must prove himself the superior of his enemies—that the struggle is a "survival of the fittest." From the time man began to drive the wild animals from the earth he has fought the enemies that sought to attack and devour him.

Man has conquered his visible animal enemies, but now finds that he has almost overlooked his greatest enemy—the vast army of small animals and vegetable growths which seek literally to get within his body and devour him.

These enemies are all parasites—that is to say, creatures that do not earn their own living but live off others.

Derive Name from Shape.

The parasites are divided into several groups. One of these groups is called bacteria, which means rods, because their shape is that of a rod. Many of the bacteria which most closely resemble the rod in shape are called bacilli, and bacteria of a round shape are called cocci.

The most deadly enemy is the tubercle bacilli. A tubercle is simply a little lump found on that part of the body attacked by the bacilli. When these bacilli obtain a foothold in the body the victim suffers from tuberculosis. This bacillus is very common and attacks fish, reptiles, birds, beasts and men.

It usually gains entrance to the body in the food, often hiding away in milk or meat. It is usually killed when meat is well cooked or the milk boiled. If the human system is in good condition the bacilli often meet an early death, when flooded by that precious acid, hydrochloric acid, which the stomach secretes.

Many of the bacilli, or germs, as they are often called, can only attack man when they find a place on the body where the outer thick skin has been torn apart. Some of the most painful of sores and inflammations come from the streptococcus, which now is well controlled by science, but which attacks wounds and is always a hard germ to kill.

Though the tubercle bacillus causes more deaths than any other of our enemies, it is the little protozoan which, entering the blood, creates the most illness. The disease it causes has many names, including tertian fever, ague and malaria. It is usually known by the last name, which in the Italian language means "bad air." It is thought this name was given because the germ is found in low countries where the air is often humid and depressing.

Germ Carried by Mosquito.

The animal parasite, by eating up the red cells of the blood, causes the patient to become weak and pale. For years this disease was fought with quinine, the only known drug which will of itself kill a germ.

It has been found that the germ is always carried by the female anopheles, a mosquito, who bites at night and leaves the germ in her victim's body.

The best way to drive the anopheles from the earth is to drain all low ground where it breeds and exterminate its offspring. This has been done in Panama and Suez, and made possible the construction of the canals. Yellow Jack or yellow fever, so named from the wretched color of its victims, has been driven out by this method, since it is carried by the stegomyia, a species of mosquito.

Typhoid fever is a disease that kills many people every year, but sends hosts to death in war time. It is due to a bacillus that leaves man's body and gets into water which other people drink.

This danger can be guarded against by watching the water supply, but it is found that the fifth fly also spreads the bacillus which breeds typhoid, and this has given rise to the "swat-the-fly" campaign.

The most deadly of acute diseases that attack grown-up people is pneumonia, or inflammation of the lungs. In this case the bacilli is known as the pneumococcus. It seems to live, without doing any harm, in the mouths of many people. But when these people catch cold, and especially if they drink alcohol, their natural defences are weakened and the pneumococcus penetrates into the lungs, and, rapidly breeding, soon kills.

Bacillus Chokes Children.

The diphtheria bacillus is a common enemy to children, whom it cruelly kills by choking them or sometimes by poisoning the muscle cells of their hearts. This disease has been fought with some success by introducing a toxin, or group of enemy bacilli, into the infected person's system. They kill off the diphtheria bacillus and are in turn killed by the human body.

For ages a terrible fever known by many names has raged in many places of the earth, especially in

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slums and insanitary surroundings. This fever is known as typhus. Many people believe it to be the same disease as typhoid, but it is entirely different.

It is estimated that typhus has killed more than 100,000 people in Serbia this year—vastly more than those killed by the guns of the Austrians.

To date there is no remedy for typhus, nor is there preventive medicine as in the cases of typhoid and plague. Nor is there a curative drug, as in the case of malaria, nor injections of vaccine, as in diphtheria or tetanus, often called lockjaw. The enemy has never been seen, according to authorities—probably too small to be seen. But the transport of the bacillus has been discovered.

As in the case of bubonic plague, this transport is a louse. The typhus louse is a vile little insect that lives upon the human skin and in the underclothing of anyone it can. In itself it is only a nuisance, causing itching and scratching. But often it carries the unseen parasite of the typhus fever which gains an entrance to the human body by leaving the louse. The scourge can be driven out only by driving out the lice from a country or camp.

Sleeping Sickness Rarely Cured.

A queer, tiny animal, called the trypanosome, gets into the blood and causes sleeping sickness, an almost incurable disease. Scientists found that this animal was transported by a fly called the tsetse fly.

There are other germs called spirilla which cause various diseases, but their ravages have been met with fair success by a powerful injection into the blood called sal-arsen, which is made up largely of arsenic. The system must fight off the effects of the arsenic, but at least the germ is quickly killed by this desperate remedy.

Louis Pasteur the Pioneer.

All knowledge of the germ world dates from the remarkable discoveries of a Frenchman named Louis Pasteur, who will always be honored as one of the foremost scientists of history, for it was he who evolved and proved as a law the theory that germs are the greatest living dangers man must overcome in his fight for existence.

THE USE OF EGGS.

Investigation Shows Them to Be Most Widely Used Food.

