

Diamond Cut Diamond OR, THE ROUT OF THE ENEMY.

CHAPTER XXIV.—Continued.

For a few seconds she could not utter a word, only her trembling hands strayed with a soft caressing movement over the bent smooth dark head—then at last she spoke.

"Geoffrey, my dear, dear boy, get up. I entreat you—let me speak to you." Instinctively he obeyed her. Had he not always obeyed her, and rising as she bade him, sat down by her side upon the garden bench, holding her hands still tightly grasped in his.

"I have so much—so very much—to say to you," she began.

But he would not let her speak—the floodgates of his heart were open—the long pent-up passion would have its way at last, and burst impetuously from his lips.

"Yes, and I will listen to you—but not now," he cried, "presently, bye-and-bye, when I have said all I want to say to you—then I will hear you—but now it is I who must speak."

Oh, Rose, my queen, my darling, I can be silent no longer, nor hide the love you once bade me keep for ever from your ears. You have sent for me, and I have come to you. But now that I have come I will not be sent hopeless away from you again—I cannot live without you any more. Rose, give me your love, your life—yourself!"

Then for a few brief moments her strength failed her absolutely, and she, who was so strong and so brave, became all at once weak, with a woman's most utter weakness. The sight of the dear face so long absent, of the eyes that sought her own so eagerly, the sound of the voice she had missed so long, shaken with the pent-up passion of a love whose devotion of self-repression she so well understood, overcame her in a fashion that she had never reckoned upon.

Unrebuked he drew her into his arms, holding her closely against his heart, and sought the lovely lips he had hungered for so long in vain, with his own—and she yielded, as a woman yields to a man, who, owning all her heart, claims all her passion too as his right—giving herself up blindly and unreservedly to the rapture of that embrace, whilst he, holding her thus, forgot all else in life save her, and murmured as he kissed her lips, her cheek, her throat—

"My own—my love—my wife!"

And then she awoke—awoke out of that mad trance of an impossible joy to the awful reality of the unalterable truth. That one word "Wife" went through her with a shock. The madness was over, the brief rapture was at an end, and a cold shudder, icy as death itself, struck through her from head to foot.

She wrenched herself away from his arms, and sprang to her feet, wringing her hands despairingly together.

"Ah, what have I done!" she cried, with a low cry of exceeding bitter despair. "Wicked, wretched woman that I am! Would to God I were dead—would to God I were dead!"

And she fell forward, prone at his feet, upon the ground, shaken with those great, dry-eyed sobs that tell of a more awful conflict of the soul than wild rivers and fountains of tears.

Filled with a terrible presentiment of evil he bent over her, and raised her tenderly, so that she knelt up against his breast, struggling to control the unutterable agony of her heart.

"My sweet one, what is it? Do you not trust in me? Am I not your love, as you are mine?" he murmured. But she shrank away from him, shivering.

"Ah, Geoffrey!" she cried, "how unspcakably I have wronged you, in concealing from you my unhappy secret."

"Your secret!" he repeated slowly, whilst a dull miserable despair crept over him; and suddenly there came back to him with a flash of horrible recollection the words that his uncle had spoken—"she is a married woman—ask her, and she will tell you."

"Your husband is alive," he said presently, in a strange, far-away voice, that seemed even in his own ears not to belong to him. It was not asked as a question. He said it as a fact.

It did not occur to her to wonder that he knew it. She knelt back, a little away from him, white as death, with her very lips blanched and formless—with bent head and eyes fixed in hopeless woe upon him, and hands clasped tightly together across her breast, like a criminal who awaits the sentence.

"Yes, he is alive," she answered. Nothing more.

A bird was singing in the syringa-bush; a little breeze shivered through the mulberry leaves; a crimson rose, over-blown, fell with a shower of rosy petals, and a little soft thud, that could be distinguished in the silence, on to the dark peat-mould at its feet.

Geoffrey heard them all with a horrible distinctness. He sat quite, quite still—so still that he might have been turned into a stone. It went through his mind to wonder if death was like this—to marvel that he felt so little pain—that it was so easy to bear. Nothing but a strange, cold tightness across his head, and an odd numbness at his heart. Only that, nothing more. How little it hurt! Then, out of the awful silence, came her voice, shaken with a wild despair.

"For God's sake speak to me! Curse me, if you will! Kill me, if you can!—But, speak! Do not look at me like that, Geoffrey!"

And, shudderingly, she hid her face in her hands. "When I am dying," she thought, "the awful agony of these brown eyes will be before me!"

But he answered her nothing—only a low moaning sigh broke from his white lips.

