

Essentially

Why Not Now?

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Sunshine After the Storm.

CHAPTER XVIII.
The Viper in the Breast.
(continued)

Once with him in the carriage, she laid her head upon his breast and wept with an anguish Robert felt was this time only too genuine. He did not question her until they were at home. Then she told him all; and Robert listened gravely, silent, with that inward passion which reveals itself without words. He did not reproach Ambrosia. He felt that her imprudence had been punished cruelly enough. He believed her fully when she declared she had done nothing, said nothing, looked nothing, to merit such words. He had only a passing thought of the many women in the room who had done, said and looked, and who had yet escaped all condemnation; and the injustice of circumstances made him sigh.

As for St. Ange, he felt for him a contempt which scarcely required hatred to increase it. He talked the night away with Ambrosia, soothing her, reasoning with her, advising her. But he longed for the morning. He wanted to kick the wretch out of his life. He was angry at Will for bringing him into it; angry at himself for enduring the man so long. How many quarrels he had caused! How much suffering and heartache had had their rise in his hateful presence! He felt his own wrongs bitterly also; for he had really been generous to the creature, and yet he was accused of giving him only aittance—and of stealing his ideas! Miss Saltar had snatched the words to Ambrosia, and she would not hesitate to say them to others.

All night he kept his sorrowful session with Ambrosia; and when at length she fell asleep with exhausted nerves, he was more alive than ever he remembered being before. Sleep was his last thought and last necessity. He was in a fever of insulted manhood. He radiated anger from every point. His eyes were on fire, his hands twitching. His controlled passion dominated every other desire. He wanted no food, no papers or letters. He wanted nothing but the lover which would bring the measureless villain to his presence.

St. Ange entered the office insolently and ready for the fray. Robert said only:

"The time has come for us to part. There is the money I owe you."

Nerves at High Tension

Slight extra strain means collapse—Restoration obtained by using DR. A.W. CHASE'S NERVE FOOD.

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A little extra worry and anxiety and snap the nervous system. Weeks and months are often required before energy and vigor are regained.

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"It is far too little. You have always underpaid me, and you have stolen my ideas quite long enough."

The wickedness of the two charges almost strangled Robert, though he was somewhat prepared for them. But he did not design to answer them. He turned to his desk and began to write. St. Ange had now his opportunity, and whatever his wicked heart could devise, his wicked tongue uttered. And Robert felt that he could have nothing to say to such abuse; could not enter into controversy with so vile a foe about the honor of his wife and the integrity of himself. Under the circumstances, defense would have been excuse; and excuse would have been self-accusation. But his position was a moral piety, in which he took lash after lash with apparent indifference; because he knew right well that retaliation would be unpeppable degradation.

But oh, how he suffered! The almost miraculous strain under which he took his punishment was a year's aging, and all the time his body winced and trembled, his conscience reminded him that it was his own fault. Even after his tormentor had gone away, he sat for two hours thinking—and thinking, without definite idea either—the past or the future. He appeared to be writing, but he did not make a letter. In a troubled, torrid way he was feeling all the wicked and cruel positions St. Ange could put Ambrosia and himself into—feeling savagely his own blindness and indifference—trying to calculate the advantages he had permitted this stranger to take not only in his domestic concerns but in his business. He knew that both alike were at the mercy of a scoundrel's scornful word and smile.

For some hours he endured such self-reproach and remorse as spirits who have outlived their opportunities may feel; and in the whole affair he could find for himself no comfort but the fact that he had at least preserved his self-respect and kept his temper under an outrageous temptation to degrade his reputation by words or acts which would bring him down to the level of his foe.

"I answered him never a word, Ambrosia," he said, when his wife questioned him. "That is a little comfort to me; but, six, I could take a year to cease him and then not be satisfied."

"Are the young necessarily cruel?"

"There are beautiful exceptions to a general rule; yet young girls are generally without pity. There is no question about it. Their want of experience makes them hard to sorrow; they cannot understand. They say the most scornful things to their friends; they even hurt and humiliate their own mothers. They are assertive and aggressive, because their instinctive selfishness prompts them to taking all and giving nothing. A young girl is a cruel creature, Ambrosia, but a young matron is frequently much worse. Bessie's conduct last night was a piece of brutality, and I have told her so. What right had she and Miss Saltar to put St. Ange in such a position. It was an interference with Doctor Carter's household and business that was unwarrantable. I do not say that she contemplated St. Ange's insult to you; she thought of nothing but the little ripple of interest it would give to her party. People who talked of it would naturally talk of her. That was as far as her reasoning went. How much St. Ange's wife would suffer at the time from the shock or afterward from anger, she declined to take into consideration. And yet, had any one so interfered in her affairs, she would have babbled about it as an inconceivable outrage."

