

A LIVING LIE

Continued From Page Two.

Lois looked at him with a smile that was half-sad, half-pleasing. 'Are you thinking of him?' she asked. 'Of course not. He is a good man, but I am not in love with him. I am in love with you.'

CHAPTER III.

Vere Meredith had benefited by change and travel. This was the opinion of his mother and brother, and also that of Mrs. Dawson, the housekeeper at the castle, who had known and loved him from a child.

A pleasant smile illumined Lady Meredith's gentle face as she watched the two young men drive off one afternoon, shortly after Vere's return, to pay a call at The Towers.

The two families had become fairly intimate, for Lois spoke, as Lady Meredith's explained.

The heiress, being still in mourning, had no other visitors. She seemed glad of the excuse to lead a quiet country life.

During the drive to The Towers, Vere Meredith's serene, plain face lit up with an amused smile, as he listened to his brother's account of the siege laid to him by the enterprising widow.

It was his first visit to the house, and he was curious to see the girl who was innocently thwarting her step-mother's impudently devised plan for turning his mother into a dowager.

In soothing towards the girl who had tried his love so cruelly, he had gained a sympathetic insight into other love affairs, and his brother's secret was no secret to him.

At The Towers he contrived to engross the widow's whole attention when he saw the baronet purposely lingering in the orchard-house, where Lois was pointing out some new specimens to him.

He knew that his brother had a purpose in spying this visit, beyond the mere delight in seeing and talking to the girl he loved.

It was not long before Sir Alwyn ventured to speak to Lois on the subject nearest his heart.

In firm, manly tones he urged his suit upon her, hardly noticing, in the fervour of the moment, the expressions of anguish, sorrow, and despair that appeared in rapid succession upon her face.

It was not until he had thrice pressed her for a reply that she seemed able to summon up the courage to answer him.

At last she managed to falter out her thanks for the honour he had done her, and her regret that she could never be his wife.

But the baronet was not to be daunted by this conventional phraseology.

He saw the love, that would not be concealed, in the depths of the liquid brown eyes that he forced to meet the gaze of his own.

'Lois, you do not know what you are saying. Darling! you do love me; I feel sure of it. You will not be so weak as to let yourself be coerced by your step-mother? Why should you fear her, sweetheart?'

A sudden flush replaced the palor in the beautiful face, and the girl replied, in a firmer, harder tone—

'I have given you my answer, Sir Alwyn. As a gentleman, I must beg you to let me go.'

Meredith instantly released the cold hands that he had caught and imprisoned them in his own.

'You have not given me a satisfactory answer, Lois,' he said. 'You have not told me your reason for rejecting my love.'

The girl seemed to have recovered her self-possession. A hard, proud look had crept into her face.

'I was going to tell you it,' she said slowly, 'but you interrupted me. I am engaged to another man.'

Meredith recoiled from her as if he had received a physical blow.

An angry light gleamed in his eyes. 'Coquette! he burst out. 'You know this and yet you let me believe that I might win you for my wife. You are in league with that woman I sought to defend you from. Heaven knows if you are not the worst adventurer of the two.'

A bitter cry broke from the girl, then she recovered herself, and turned to leave the place.

An instant's compunction smote the angry lover, and, following her, he said in entreating tones—

'Forgive me, dear! I was mad to have spoken so. I will not believe that you voluntarily deceived me.'

The sound of footsteps close at hand checked his speech, and the next moment Mrs. Armitage, Vere Meredith, and a stranger, whom the hostess introduced as her brother, joined them on the lawn that faced the hot house.

Mrs. Armitage seemed in high spirits, as, linking her arm through her step-daughter's, she drew the girl forward into the centre of the group.

'Well, Lois, have you been telling secrets?' she said, with a little laugh.

Then, as if sobered by the enigmatical expression on the girl's face, she continued, in graver tones—

'I think we must explain that your actual engagement to my brother has only been deterred on account of your being in mourning, and that it was really a matter settled between you some time ago.'

For his brother's sake, Vere Meredith toreid himself to keep a conversation going, as they all adjourned to the great hall, when the butler was bringing in tea.

Vere was a fair reader of character, and Horace Beauchamp's attempted assumption of the role of a genial, careles man of the world did not impose upon him in the least.

He mentally stigmatized him as a rather dangerous specimen of the genius 'cad,' and he felt a curiosity to know what circumstances could have brought about his engagement to the heiress.