"Oh, for pity's sake, hear me!" she cried widely. "Hear me, at least, before you learn to loathe me!" Then

like a torrent, there burst from her the whole of her miserable story. Of the husband she had married, years ago, without much love, perhaps, still, with enough of affection and regard to have, in time—had he chosen it—ripened into real love. She told of trust betrayed—of affection thrown back upon herself—and of the utter worthless nature of her own mind she had given her life, and of the gradual awakening of her own mind to the comprehension of his true character. Yet, all; untruthfulness, unkindness, want of refinement and sympathy, infidelity itself; all she would have endured in silence, and have striven to hide from the world's eyes, had it not been for that last crime—that crowning iniquity, which branded him with a felon's name, and made of him an outcast from the company of all honorable men. Then, in the very moment of detection and discovery, came the railway accident; from which, although left for dead upon the ground, the wretched man had recovered, after a long and dangerous illness, during which his wife nursed him, at the lonely farm house, near the scene of the catastrophe, to which his inanimate body had been carried. By the time those long weeks of watching were at an end, the news of his death had gone abroad; and she found that, with all the world, the man whom he had robbed and cheated also believed him to have been killed.

Then came the great temptation of her life; for the sake of his aged father, and to shield his heartbroken agony, to ward off from him the shame of an exposure which he dreaded worse than death, Rose de Brefour carried out the delusion which had accidentally arisen concerning his death. Leon de Brefour was to all intents and purposes dead. He came back from the jaws of the grave altered almost beyond belief. A frightful wound upon his head had rendered him subject to lapses into partial imbecility, whilst the worst vices of his character, his cunning, his cruelty, and his sensuality, seemed but to be accentuated by the injury to his brain. For years this miserable creature had been successfully hidden by her, first in one place and then in another, never long in the same hiding-place lest attention should be drawn to the singularity of his case, and detection of his identity be the inevitable result.

For the same reason her own home had so frequently been changed, because of necessity she had been obliged to remain within reach of him, and she had therefore altered her dwelling-place every time it had been considered desirable to move him.

It had been a terrible life—a life of constant terror, dread and apprehension, of fear and of terrors unspcakable—only death could end it, and Leon de Brefour, like many others who live only to be a punishment to their fellow-creatures, did not seem disposed to die. All around, Death moved away with his relentless sickle—mothers, adored by whole families of loving hearts; bread-winners of loving children whose very existence depended upon their efforts; young men, in the prime of their manhood; maidens, the hope and desire of parents and lovers; only sons and daughters, heirs to position and wealth, whose death made an irreparable blank; hundreds such as these, were stricken down—but Leon de Brefour lived on. This is the mystery of life, and its supremest cruelty. "Why? Oh, why?" cry out all the great multitude of souls in their agony—but the pitiless Heavens answer not, neither is there any voice of compassion from above. Is it only the caprice of a mocking fiend who orders these things? Or, as some tell us, is it all fixed by the calm, immutable laws of nature, which were settled and foreordained before the earth's foundations were laid? We do not know, we may not guess, how it is—the secret is not of this world, and the speculations and surmises only lead us further and further into a quagmire of doubt and insecurity. The "Truth," as we are accustomed to be taught it, is so flimsy and unreal, stands the test of great sorrows so badly, falls to pieces so quickly before the steady light of science and common sense. And yet the "Truth," as we would like to have it, is so cold, and harsh, and repelling; bewilders us so very much, consoles us so very little, reason and then leave us in utter darkness? Why, rather, did he not make us as the brutes that perish who live, and eat, and are happy, because to-morrow they die?

And so, why not, therefore, none might say, this man lived on, lived to be a daily curse upon Rose de Brefour, lived to shut her out for ever, with unutterable despair, from the paradise of love and joy to which one short glimpse had just been vouchsafed to her.

In silence Geoffrey heard her story—listening at first to her with a cold passibility, with a stricken silence. Yet, as he heard of it all, of all her suffering and all her heroic devotion to the old man for whom she lived, a deep pity arose in his heart, and the icy floodgates of his harsh resentment gave way.

When she had ended his eyes sought hers, his hands drew her near to him once again. "Why should this horrible nightmare stand between us?" he said feverishly, with a sudden flush on his face, and a strange glitter in his eyes. "Darling, do not let us love each other! Leave this miserable life—this self-sacrifice to a brute to whom you owe nothing—trust yourself to whom you come with me; let us go away abroad—to America, Australia, where you will—anywhere, so that it may be far enough to begin a new and better

life together—do you not believe I can make you happy? Will you then fear to trust yourself to me?"

With a quick, warning gesture she stopped him lifting her hand suddenly, so that the torrent of his wild words was arrested.

"Hush!" she whispered, "hush! look there!"

He followed the direction of her eyes. Behind them, as they sat under the deep shadow of the tree, there came a faint sound; the old man in his wheel chair was being slowly pushed up and down by Jacques along the gravel path in front of the house. He did not see them, his face was bent, he looked at his white hair till it shone like silver—there was something pitiful in his bowed back and clasped hands—something of an appeal to compassion in the helplessness of his age and condition. Whole volumes could not have rebuked him more utterly than did that sad spectacle of sickness and old age.

For a moment they were both silent, watching till the chair had slowly been drawn away round the corner of the house, then their eyes met.