"I am sure Uncle Madison was angry at her last night."

"He is very angry, indeed. Jack poor fellow, thinks and speaks as directly as I can. Come to Mayberry with me for a few days."

"No, dear, I will not run away from a mouthful of bad words. Words will not slay me. And Robert has been so kind and just in the matter. Perhaps this very trouble may draw us close together again. If so, I will thank God for it. At any rate, I will take what opportunities it offers."

"That is right. Bessie and Jack, Will and Louisa are talking of Europe this summer. They will make a party of their own. Bessie may find some changes when she comes back. She had been so tyrannical in her home, that her father is beginning to rebel against her."

"Clara, you do not believe anything wrong of me, do you?"

"I believe in your innocence to the uttermost. I am sorry that for any cause you showed St. Ange more attention lately. I must tell you that some accuse you of flirting with him."

"Who of our set has not flirted with him? And if I did so, it was for the purpose of outwitting Robert's love."

"Well, my dear, a bad road never leads to a good place; and in flirting, you cannot go on with what you never begin. There ought to be no suspicion about a wife's conduct."

"You are so old-fashioned, Clara."

"My dear, purity and honor are never old-fashioned. When they are

CHAPTER XIX.

"Clear Shining After Rain."

And love, our light at night and shade at noon.

Lulls us to rest with songs and turns away

All shafts of shelterless, tumultuous day—Rossett.

The time of smiles came round once more—Wells.

During the first day of acute humiliation Ambrosia had received a little comfort from the practical sympathy of Clara. She called very early in the morning and offered to come at once to Dr. Carter's house. But Ambrosia felt that this would be a false step.

"I have done nothing, Clara," she said, "that calls for the support of your presence. If you made this change, every one would say I anticipated neglect or scorn. I am sure it is best for Robert and myself to be sufficient for each other."

"When I shall go to Mayberry, Bessie has been too absolute for some time. I will not any longer appear to sanction the crude cruelties and insolence of her youth and inexperience. When she is older, she will likely be sweeter; now she has all the acridness of her years."

so, good men and women may break their hearts and go out of the world."

Louisa and Will followed Clara; and Will's anger at Bessie's and Louisa's womanly criticisms of her conduct were a little consolation.

"Bessie has such a high opinion of herself," said Louisa, "and the world has caught this opinion from her. But I wish she had fewer virtues and more amiability. I will tell you something about Bessie. After her last fall, I found her writing a description of it for the Home Journal, and she had incidentally remarked that she 'looked lovely.' Think of such courages!"

Ambrosia smiled; and Will put his thumb in his vest and strutted out with an affection of weariness:

"Oh, for an age so sheltered from annoy

That I may never know how change the moons

Or hear the voice of women's defamation."

It struck Ambrosia, however, that Will and Louisa treated the affair with two little interest. Yet it was a difficult visit to pay, and very likely they felt relieved when it was over. Then the day went wearily on until Robert's return home. And he was silent with wrath and not inclined to talk before dinner had lubricated his feelings. Then it was different. He told Ambrosia all he had longed to say to St. Ange, and found solid comfort in this explanation of himself. Still there was an unhappy, restless atmosphere in the house and a weight on each bosom that sympathy did not lighten.

On the third morning the premonitory unhappiness was explained. The doctor found in his morning paper a letter from St. Ange, claiming the discoveries already linked with Dr. Carter's name, and boldly accusing the doctor of taking advantage of his poverty to appropriate experiments he himself was incapable of making. For this end, he averred, he had been poorly paid and kept in poverty; every advantage having been taken of his being a stranger without friends and without knowledge of the peculiarities of Northern life and practice.

(To be continued.)

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Grape Fruit, Pears, Dessert Apples,
Tomatoes, Celery,
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Child's Yoke Dress.
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A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10c. in silver or stamps.
Suitable materials for any of these patterns can be procured from AYRES & SONS, Ltd. Samples on request. Mention pattern number. Mail orders promptly attended to.

8880.—LADIES CORSET COVER.

A well shaped corset cover of simple construction is here illustrated. The shield shaped sleeves trimmed with lace are an attractive feature but they may be omitted. The pattern provides for either tucks or gathers in the front, and a tape inserted in a casing at the waistline adjusts the fullness about the waist. The materials used for these garments are linen, batiste, lawn, dimity and China silk. The Pattern is cut in 6 sizes: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 inches bust measure. It requires 1 1/8 yards of 36 inch material for the Medium size.



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