



THE HEIR OF Lancewood

CHAPTER XXXV.

"And my reward?" he said. "How I have loved you! I cannot remember an hour, a day, a moment of my life that has not been filled with thoughts of you. I seem to have lived so entirely in my love that I know nothing outside it. Had you asked me for my life, I would have given it."

"You have given me your honor and your honesty," she remarked sadly—"that is more than enough."

"I dare to ask you for your love," he continued, "because I know what the love of men is, and I know that no creature living will love you as I do."

She laid her hand on his and looked at him with pity in her face.

"My poor Gerald," she said, "do you not see that, even were there no other obstacle, you yourself have placed an insuperable one between us?"

"I?" he cried.

"Yes, you—by this very sin. Even had I loved you—which I tell you frankly I do not—this sin would have raised a barrier between us. You and I could not share together the inheritance that we have taken from another."

"Then you will not—you will never love me?" he said.

"No; my love is no longer mine to give—even were it so, it would never be given to you."

"Then may Heaven help me," he cried bitterly, "for I have sinned and suffered in vain!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Vivien and Gerald Dorman had forgotten Mr. Greston, who had finished his paper, and had been more than once to the window to look at them. He thought it rather strange, that long, earnest consultation between the stately heiress of Lancewood and the young secretary—he would have thought it stranger still had he heard the matter discussed.

"I have sinned and suffered in vain," repeated Gerald Dorman.

"Not altogether in vain," said Miss Neslie; "you have rendered me good service—and you have rendered good service to Lancewood."

"It was all for you—for no one else," he told her; "and now you hate me for it."

"Nay," she replied, "I do not hate you—I am grateful to you. I have a kindly liking for you. You have proved yourself in every way my true, devoted friend—for that I thank you; but there never could have been any thought of love between us, even had I cared for no one else."

"Never?" he said, mournfully.

"Would nothing have won you—would nothing have made you care for me?"

"Not in that way," she replied;

"and, Gerald, I have still more to say."

A feeling of utter despair came over him. She laid her hand on his. It was cold as death.

"It is something that must be said," she continued. "Gerald, we have sinned—I in thought and word, you in deed—for the sake of pleasing me, I because of my pride. We have sinned grievously, and henceforward the sight of you will be a terror to me. Knowing the terrible bond between us, I could never talk or laugh with you. The very sight of you would be a perpetual and terrible reminder to me of my sin."

"Then I must leave you?" he said.

"You must leave Lancewood. I am grieved to say it, but it must be so. The sin has been committed, the evil done. I refuse to undo it; but I could not bear to live with the one who has shared my guilt—you must go."

"I might have foreseen it," he moaned.

"Imagine," she said, with white lips, "you and me talking, joining in careless conversation, sitting at the same table, with this horrible sense of guilt between us—this story of a stolen child and a stolen inheritance! It could never be."

"I see it. I have suffered in vain. I have loved you all my life—you have been my very life; but I must crown my love by the greatest of all sacrifices—I must leave you."

Before she had time to reply, Mr. Greston walked across the terrace and joined them.

"You are admiring the beautiful night," he said. "No wonder. I think a summer night the most beautiful thing in nature." Even as he spoke he felt startled at the sight of the two haggard white faces.

"It is growing cold," said Miss Neslie. "How quickly the dew falls! I think we will go indoors."

Her color returned, her eyes lost their dim, dazed look. She had a secret to keep, and she determined to keep it well. "It is for the honor of Lancewood," she said to herself, and then shrank within herself at the false words. In one sense the honor of Lancewood was destroyed for evermore.

There was no opportunity of speaking to Gerald again that evening, and the night Vivien spent was one of the darkest and most terrible of her life. It was over at last, and morning dawned. It brought her a letter from Lord St. Just—a loving, tender, earnest letter—that brought a soft blush to her face, a bright love-light to her eyes—a letter in which he told her that he had waited until he could wait no longer—that now, owing to the unfortunate death of the little heir, Lancewood was hers, the only objection she had to their marriage removed.