The fellow's occasional jealous glances at Alwyn Meredith showed it was not merely the matter of money that attracted him.

He could not refrain from displaying a rather vulgar pride in the beauty and grace of his fiancée.

It was a relief to more than one of the party when the visit was over, and though, for a short time, there was a constraint in Sir Alwyn's manner, a quiet smoke with his brother before bed-time resulted in the subject of the engagement at The Towers being brought forward and thoroughly discussed.

'There's something fishy about the business,' Vere said, 'and as a barrister who aspires one day to a criminal practice, I think it may be as well to encourage my detective instincts, and study the anatomy of this promising case. Do you mind upon it, Mrs. Armitage and that delectable brother of hers have got some sort of a hold on the girl. A little judicious pressure from outside might induce them to relax their clutch.'

Meanwhile, ignorant of the interest they were rousing, Horace Beauchamp and his widowed sister played game after game of cards in the drawing-room at The Towers, while Lois Armitage lounged listlessly by the piano.

'Lois, my girl, you seem uncommonly sulky! her fiancé remarked, as she refused to sing one of his favorite songs, on the pretext that the heated room made her languid and tired.

'I can't make you 'my lady,' I know,' he continued; 'but, nevertheless, you owe—'

The girl sprang to her feet as if the words were whips to drive her from the room.

'I have more than paid my debt,' she burst out. 'Would to God I could cancel it with my death instead of with my life!'

And she swept from the room without another word.

As the door closed heavily behind her, Mrs. Armitage looked, with raised eyebrows, across at her brother.

'Lois needs to be dealt with tactfully,' she said, and she laid a meaning stress on the last word.

'Tactfully! Confound it all, Rachel! You've said as much to her yourself!'

'I choose my time and opportunity,' was his sister's quiet reply.

He pushed his chair back from the card table with an angry air.

'Oh, it's easy for you to talk like that! I'm fond of the girl, and it maddens me to put on those stand-off airs. Hang it all! I believe I'd marry her even if she hadn't the money. She's grows handsomer every day.'

Mrs. Armitage frowned.

'If, instead of defeating your own ends, you will help me to gain mine, we might both prosper,' she remarked with asperity.

'Oh, I can't bully Meredith into marrying you. He's a man of different mettle from that of Armitage deceased.'

'Good heavens! What's that fluttering in and out among those trees?'

Following his gaze in the direction of the shrubbery, Mrs. Armitage saw the disappearing flash of white drapery.

'Your face is as white as the woman's dress,' she remarked scornfully. 'Did you think the creature was a ghost? I suppose

it's Nana wandering about to get a little fresh air.'

Her companion looked only half-assured. 'I told you what I dream last night,' he said. 'I saw her in that dress—only, they were her grave clothes—'

'Hush, don't be a fool! brook in his sister. 'You are as superstitious as Nana herself. Pull yourself together and be a man.'

She stopped abruptly as a servant came into the room, with some letters and papers; and then, bidding him Good night, she left him to finish the evening by himself.

At midnight, upstairs in her own room, Lois Armitage was sobbing herself to sleep, with her head pillowed on her old nurse's faithful breast.

The ayah stroked the hot forehead tenderly, while her black eyes shone with a peculiar light.

'Burred, darling, not-cry,' she murmured soothingly. 'Nana make missus grand lady. No one hurt her then.'

The shudderingly sounding promise seemed to bring strange comfort to the girl.

A faint smile stole over her drawn face, and her burning eyes closed in sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Drew, the housekeeper at Meredith Castle, was expecting a visitor.

She had donned her best dress and smartest cap, and was giving final instructions to the maid, who was sitting out the pretty afternoon tea set that Vere Meredith had given her at Christmas.

'Yes, I think it will do, Hester,' she said at last, as, with a comprehensive glance at the table, she noted that every little detail was complete.

'Now remember—a young lady in nurse's dress, and show her up directly she arrives; and if any one else should come, I'm particularly engaged and can't see them.'

The girl made a respectful response, while she inwardly wondered what the nurse could be like for whom such punctilious arrangement had to be made.

Her curiosity was destined to be wholly gratified, and she could only tell her fellow servants that the visitor had a particularly pleasant voice, but that her face was hidden under a closely meshed veil.

ENGLAND'S NAVAL STRENGTH.

Great Britain's Naval Force is Equal to that of Any Three Continental Powers.

