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CHAPTER XXXIV.

DISGRACED AND BANISHED.

John Verner glared at him, then, crossing to a table, he wrote hurriedly and briefly, and, signing the paper, thrust it into Reuben's hand.

"Now are you satisfied?" he said, sullenly.

"Yes," rejoined Reuben, as he glanced over the recital of his injuries.

"You are free to go where you will. No mention will be made of the monies you have stolen and wasted. If you apply to the solicitors a proper income will be secured to you and Morgan. I wish it were not my father's brother who had so wronged me."

He turned on his heel and left the room, followed by his friend and counselor, Sir Edwin.

An hour later, John Verner rang for a servant. He was just ready to depart.

"See where Mr. Morgan is," he said briefly, "and order a carriage for me."

In a minute the servant returned with the reply that Mr. Morgan had gone out.

"Tell him," said John Verner, "to follow me to Paris. The usual hotel."

This was his last order as master of the Grange. Without a thought of the old steward who had served him so faithfully, if ever, he got into the carriage, and was driven down the long avenue, never to return.

As for Morgan, in the confusion of old Griley's death, he had slipped out of the room, heedless of the father who had schemed for him, heedless, too, of the old man who would have committed murder for his sake, and who had indeed committed suicide. Both were forgotten in his mad desire to get away, lest Reuben should fall on him in his just wrath.

Half crazed with fear, he went out blindly, and gained the hill, keeping near the hedge. In his distraught brain there was but one idea: to reach London, where he would find Polly waiting for him as of yore. But as he passed the bottom of the lane by Styles' farm, his brain cleared, and he shuddered, as before him there seemed to rise a figure, a girlish figure with a weak but pretty face.

With a shiver, he crossed to the other side of the road—the figure was behind him, it dogged his footsteps. He looked round in a paroxysm of terror. But no, it was no ghost, he could hear its footsteps. In another minute there was a cry; a pair of icy hands grasped his throat, and he reeled half choking to the ground.

In that moment he saw above him the idiot face of the father of the girl whom he had ruined and deserted, and his cowardly heart died away within him. He tried to cry out; but the fingers around his throat were too strong for him.

"Reuben Wynter, give me back my lass, my bright lass! It was you who took her from me. I've got you at last!"

He laughed hideously. Tighter and tighter twisted the madman's fingers; and in another awful moment, the soul of Morgan Verner had passed away from earth.

Late that same night, beneath the radiance of the moon, the villagers found them—dead. For the very act of avenging his daughter's betrayal seemed to have snapped the frail thread of Farmer Styles' life, and thus John Verner and his worthless son quitted Reave Hollow forever.

As to Julian Normansby, his plots and plans availed him little. For a time he attempted to face the world and brave it out. But he was without money and without credit. All his capital had been ventured on the ensnaring of the Grange, and by the loss of that he was ruined.

John Verner completed his revenge by sending an account of Normansby's blackmailing schemes to the papers; and many and varied were the rumors spread about concerning him. Men who had bowed to his opinion and followed his advice, now cut him publicly, as Sir Edwin had prophesied. The clubs expelled him. He was forced to resign his seat in Parliament; and, driven at last from the London he had loved and deceived so well, he fled to the Continent, there to haunt the card tables, and make his income by such lesser swindling as he could achieve.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HAPPINESS BEYOND WORDS.

THE carriage had driven away with Sir Edwin and his daughter, both tired out by the events of the last twenty-four hours. An all-night journey without notice is no light thing for an old man, weakened by illness, especially when it is followed up by a scene of wild excitement; and on their arrival at Bingleigh, Olive insisted that Sir Edwin should go straight to his room.

She herself was almost worn out with pent-up emotion. The strain of

the journey had told on her as well, augmented as it was by the strange appearance of Reuben, and the shock of Morgan's perjury. She had shown her trust in Reuben, the man she loved, and it had been repaid. Twice had he saved her from death, but now on this day he had saved her from what was worse—dishonor.

She shuddered as she thought of her miraculous escape, and on what a slender chance it had hung. Again and again, she made Topsy relate how Reuben had come to her in the morning and persuaded her to don one of Olive's cloaks, so as to enact the part of her beloved mistress and save her from ruin. Reuben had told her of the danger she would run, if Morgan discovered the trick played on him before the carriage reached its destination; but Topsy had laughed his fears away. She knew Morgan's cowardice, and she calculated for success on the darkness and her powers of imitating Olive's voice. Nor had she calculated wrong.

Olive's heart throbbed with gratitude, and when Topsy was about to leave her for the night, she pulled her down to her and kissed the devoted girl. Topsy would have wished no better reward than this.

Left alone, Olive's thoughts turned once more to Reuben. Thanks to his care, she was free from Morgan. Whatever happened in the future to Bingleigh, she felt sure that the sacrifice of herself would be needed no longer. All her fears as to a loveless marriage with such a despicable being as Morgan Verner disappeared forever.

She could have sung for very joy; for it was Reuben who had saved her; and on top of that came the thought of his birth, equal now to hers. It was no wonder that she had loved him; for in her own mind—she admitted it freely—she had loved him from the very first lesson he had given her on the downs.

As for Reuben himself, he, too, was in a state of happy bewilderment—to him, all that had happened seemed a fairy tale. He had returned to England, wealthy beyond measure, from the fruits of his own labor. The utmost he had hoped for was to find his grandfather, and clear his tarnished honor; then to return to the land of gold, there to end his days.

