



"ECHOES of the Past;

The Recompense of Love!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.
It was, therefore, with some trepidation that, one night when he and Mina—and, of course, Tibby—were at a reception at the French embassy, he heard the Chesterleights' names announced.

He turned to Mina, who was at his side, surrounded by the usual court of admirers, and, drawing her a little apart, said quietly:

"Lady Edith is here."

To his surprise—and yet he ought not to have been surprised—instead of displaying any embarrassment, Mina drew herself up and smiled at him. And she looked so beautiful, so queenly, that Clive thrilled with pride and felt reassured. A little later he met the Chesterleights face to face. Lord Chesterleigh went pale; then, as he scanned Clive's, the color came back to his face—it was sadly aged and worn—and he held out his hand and gripped the one Clive quickly gave him.

The two men looked at each other with all their old affection glowing in their eyes. Then Clive turned to Lady Edith. She, too, had changed; say, rather, that she had gone back to the Lady Edith, of the days before she had met Clive Harvey. Her face was no paler than usual, but her lips were curved proudly, her lips haughtily half-lowered. She gave him the tips of her fingers and, erect as an arrow, she met his half-sad, half-embarrassed gaze, quite steadily.

"How do you do, Lord Rafterough?" she said very slowly. "What a time it is since we have met! Is Lady Rafterough here?"

Clive could not speak; the mere man is always at a disadvantage on these occasions; and he is no match for the woman. He indicated Mina by a wave of the hand, and Lady Edith glided on. She had heard of Mina's social triumph; but, all the same, perhaps she was a little startled by the beauty, the grace, the absolute self-possession of Lady Rafterough, who turned to receive her as she approached.

Lady Edith surveyed her in silence for a moment, and both the women's

eyes were like steel; then Lady Edith said:

"I am so glad to meet you, Lady Rafterough; your husband and I are old friends."

There was a slight, but eloquent pause; then Mina—the gentle Mina—returned the blow with a skill and spirit which even Tibby might have envied.

"Yes, I know," she said very quietly, her eyes meeting the haughty ones of Lady Edith unflinchingly. "He has told me everything!"

Lady Edith faced the dark-gray eyes as unflinchingly for a moment; then with a forced smile she turned away.

Lord Chesterleigh had drawn Clive aside. The poor old man was trembling, there was something like tears in his eyes.

"What can I say to you, Clive?" he said brokenly. "What can I do? I know who your wife is—but—but you know how I love Edith? Can I punish her, wreck her life?" His voice broke and he turned away to hide his emotion.

Clive laid his hand upon the old man's shoulder.

"I understand," he said; "we both understand. There is nothing to be done, there is no need to do anything, to say anything. Let me take her to you."

But Lord Chesterleigh shrank back. "Not now—not here, in this crowd. Some time when we can be alone, Clive. It must be soon, for I am a broken man, as you see—and the doctors tell me—Let me meet her alone, when I can unburden my heart, when no other eyes but hers are looking on."

That meeting came at Lord Chesterleigh's bedside, when he was dying. But no record of it shall be set down here.

THE END.

Love in a Flour Mill,

OR,

The Romance of Two Loyal Hearts!

CHAPTER II.

"Gout—I think," said Mr. Lexham meditatively. "I'm not sure. Sir Reginald rarely talks of himself, and never of his ailments."

"He appears to be rather a moody man," remarked Reece, still with the air of casual interest.

"Yes," assented Mr. Lexham abstractedly. "He has reason to be." It was characteristic of Dexter Reece that he did not ask why, as he might reasonably have done. "Some more wine? No? Shall we go into the smoking-room?"

They left the room and crossed the hall; a door leading to the terrace was open, and Reece said:

"What a lovely evening! Shall we go outside?"

They went on the terrace, and, lighting their cigarettes, looked at the magnificent view.

Dexter Reece turned to his companion.

"A fine old place," he said; "but—rather grim."

Mr. Lexham cast a glance at the house and nodded.

"It has seen some tragedies," he said. "There is a tradition that no master of Thorden can be happy."

"Certainly Sir Reginald's appearance and manner support the tradition," remarked Reece. "He looks like a man borne down by some trouble."

"He is," responded Mr. Lexham. "It is his son."

Dexter Reece looked up sharply.

"Ah, yes?" he said invitingly.

"They have quarrelled," continued Mr. Lexham gravely. "Faults on both sides, no doubt; but the young man may lay claim to the larger share. He is as wild as a March hare, and appears to be one of those irresponsible beings who are entirely swayed by their own will. A fine young fellow; but reckless and extravagant to a degree. He was always in some scrape at Eton; was no stender at Oxford, where he shone as the wildest of a wild set. He got into the Army by the skin of his teeth, and was immensely popular—

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so popular that he ran into debt and his father compelled him to send in his papers. They never met but they quarrelled; and about three years ago they parted, probably for ever.