The naval forces of Great Britain are in a far more effective and efficient condition than the Continental Powers believe, and that never in her naval development has England been stronger on the seas.

Recent torpedo boat accidents have made little impression in British naval circles, and their programme calls for the continued advance of the highest class of boats of the swiftest possible speed.

The naval force that Great Britain is capable of exerting is equal today to that of any three Continental Powers and was never in a more efficient condition.

The British service has been severely criticised, but much of this criticism as to its efficiency is due to a policy of the Naval League and the press to depreciate in the mind of the public England's strength.

In order that large appropriations may be secured for expanding the navy and to continue the policy of maintaining it equal to that of the combined strength of any two world powers. The policy in England seems to be to impress the public with the weakness rather than the strength of the British service, with a view to securing additional ships through misapprehension in the public mind that the force is not keeping pace with its importance to the nation.

Abroad the United States is reckoned as the seventh naval power, being outranked by all the Continental navies, including Italy. But this view is not accepted in the United States, and figures of shipbuilding and tonnage indicate that the United States is now either fifth or tied with Germany for fourth place, being outranked by Great Britain, France and Russia.

Germany, however, has a more extensive programme of increase than the United States and will probably lead in a few years at her present rate of building unless liberal appropriations are made for naval development. Abroad the United States, while, of course, reckoned as a naval power, cannot be said to be counted in any combinations that nations might make against others.

England to-day is stronger than any two of the most powerful Continental Powers, and stronger than these with another Power included. She has 80,000 men afloat, and although her naval reserve is not so strong and perhaps as well drilled as that of France, the real strength of her

personnel is in the trained, disciplined men afloat, who are being constantly increased. Her Channel fleet is a magnificent aggregation of fighting force, constantly kept at sea and ready for any assignment.

The ships are always in excellent condition, and reports of weaknesses and rottenness are without the slightest semblance of truth. These reports are circulated by the Naval League, an organization for the upbuilding of the British navy, with branches throughout the British Islands.

In fact, the Admiralty will often refuse to officially deny statements of reported defects in the British navy, and rather encourages a feeling of depreciation of its strength than magnifying it.

Last year men were employed by the Admiralty to walk the populous thoroughfares of London with posters denouncing the weakness of the British navy and containing statements of the terrible condition of the ships and ruin that would befall them if the navy was not strengthened.

The posters were designed to create public sentiment among the people for more liberal appropriations and had come off of the Naval League in its publications magnificently purposely any accident befalling a torpedo boat or large vessel, or any report of weakness developed in some fleet ship, in order to depreciate the real strength of the navy in the public mind.

This policy works upon the feelings of the people, with the result that England each year votes enormous sums for her defenses.

CASINO SLOAN TALKS.

The Metted Jockey won \$90,000 in Europe last season. Casstus Sloan, expert jockey, globe-trotter, bon vivant, is at present making his home in New York.

Sloan has been riding in France and Russia this year and returned to America on Oct. 28, after winning 104 races out of 239 mounts. This record eclipsed that of all the other jockeys who were riding in opposition to Sloan by nearly 50 mounts.

Joe Figgott, an American jockey, was next in order with 69 wins to his credit, with the English and Russian jockeys trailing along in a lower division.

Sloan was riding for Jean de Bexke, the celebrated Polish tenor and nobleman, and succeeded in winning \$90,000 during the season on the Russian turf, which was nearly as much as C. W. Whitney won on the American turf.

Sloan probably made of the most successful seasons any jockey in the world ever rode, considering the material he had. He won the Russian Derby at Moscow, worth \$17,500; the Warsaw Derby of Poland, a province of Russia, worth \$12,000; and at both tracks the imperial stakes the same day the derbies were won.

For this feat the Czar presented the little American horseman with a watch valued at \$5,000.

Sloan says that they have no bookmaking in Russia, but everything is French mutuals. They play the mutuals like they formerly did here and one can buy as many as he wants at ten rubles each or \$5 in American money. The mutual machines are numerous and can be played in most places as well as on the race tracks.

'I am under contract to ride for De Bexke next season and expect to leave for France about March 1 where I will ride lance free for about a month at St. Cloud, Meison, Lez and Longchamps. The French tracks are great and everything is conducted on the square. The St. Cloud course, a new track just outside of Paris is undoubtedly one of the greatest in the world.'

'I met my brother Tod when I came through Paris on my way home, and he told me it was almost certain he would ride in England next season and at any event he would be doing business on all the French courses. Tod is tied up now in the automobile business and raising the machines, which is quite a job now among the frog eating sports.'