"I did not tell you," he wrote, "how keen and terrible the disappointment was to me—almost more than I could bear; but for your sake I bore it. Now it is ended. You shall do with Lancewood as you will; but you must be what I long to make you—my darling, my beloved wife."

It was a letter that might have made any woman that read it proud of the writer's fervent love and entire devotion—proud that such a noble heart was her own. Even as Vivien read it she knew and said to herself that the union could never take place; with her terrible secret weighing down heart and soul, she could never marry him.

Should she—and the temptation was strong—relent, send for the child and make peace with her own soul, and marry Adrian? Up rose a host of objections—mildly's triumphant return, Lancewood given up to folly and dissipation. No; she held its honor firmly in her own hands now, and she would keep it so.

"What will become of Lancewood then?" he asked.

"It will pass to the other branch of the Neslies. I know them—they are simple, loyal, honest people—I shall send for their eldest son in a few years' time, and make him my heir. At least, I shall have a gentleman to succeed me. Lancewood will not be the prey of Lady Neslie and her friends."

"It is a cruel decision," said Gerald, sadly.

"I have done cruel wrong," she re-

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"Gerald," said Miss Neslie, "will you come to the library? I wish to speak to you."

He went. She seated herself at a writing-table, with an open letter in her hand.

"Sit down by me," she said. "I want to talk to you. You thought I was hard upon you last night. I could perceive that you did. I want to show you that you will not have to suffer alone. See," she continued—"this letter is from the man I love better than all the world. He asked me some time since to marry him, but for the love of Lancewood I refused. I told him that I remained there as the guardian of the honor of my name—that I could never leave it; and, though he took my refusal sorely to heart, he seemed to understand. He loved me so well," she continued, with a softened voice, "that for my sake he would have remained unmarried forever. Now he has written to me, and he says in his letter that the only hindrance to our marriage being removed, he wishes me to become his wife."

Although the fire of jealousy burned like a fierce fever within Gerald Dorman, he loved her so well that he forgot himself—forgot everything except that she was in trouble.

"Let me show you, Gerald," she went on, "that you will not suffer alone. I am going to answer this letter, and I shall tell the writer—the man whom I love with so great a love—that I can never be his wife—never while the world stands—that there is an insuperable barrier between us. My pain will be as great as yours."

He loved her so well that he even pleaded against himself.

"Why should you do it?" he asked. "Why should you not marry him?"

"With the black shadow of a terrible sin resting upon me? No—a thousand times no! I love him too well. I am guilty of a crime. He shall not marry a criminal. The nobles of women would not be noble enough for him."

"But," said Gerald, "what will you do with your life?"

An expression of rapt thought—of patient devotion—came over her face.

"I shall spend it," she said, "in atonement. So far as in me lies, I will make up for the evil I have done. I will not live for myself—for my own pleasure—for my own indulgence; I will live for the good of others. Gerald, you will hear of churches being built, of schools established, of hospitals erected—of the poor, the aged, and the sorrowing finding help and succor. When you hear of all this, say to yourself, 'That is Vivien Neslie's atonement for a wrong done.'"

"Undo the wrong," he said, quickly, "rather than sadden your life."

"No. I have thought it over well. I shall never undo that. It must remain as it is, but I will do my best to make amends. I will do all the good that lies in my power. I will spend the princely revenues of Lancewood in charity and benevolence, but I will not restore to the child of a strolling player the right that should never have been his."

"And you will never marry?" he interrogated, slowly.

"No, I shall never marry," she replied.

"What will become of Lancewood then?" he asked.

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plied. "And now, Gerald, we have to discuss your departure. I have told you this only to show you that you will not suffer alone."

It was some days before Gerald left, and to him that parting had all the bitterness of death. Yet he saw that it must be. He saw that Vivien would never feel happy or at ease with him again. The sound of his voice, the sight of him, brought an expression of pain over her face—her voice took quite another tone in speaking to him. All the intimacy of their friendship was at an end. Between them lay the shadow of sin. He must go. He had imperiled his soul for Lancewood, but Lancewood was no longer a home for him.

