

THE LITTLE OLD SECRETARY

(CONTINUED.)

Kathleen and Ewan's journey was performed with all possible expedition, and nothing marred her perfect enjoyment of the new scenes through which she passed, except the sight or rather the consciousness of the suffering which her brother was interiorly going through. She had quite prepared herself to expect that it would be a long time before the habitual sense of being under ban would wear off, and was not surprised when a casual greeting from a stranger or the sudden opening of a door would send a crimson flush across his cheek, and make his usually firm tread tremble. But Ewan could laugh at himself for this. He was very open with her about all the circumstances of his troubled life; he was overflowing with gratitude to God and man for the mercy which had been shown him. Yet Kathleen was perfectly aware that there was an inner chamber into which it could not bring her; and that, as yet, no ray of real happiness lit up the path he trod so bravely. "I shall be so glad when Ewan can be quietly with you," she wrote to her mother, after having caught a glimpse of his face as he knelt in an agony of prayer in one of the churches where they were hearing an early Mass. "He is in too deep waters for a silly child like me to reach him at all. You would be much more able to console him." And her mother had answered her: "No one can console whom God chooses to desolate. Wait in patience—the long night will end in a bright dawning. He is thoroughly humble now, and can only look to the future as an expiation of the past. When the right time for joy comes God will send it, and it will be peace beyond understanding. But take care never to let him feel you expect him to be happy. Leave him quite alone, and all will be right." They found Mrs. Hanson at Alexandria, but heard, with some anxiety, that the Calcutta steamer—overdue five days—had not yet arrived. They secured some pleasant rooms in a hotel not far from the quay, and Kathleen's grateful heart became quite maternal in its anxieties to make a home-like welcome for the orphan girl. Early the following morning, the joyful tidings greeted them that the "Star of India" had been signalled, and would probably be in harbor in a couple of hours. Long before the time the brother and sister were on the spot, and so possessed were they with the idea that Eva might be on board with no one but an ayah, in consequence of the disastrous state of Indian affairs, that, instead of waiting her arrival at the quay, they took one of the numerous fleet of little boats setting forth to receive the great steamer's living cargo, so as to save her from that last disagreeable step of lonely travelling. The scene on deck was one of more than usual clamor and excitement, for there was an unusually large number of passengers, and several small disasters having so much prolonged the usual length of the voyage, every one was frantic with impatience to get on terra firma. Kathleen clung to her brother's arm, almost frightened at the shoving, shouting crowd, all trying to get attended to first. Ewan, seizing upon the first official he could see, inquired in a loud voice, to make himself heard above the din, "Is Miss Eva Hamilton on board?"

He was answered by a rush, almost into their arms, of a young girl, whose costly dress seemed tumbled and dishevelled, and whose young face bore the impress of cares that were too much for her. "Thank God for somebody to help me," she exclaimed, with almost a sign of relief. Then, without stopping to ask who they were, she laid her hand on Ewan's arm and hurried on rapidly in an agitated voice: "Do go at once to my cousin Oswald, and help him up from the cabin. He has got a wound from the rebels at Delhi. He said it was nothing when he left Calcutta, and, as he could not fight, he would come to take care of me. I was so glad he came, but now, something has happened to his wound on board this horrid steamer, and he cannot move. And oh! I fear he will die if he stays here much longer, and if no one helps him to get away they will leave him to the last." "I will go this instant," replied Ewan, earnestly. "Kathleen, you can take Miss Hamilton down the hatchway ladder to our boat, and remain there till I join you; but you must have some one to help you." He looked hurriedly round. "Here, my good fellow," he said, addressing himself to a respectable, fatherly-looking sailor, who seemed for the moment only engaged in making himself generally useful to the passengers: "Take charge of these ladies and see them safely down to their boat." He put a crown piece in the sailor's hand. "When you have secured the ladies' comfort, come back to this place and I will give you another five shillings to help me with the wounded officer." "All right, sir," said the man, touching his cap. "I'll take the greatest care of the ladies, and see 'em in the boat, and be back in a jiffy to look out for you." "Do not be alarmed if I should seem a long time bringing your cousin," said Ewan in a gentle tone, turning to where Eva was standing, her arms drawn within Kathleen's, her countenance flushed and anxious. "I will bring him as quickly as I can, but it will be needful to move him gently." He looked round. "The crowd is already beginning to thin a little," he continued, "so I hope we shall meet with no hindrance, and shall be with you very soon. But tell me who I am to ask for? You did not mention your cousin's name." "Captain Oswald Cochrane," replied Eva. At the mention of this name Kathleen saw her brother stagger slightly, and seize the rail of the cabin staircase to steady himself, while every tinge of color left his face, and he stood as though an icy breath had turned him into stone. She had no time to speak to him however, or even to think what it would be best for them to do, for Eva's agitation at the thought of her own desolation and her cousin's danger became at this moment so overpowering that Kathleen's whole attention was taken up in soothing her, and assuring her of the affectionate welcome that awaited her in her new home. She drew her future sister to her heart, and wiping away her tears, gave her a warm embrace which set the harassed mind of the poor orphan girl quite at rest on the question of what was to become of her. "I am Kathleen McDermot, and your uncle, Lord Melton, whom I love dearly, sent me to meet you," said Kathleen, in answer to Eva's sobbing questions, "Who are you? And who sent you?" "And that is my brother Ewan; he will do everything he can for your cousin." While she was speaking, Kathleen looked round to where her brother had been standing, and her heart gave a