But to be thus the means of saving Olive from a dishonorable marriage, and, what was even stranger, to have the right to be near her and to win her for his own, with honor in the eyes of the world, and as her equal, this indeed was happiness beyond description; and all the struggles of the earlier years seemed to him as naught in the delicious rapture of the present.

As soon as possible he went in to old Wynter, and soon scattered any lingering doubts that the old man might have as to Reuben's affection for him. His memory was now quite clear; and as Reuben looked back on the cruel treatment of his childhood after the death of his father, and contrasted it with the open-air life and the love lavished on him by Wynter, his heart was full of gratitude to the man who, by thus taking him from his inheritance, had thereby saved his life.

On the following day he rode over to Bingleigh Hall, ostensibly to inquire after Sir Edwin's health; but love is naturally self-centered, and it must be confessed that Reuben's thoughts were more with Olive than with the man who had so firmly confided in his word.

He felt that he must see her and learn the truth from her lips. No word beyond the formal conventional speeches had passed between them; and now that there could be no longer any shadow of a bar between them, Reuben rode rejoicing over the downs whereon he had given her riding lessons; by the mill stream where he had rescued her, and past the cottage which he had once left in such agony of soul. Now he was no longer Reuben, the horse-trainer—Jack of all trades; but Ernest Verner, master of the Grange, and deep down in his heart, he vowed that he would be worthy of his trust.

As he passed through Bingleigh village he was greeted with respectful admiration; for Topsy had not been idle. Up with the dawn, she had spread the news far and wide; and the story lost nothing in the telling. To the servants and villagers the news that Reuben, the steward, whom they had thought to be a villain and thief, was now Ernest Verner, and heir to the great estates of the Grange, seemed nothing short of a miracle.

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Zam-Buk

Sir Edwin greeted the young man warmly; yet not more so than on the preceding night, when Reuben had been but an unknown man intent on clearing his name from the foul charges imputed to him.

The death of Morgan was an additional shock to the old man; for up to the preceding day he had genuinely believed in him, and, as Reuben had surmised, would have found it difficult to credit his villainy, had he not heard it and seen it for himself. Yet the young man's death was so sudden that it was hardly realizable, and he besought Reuben to break the news to Olive, of whom there had been no sign.

Reuben, for he would always be known by the familiar name, looked at Sir Edwin doubtfully.

"I don't know that I dare," he said. "She must have cared for him a little, or she would never have consented to marry him. Would it not come better from you?"

Sir Edwin shook his head, while tears came into his eyes.

"My boy," he said, in a voice deep with emotion, "she sold herself to save me the pain of leaving Bingleigh, the home of my fathers, the home which I lost through my own weakness and folly. In my blindness I never realized what a sacrifice she was making, and had it not been for you, she would have died beneath the burden she would have had to bear. I know only too well how she hated and feared him; and this has meant a release as of one condemned. No, Reuben—have no scruples on the score of her engagement. Olive has ever loved one man."

Reuben's face lit up with joy; and he rose impulsively.

"I think she is in the rose garden," said Sir Edwin, extending his hand to Reuben, who grasped it heartily. Then, with a friendly pat on the shoulder, he said significantly: "Go, and find her, lad."

With a light heart, Reuben hurried through the long French windows and made his way into the garden. In the more secluded part of the grounds once gay with roses—whence the place took its name—he found Olive walking.

At his impetuous approach she looked up. Her cheeks flushed rosyly, her eyes were like stars, as she shyly welcomed him. For a minute or two Reuben answered her conventional remarks, but as they reached a secluded arbor, which seemed sacred to Venus and her votaries, he turned to her and said:

(To be Continued.)

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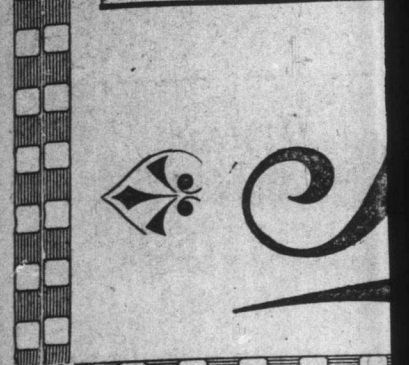
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MEN'S

and cut at the



EARLY M

WAR SUMMARY.

The strikes in Germany apparently are growing in magnitude. In Berlin alone, according to despatches reaching neutral countries from Germany, 700,000 men and women have ceased work, while in Kiel towns along the Rhine, in the Westphalian coast region, and other districts in the empire, including Bavaria, the situation is serious. It's asserted that martial law has been declared in Hamburg and that centre, and that Hamburg's military commander has ordered the cessation of the strike and given an added order that further demonstrations of this nature must be avoided. Additional Socialist leaders in various towns have been advised to cease their activities in fomenting strikes or by reason of their hostile attitude towards the policy of the militaristic elements with regard to peace and franchise reform. Numerous industries necessary to the prosecution of the war have headquarters in towns where strikes are in progress and doubtless they are affected by them. Notably among these industries are the great shipbuilding yards at Kiel, the military aeroplane and balloon plants at Aldershof, big arsenals and ammunition works at Spandau and the great iron mines and foundries in the Westphalian region. On the fighting fronts the most important event has been another attack by Germans on a small American port in which two Americans were killed and four wounded, and another soldier is believed to have been captured by the enemy. This position on the French front daily has been searched out by shells from the Germans for several days past, but on Wednesday morning, aided by heavy

And the Worst