There was great wonder expressed on all sides when it was known that Gerald Dorman was going to leave Lancewood; but it was generally understood that Miss Neslie did not require his services, as she preferred to keep the management of matters in her own hands. Mr. Greston thought it rather a pity that Miss Neslie should lose such a valuable and trustworthy friend, but did not interfere.

So the day came when Gerald Dorman left all his hopes and happiness behind him. For long years afterwards the memory of that parting remained with him—it broke his heart in the end.

He had made all arrangements about the sending of the money to his brother for the care and education of little Oswald, and Gerald had deferred the parting with Vivien until the last moment—he dared not trust himself with her, but when the carriage stood at the door, and his luggage was all placed within it, he went in search of Miss Neslie.

She was waiting for him in the library, where they had spent so many hours together. Without a word he held out his hands to her, she clasped them in her own. He tried to speak to her, but his lips quivered, and tears that were no disgrace to his manhood stood in his eyes.

"You are going, Gerald," she said, sadly. "My faithful friend, I shall find no one to take your place."

"No one ever will," he answered, hoarsely; "no one will ever love you as I do; no one will ever be so ready to lay down life and love for you as I am."

"I know it," she said. "You have been one of the truest of friends to me; but we must part that we may try to forget. Gerald, will you tell me where you are going?"

"Yes," he replied; "I shall go to my brother in America. I shall not stay in England; and, Miss Neslie, promise me—we none of us know what the future holds for us—that if you want a friend you will send for me."

"I promise," she said; and bending down, she touched his bowed head with her lips.

He would have suffered twice as much for such a reward.

"Good-bye. Heaven bless you!" she said, in a low, faltering voice. "You have been my greatest friend—I have been your worst enemy. Good-bye."

And the next moment Gerald Dorman had left Lancewood forever.

(To be Continued.)

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OFFICIAL.

LONDON, Aug. 26.—The Governor, Newfoundland, today destroyed a German submarine, the single handed, by bombs dropped from an aeroplane. The submarine sank off Ostend.

The following is the official statement respecting the Dardanelles Operations since August 6th:—The first two lines of attack, those from the old Anzac position, and second from the new landing at La Bay. Severe fighting and losses on both sides resulted. Objectives are not yet gained, the area held by us has greatly increased. The Anzac attack from below the crest are effectively solidated. The ground gained led the Suvla-Anzac line to be connected upon a front of over 10 miles. Renewed attack on the advanced the Anzac front, where, being unable to occupy summits, we withdrew to the old front.

No special news from the Russian front.

The Italian Government reports capture of the head of Strino to the Tonale zone.

BONAR LAW.

EARL SELBORNE FORESHAW CONSCRIPTION.

LONDON, Aug. 26.—

Something in the nature of a description, though the term was employed, was foreshadowed by Selborne, President of the Board of Agriculture, in an address this noon to a deputation of agricultural land owners, which took place in London. "Many more men have to join the army, whether voluntarily or compulsorily, said the Earl. Cultural laborers have done their part nobly in this war, but there have been very unequal over-crowding. I forecast that during the year men will be taken from the land from farms, whence they have not gone. What I am alluding to is the fact that the Government has been very sympathetic, and leave to farmers his foreman, man and carters, but the rest of the work will have to be done by men not hitherto engaged in culture." Earl Selborne emphasized the fact that Russia's reverse posed a great strain on the shoulders at the present time. "We have a greater burden than six months ago," he said. "The financial strain is going to be great, and the situation is going to demand from every class greater sacrifices." The Earl stated that the navy had the situation well in hand. The present lends color to recent reports to the effect that the navy have of late months captured a large number of these submarines, and that many others have been since the beginning of the war. Official reports, however, counted for but one German submarine which is announced to-day, though there have been vague guesses to submarines being sunk or sunk by unarmy ships in the fish channel, and, in one instance, reward offered by the Admiralty, sinking a submarine has been to a British merchantman, the

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