"Where is he now?" asked Reece.

Mr. Lexham shrugged his shoulders. "I have not the least idea. His father does not know. In London somewhere, I imagine. Sir Reginald offered to make Ronald an allowance but he refused it; and I know that he has not asked his father for money since they parted."

"Still, the young man must come in for all this," remarked Reece, casting a glance at the house.

"He will come in for the baronetcy and the estates," said Mr. Lexham; "but there will be little or no money to support them. Why, you should know that, seeing that you are here on business connected with this loan."

"How is it if they are so poor?" asked Reece. "The Desboroughs used to have plenty of money."

"So they had until the last baronet, Sir Mortimer, came into it—I mean, of course, the man whom our Sir Reginald, a cousin, succeeded. You have heard of the famous Sir Mortimer, I suppose?"

Dexter Reece made a gesture in the affirmative. "Yes; and while you were describing Sir Reginald's son, I was thinking how well his description would have fitted Sir Mortimer—as I have heard of him."

"That's so," agreed Mr. Lexham. "They are alike as two peas, in face and form and character. Sir Mortimer was one of the handsomest men of his time, and the most reckless. And his end was a tragic and consistent."

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ent finish to a wild and adventurous life.

"Tell me about him," said Dexter Reece quickly; then, in a more casual way, he added, "that is, if I am not asking you to commit a breach of confidence."

"Certainly you are not," responded Mr. Lexham. "The story is public property, and I should have thought that you must have known it; one forgets that the memory of the present-day world does not extend to even the traditional nine days. So many sensational happenings trip up each other by the heels that one story effaces another from the public mind. I can tell you the tragedy of Sir Mortimer's life in a few sentences. As I have said, he was as wild and reckless as Sir Reginald's boy, Ronald; he belonged to the fastest set in town, and was ringleader and chief in most of the mad exploits of his day. With the title he came into a large sum of money, which he set about spending in all the approved and disapproved fashions. At last he made England too hot to hold him—though, mind, he had been guilty of nothing dishonourable, as the world understands the word."

"Up to his neck in debt, I suppose, and—other difficulties," murmured Reece.

"Just so," assented Mr. Lexham. "He disappeared one morning, and the world lost sight of him. As a matter of fact, he went to Italy. One would have thought that he had had enough of adventure for a time; but he was one of those men who would get into scrapes on a desert island."

"I should scarcely call Italy a desert island," said Reece softly. "I should imagine it to be just the place in which a man like Sir Mortimer could find plenty of scope and opportunity for his peculiar gifts."

"Yes; he found an opportunity soon enough," said Mr. Lexham, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"And, of course, the trouble was a woman?" suggested Reece.

"A woman," said Mr. Lexham. "She was a young girl, the daughter of a farmer, and betrothed to a respectable young fellow—the son of a farmer also, probably. Sir Mortimer met her, made fast and furious love to her, snatched her, so to speak, out of the arms of her bride-groom the night before their wedding, and bolted with her. There was no resisting the man! She must have loved him at first sight, or he had fascinated her with that diabolically handsome presence of his; anyway, she left her betrothed willingly enough, and of her own free will went off with Sir Mortimer."

"Of course, one knows the end of the episode," observed Reece.

"You mean, he tired of her and cast her off? He did nothing of the sort. He married her and brought her to England, here to Thorden."

"Your tragedy has become mere commonplace, Mr. Lexham," said Reece, with a laugh.

"No, it hasn't," retorted the old lawyer. "We haven't got to the end of the story yet. Sir Mortimer brought his bride home. He had some reason for his mad act; she was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. A woman! She was but a mere girl. They were devoted to each other; and, to the amazement and the amusement of the county, he settled down into a highly respectable country gentleman. A child was born—a girl. The mother died in giving it birth. The loss of his wife simply crushed Sir Mortimer; and he shut himself up in the Hall here, with the child and its nurses, and became a recluse."

"Poor beggar!" said Reece. "Nemesis dropped upon him pretty heavily. He had lost his fortune and his wife."

(To be Continued.)

Mysterious Envoy in Rome.

Bears Autographed Documents from a Belligerent Nation.

Rome, Nov. 8, via Paris, Nov. 9.—A mysterious envoy bearing an autographed document to the Pope from the ruler of one of the belligerent nations, has been in Rome this week, according to the Giornale d'Italia. The mission of this personage has not yet been accomplished, the paper says, and it is not known whether he is awaiting a reply from the Vatican or orders from his chief.



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