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have quieted. She was pale, and there were dark circles around her sad eyes. But the light of a golden sunset slanted from the far west caught the auburn of her unweaved hair, and lit it with a russet glory. He had been pacing about in his impatience and wrath, but now suddenly he stopped and looked at her, with the red sunshine of the dying day covering her from head to foot with its glow—the sad face, the weary eyes, the delicate hands crossed upon her knees, her dress or some dark rich material of a violet hue—all, in some subtle way, reminded him of that first evening in the long, low, book-lined room at Hidden House, when he had found her sitting in the fire-glow, and all his young heart had prostrated itself at her beautiful feet. The memory of that day sobered and melted him.

To be Continued.

USE BOTH HANDS.

Educational Authorities Believe the Custom Easily Acquired.

Left-handed facility among the school children is a subject that is receiving much serious attention from the school authorities in Germany, with a view to developing both hands and arms equally while the children are young. They argue that the right hand has been so excessively developed that many efforts which might easily be delegated to the left hand are undertaken by the right. The smallest objects, as a rule, are picked up by the right hand. Such one-sided movements, repeated constantly, have their influence on the entire system, and are not conducive to the symmetry of the body. The habit of people so carrying children on the left arm, so as to have the right hand free, tends to make the left shoulder higher than the right. In such cases the cure must date from childhood. In the boys' mechanical departments in the German schools much of the work is done by the left hand under compulsion. The boys are taught to saw, plane and hammer with the left hand as well as the right. In all trades and professions involving heavy hand work and importance of being able to use both hands equally well is being impressed on students. As example, the case of a bronze worker is cited. He could work as effectively with his left hand as with his right. That made it possible for him to change about when his right hand became tired, and consequently he got through considerably more work than those who could only use the right hand. The preference given to the right arm has been explained physiologically by the construction of the veins and nerves that enter the arms, those of the right arm being the more prominent. The reverse is the case in the few who are naturally left-handed. Many instances are on record of men who could use both hands with equal facility. Among them are two renowned painters, Menzel and Klimsch, who practiced the ambidextrous habit in the days of their youth.

Exercises that require the effort of the entire arms are urged by the German educational officials. Large circles are drawn by the scholars on the blackboards, first with the one hand and then with the other, without bracing the hand, so that the entire arm is in action. The superiority of Japanese drawing can probably be traced to the custom of that land to make the children practice painting and drawing without the use of any stick or supporting device for the hand. They are taught to draw at the same time they are taught to write the letters of their alphabet, and they are taught to use both hands equally in the task.

HIDE AND SEEK.

This Old Game Is Often Played By the Natives of the World.

The pursuit of Cervara's fleet is not without its parallels in history. The search for Sir John Franklin was a great deal like trying to find a needle in a haystack. His expedition was last spoken of in July, 1845, and thereafter disappeared without trace into the then unknown maze of sounds and islands between Baffinland and British North America, comprising 60 degrees of longitude and nearly 25 of latitude, hidden in Arctic darkness, bound in ice and covered with snow for the greater part of every year. More than 20 expeditions searched that immense area, first for the land, and then for documents telling of their fate, but it was not until 1859 that Sir Francis McClintock, in command of Lady Franklin's forlorn hope, the little Fox, succeeded where so many had failed. Nelson's celebrated quest after the French fleet, previous to the Battle of the Nile, throughout the Mediterranean, and to the West Indies, is another notable historical example of hunting for a man who had just left.

USERS OF MORPHINE.

The Independence Belge has made a compilation of "morphine fiends," found among men and women in different vocations of life. Out of 230 cases, among 22 classes of occupations, scientists, artists and journalists were found least addicted to the habit, but there were 69 physicians in the number. Eighteen cases were charged to workmen and 20 against pharmacists. In all occupations women appeared at as great a disadvantage as men.

TIRED AND LANGUID

THE EXPERIENCE OF AN ESTIMABLE YOUNG LADY.

Her Blood Was Poor and Watery—Suffered From Sick Headaches and Fainting Spells—How She Regained Health's Blessing.

The Recorder, Brockville.

On one of the finest farms in Wolford township, Grenville county, resides Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Smith and family. Mr. Smith is perhaps one of the best known men in the county, as in addition to being a practical farmer he represents several agricultural implement companies. His family consists of two estimable daughters, the eldest being seventeen years of age, is a correspondent of the Brockville Recorder who recently called at Mr. Smith's, Miss Minnie E. Smith, the eldest daughter, related the following story:—"About two years ago I was taken quite ill. I became pale and languid, and if I undertook to do any work about the house, would easily become terribly fatigued. I became subject to terrible sick headaches, and my stomach became so weak that I loathed food. My trouble was further aggravated by weak spells, and my feet, winter or summer, were as cold as ice; in fact it seemed as if there was no feeling in them. I tried several kinds of medicine, but instead of helping me I was growing weaker. One day in March, 18, my father brought