great bound of relief as she caught a glimpse of his figure just disappearing down the cabin stair, his face, though still pale, looking quite calm and brave. "Hadn't we better get to our boat, Miss?" broke in the sailor, touching his cap respectfully. "The gangway is getting a bit clearer now, and I ought to be back here soon, to lend a hand with the sick gentleman." CHAPTER XX. "There was only a sound of weeping From watchers around a bed, But rest to the weary spirit, Peace to the quiet dead." —Adelaide Procter. It was rough work pushing their way to the steamer's side, and getting down the steps that led to their boat, and Kathleen's satisfaction, when she and Eva were at last comfortably settled, was dashed with no little anxiety as to how Ewan could possibly manage to bring his poor wounded charge. She soon found, however, that she had no cause for anxiety on this score, for the Captain himself superintended the matter, ordering everyone out of the way, and standing at the head of the steps till he saw him deposited in the boat. With all their care, it was only with the greatest difficulty that they accomplished their task, and the poor sufferer seemed greatly exhausted. Ewan sat behind to make a firm support for him, while Eva held an umbrella to shield him from the blazing sun. Captain Cochrane did not speak during the painful transit from the steamer to the shore, and Kathleen saw that he was much too ill to recognize Ewan, and that the latter had perfectly recovered his calmness and presence of mind. As they touched the quay Captain Cochrane said to Ewan in a faint voice: "Will you get a surgeon to me quickly? My wound has been painful me horribly, and the pain has suddenly ceased. I expect the rascals have done for my right arm—for I know what that means." "The hotel is very close, and I will get you the best surgeon in Alexandria immediately," replied Ewan, in a reassuring tone, giving a warning glance at Eva, who was beginning to break out into lamentations. "Take her to our rooms, Kathleen," he whispered to his sister, "and make her rest. Perhaps she may be able to see her cousin towards the evening." Eva was quite contented to leave Oswald in those strong hands. She had been miserable at her own incapacity to do anything for him—indeed, in his fever he had moaned that he was dying like a dog with no one to help him. She waited with Kathleen till they saw him carried into a large hotel close on the quay, and then, leaving their luggage to be looked after by a commissioner, they walked to the hotel in which the McDermots had taken rooms, Eva saying very sorrowfully as they went along: "If he should die, it will be all my fault, for I asked him to come with me; and when he came up to Calcutta from Delhi, the doctor said the wound was only a slight one, and he would soon be well." Kathleen devoted her whole attention to the care and so-lace of Eva, and after an hour spent in tempting her to eat, soothing her with bright visions of a mother and a home, and at last putting her to bed like an infant, had the satisfaction of seeing the poor, worn out child fall fast asleep. Kathleen had already despatched Mrs. Hanson to Ewan, to offer her assistance if she could be of use. Now she went to the post-office and sent off letters, one to her mother, the other to Lord Melton, telling them that Eva was safe in

their keeping, but that Captain Cochrane, who had accompanied them, was dangerously ill. This duty accomplished, she has leisure to sit and think over the extraordinary chance which had brought the injurer and the injured together, and to wander what its effect would be upon Ewan. Would it bring back the past so vividly as to deepen the cloud which hung so heavily upon him? She was disquieted by no fears as to the recognition of her brother by Captain Cochrane; he evidently did not recollect him in the least under the different name and dress, and the change that suffering had wrought upon his face. In the afternoon a boy brought a pencil note from Ewan, "that he was very thankful for Mrs. Hanson's experienced nursing—that the arm was off—and the surgeons thought that there was just a possibility that his life might be saved; but that the greatest quiet was enjoined, and Eva must relinquish the hope of seeing him that night." At the end was written—"Private. — He is getting anxious about his soul.—Pray." This little scrap Kathleen tore off the note, and then took it to Eva, to make the most of the hope that still remained. Early next morning Mrs. Hanson came back to take a few hours' rest before watching through another night. She brought the sad intelligence that all hope was gone, and that the doctors had plainly told him he had not twenty-four hours to live. "But, my dear," she said, turning to Kathleen, "that brother of yours is a saint, if ever there was one on earth. In the middle of the night the poor young captain got into an agony of terror about death, and cried out that he was not fit to die, that a man's blood was on his soul, and that he should be lost forever. Then Mr. McDermot bent over him, and took hold of his hand that lay clenched on the coverlet, and he spoke with such a majesty and power of the love of God, and the certainty of salvation for those who were sorry for their sins and went the right way to work to get forgiveness, that the poor young man lay quiet like a child, listening to his words, as though his life depended on them. At last he looked up into your brother's face, so earnest-like, 'he had seen a Catholic go to death, and he wanted to die like him. And, oh! Miss, you ought to have seen Mr. McDermot's face; it got quite bright and shining-like, as he promised the poor, dying young man, 'that he should see a priest the very first thing in the morning, as soon as the doctor had seen him.' "Then Mr. McDermot asked me to leave them alone a few minutes, and he said something to Captain Cochrane while I was away, which seemed perfectly to satisfy him, for when I went back, he was lying like a lamb, and he never went off his head again, but joined earnestly in all the prayers said for him between whiles. Very early this morning Mr. McDermot went out to find an English priest, and he is there now. I tried hard to persuade your brother to take an hour's rest before he sent me away, but the sick man looked up at him and said so piteously: 'Don't leave me in my extremity; that no power on earth would make Mr. McDermot stir from his side. My dears,' concluded Mrs. Hanson, wiping her eyes: "I wouldn't have missed the sight I've seen this night for worlds. I'll never be able to think about it without crying." The good old woman had made both her auditors cry too. Indeed, poor Eva had laid

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