The racing in Russia does not begin until the first of May, and you can see that will give me a month in France to ride for anybody who will offer the most francs. The first Russian meeting begins at Warsaw about May 5 and they race there on June 15, and from there they go to Moscow, where there is an all-summer meeting.

The great meeting, though of Russia is at St. Petersburg, where they give a midsummer meeting with all large stakes. The Czar attends this meeting with his court and gives the patronage to the game is awarded to the stakes and purses compare favorably with those given in the East.'

The Youth's Companion in 1902.

To condense in a paragraph the announcement of THE YOUTH'S COMPANION

for 1902 is not easy. Not only will nearly two hundred story writers contribute to the paper, but many of the most eminent of living statesmen, jurists, men of science and of letters, scholars, sailors, soldiers and travellers, including three members of the President's Cabinet.

In a delightful series of articles on military and naval topics the Secretary of the Navy will tell 'How Jack Lives'; Julian Ralph, the famous war correspondent, will describe 'How Men Feel in Battle,' and Winston Spencer Churchill, M. P., whose daring escape from a Boer prison pen is well remembered, will describe some experiences of the 'Mark of the Army.'

And this is but a beginning of the long list. A complete announcement will be sent to any address free. The publishers also announce that every new subscriber who sends \$1.75 for the 1902 volume now will receive all the issues for the remaining weeks of 1901 free on the time of subscription; also FREE COMPANION Calendar for 1902—all in addition to the fifty-two issues of THE COMPANION for 1902.

THE YOUTH'S COMPANION, 95 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass.

Indian Smoke Signals.

The traveller on the plains in the early days soon learned the significance of the spires of smoke that he sometimes saw rising from a distant ridge or hill, and that in turn he might see answered from a different direction. It was the signal talk of the Indians across miles of intervening ground, a signal used in rallying the warriors for an attack or warning them for a retreat if that seemed advisable. The Star Monthly describes some of the signals and their meaning:

The Indian had a way of sending up the smoke in rings or puffs, knowing that such a smoke column would at once be noticed and understood as a signal, and not taken for the smoke of some camp-fire. He made the rings by covering the little fire with his blanket for a moment and allowing the smoke to ascend, when he instantly covered the fire again. The column of ascending smoke rings said to every Indian with in thirty miles, 'Look out! There is an enemy near! Three smoke built close together meant danger. One smoke merely meant attention. Two smoke meant 'Camp at this place.' Travel the plains, and the usefulness of this long-distance telephone will at once become apparent.

Sometimes at night the settler or the traveller saw fiery lines crossing the sky, shooting up and falling, perhaps taking a direction diagonal to the lines of vision. He might guess that these were the signals of the Indians, but unless he were an old-timer he might not be able to interpret the signals. The old timer and the squaw man knew that one fire arrow, an arrow prepared by treating the head of the shaft with gunpowder and fine bark, meant the same as the columns of smoke puffs—'An enemy is near.' Two arrows meant 'Danger.' Three arrows said imperatively, 'This danger is great.' Several arrows said: 'The enemy are too many for us.' Thus the untutored savage could telephone fairly well at night as well as in the daytime.

The Power of a Smile.

Those readers who have at some time realized how a smile from a friendly face has brightened a day will appreciate this anecdote, told by the New York Sun:

She was the most attractive, dirty little creature ever saw. She sat in a cross seat on an elevated railroad-train, and facing her, farther along the car, sat two beautifully dressed women. Evidently they were much interested in the unusually bright little foreigner, and smiled at her. Her eyes and lips flashed instant response, and an interchange of smiles and nods took place which interested every passenger in sight. Delight at the attention of such lovely creatures was expressed in her every glance.

Presently she seemed possessed with the idea of giving more substantial expression to her pleasure. She rummaged in a basket on her lap and brought forth two small aggressively pink objects on long pins—the little artificial roses often seen in the hands of fakers. She put her basket down and hurried up to the two women and presented to them these ornaments. She returned to her seat radiant with joy. The two women held up their pocketbooks and called her, but she shook her head. They insisted and she went to them. When she again sat down she had two nickles in her dirty, cracked little hand, and her eyes were dancing.

When the ladies passed there was an interchange of smiles, and the little girl then told her companion, with expressive gestures and in broken English:

'Oh, they were beautiful, beautiful, and they were my friends!'