There is no other single element of human diet of either animal or vegetable character which is, perhaps, more commonly used of man in a greater variety of styles and ways, than are eggs; and, while the egg of the common barnyard chicken is the one most generally used, a complete list of the different kinds and varieties of eggs which are somewhere subjected to the dietary uses of man must include a range extending from the ostrich to the insect—must mention ostrich, turkey, goose, duck, guinea fowl, chicken, seagull, murre, heron, sea swallow, many land birds, alligator, turtle, terrapin, lizard, serpent, fish and even insect.

Where ostriches are raised as an important industry in both the United States and South Africa ostrich eggs are used as human food and said to be of an excellent quality. Turkey eggs are used as a diet, but they are generally for too valuable for breeding purposes to permit of their extensive dietary use. Goose, duck and guinea eggs are more or less extensively used as elements of human food, the last named being especially prized for delicacy of flavor. Turtle eggs, of both fresh water and salt water varieties, are highly prized as a diet in most of the countries and sections in which they are found abundantly, and the eggs of the terrapin are usually served, not separately as such, but along with the shell or meat, when prepared for the table, while sturgeon eggs and shad roe are the most common instances of the use of fish eggs as human diet; but the eggs of the alligator, of the lizard, of the snake, and even of some insects, are used as human food by some races which are without the prejudices of our western civilization.

Doctor and Minister.

The famous physician and the eminent clergyman were deep in a discussion which threatened to become acrimonious.

"Do you see," said the minister sarcastically, "you medical men know so much about the uncertainties of this world that I should think you would not want to live."

"Oh, I don't know," responded the physician caustically. "You clergymen tell us so much about the uncertainties of the next world that we don't want to die."

WAR STORIES IN BOOKS JUST OUT

WHEN GHURKAS CHARGED THE GERMANS.

German Surrendered to Irish Cavalry and Then Shot From Behind.

A new book, "Soldiers' Stories of the War," is thick with thrilling incident. One of the story-tellers, Private W. H. Cooperwaite, 2nd Battalion Durham Light Infantry, gives a vivid picture of how the Ghurkas fight. He saw them rout the enemy. The Germans had been giving the East Yorkshires a terrible bout of shelling. It went on until after dark, and the Durhams wondered if any of the Tykes on their left remained:

"There was a surprise in store for us at dawn next day when we awoke, for the East Yorkshires' trenches were full of Ghurkas, who had slipped in during the night. The Germans knew nothing of this. All they knew was that their shells had been pounding on the East Yorkshires for hours, and doubtless they had satisfied themselves that no troops on earth could stand such a grueling."

By-and-by the Germans came on, pretty confidently, and the Ghurkas let them come on without showing a sign of life.

"When the Germans got to within about 40 yards of the trenches on our left the little brown fellows, who had been lying so low, sprang up and simply poured over the tops of the trenches. That performance was one of the most extraordinary things seen in the war. The Ghurkas never even attempted to fire; they just seemed to roll over the ground, gripping their legs, curved knives."

The Germans, stunned by the swiftness of the onslaught, terrified by the deadly wielding of the knives, broke and ran like rabbits. The Ghurkas, with the exception of one, seemed all grin and knife as they came back, joyously, wiping their knives, to be greeted with a rousing cheer.

Drop Shots.

"I believe that there is only one brigade of them in the German army," writes Corporal G. Gilliam, of the Coldstreams, "and I will do them justice to say that they are very good at the game." He refers to the "drop-shots," which he came in contact with on the banks of the Marne.

"They kneel down, and putting the butt of the rifle on the thigh, fire in the air at an angle of about 45 degrees. The bullet makes a big arc and drops right on top of you in such places as trenches. These 'drop-shots' were about 400 yards away, but they hadn't got just the right range for us, and the bullets plugged into the wrong places."

This Coldstreamer of twelve years' standing remarks proudly: "We have sometimes been called feather-bed soldiers, but we're known as 'Cold-steelers' now."

The trench mortar is described by Private Carr of the London Scottish: "At Givenchy we had to endure as best we could that most unpleasant engine of war which is called the trench mortar. This affects high-angle fire, and plunges a shell into the trenches when the aim is good. One shell dropped into a trench of ours, and exploded, killing one man and wounding five others—a round half-dozen fine fellows as toll of a single German shot."

German Treachery.

Driver G. W. Blow, R.F.A., who was invalided home after having had two of his ribs broken and five horses killed under him in the battle of the Marne, brought with him part of an Uhlan saddle. "The Uhlan's saddle (he says) is a wonderful thing, weighing 78 pounds, compared with 12 rounds for the British saddle." Poor horse!

Here is an Irishman's brave story, told by Mr. Hall Caine in his impressive little volume entitled, "The Drama of 365 Days," which visualizes scenes in the great war. It happened before the armies had dug themselves into the earth like rabbits, and belongs to the black page of German treachery:

"Eight hundred of the Irishman's cavalry regiment had ridden gallantly into a solid block of the enemy, making a way through them as wide as Sackville Street. At length the Germans in front had dropped their rifles and held up their hands, whereupon our men had ceased to slay. But being unable to rein in their frantic horses they had been compelled to gallop on. Then, while their backs were turned, the treacherous Huns had picked up their rifles and fired on them behind, killing many of our best men."

"And what did you do then?"

"Turned back and—"

"And what?"

"Took one man alive, sir."