

Choice Literature.

One Life Only.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The death of Lillith Orlinton, although long expected, was at the last so extremely sudden, from the rupture of a blood-vessel, that it was a long time before Una could realize that it had actually taken place. Then, stunned and bewildered by the shock, she went into the adjoining room to call the old nurse, who required but one glance at the lady's pale agitated face to understand what had happened. With a cry of dismay the faithful servant hurried away to tell the sad news to the rector and Hervey, while Una, sinking down into a chair, remained for a considerable period in a confused half-unconscious state, quite unable to collect her thoughts.

She leant back in her seat, silent and motionless, hearing indistinctly the lamentations of those who came to look on the lifeless form of her loved one so well, and then the sounds ceased, and she heard only the footsteps of the women who were performing the last offices for the dead. After a time the rector came in to speak to her, his usually stern face softened by emotion, and Una looked up at him deprecatingly as he said, "There was not time to call you indeed; it was so terribly sudden; she had been speaking with quite a strong voice almost the instant before."

"I know," he said; "the doctors warned us that the end would probably be a sudden attack of this kind, and there were indications to-day that something of the sort was impending, which was my motive for sending to ask you to come at once, and it was well I did, or it would have been too late." A shiver passed through Una's frame as he spoke. She could hardly feel glad that she had been in time, for she knew instinctively that this last meeting with Lillith would have an influence on herself and her destiny which she dreaded even while she could not resist it.

"I am sure that Lillith at least is happy," she said, with a sigh, "she seemed so wonderfully joyous in the very act of dying."

"Yes, I solemnly believe she has gone to her reward, and never did a soul more truly without guile pass to its Maker. She knows now the exquisite bliss of those who have suffered for conscience' sake, and the departing spirit seems to have left the stamp of its ineffable peace on her face: she looks like an angel reposing."

"May I go to her?" said Una, lifting her heavy head from the chair.

"Certainly, if you wish it; but there are still some hours till daylight, and I was going to suggest your lying down in the room which has been prepared for you."

"If I might do what I wish," said Una, "I should like to stay alone in Lillith's room till morning. I want to think over all she has said to me, and I shall feel the power of her words best in that solemn presence. Some day, Mr. Orlinton, I may be able to explain to you what a momentous night this is likely to be to me, and then you will understand why I ask leave to usurp your place by the side of your dear sister for the next few hours."

"I will cede it to you willingly," said the rector; "and I do not think there is any fear that your nerves will be shaken by such a vigil, for her aspect is sweet and gentle as that of a sleeping child."

"And there is no one there?"

"No; my brother has gone to his room, and I will give orders that you shall not be disturbed," and Una, rising up, thanked him in a low voice, and then walked quietly into Lillith's room, and closed the door, while the rector turned away to his own apartments, and soon the whole house was hushed into its ordinary midnight silence, and nothing but the veiled light shining from one solitary window told that the angel of death had passed that way.

The sight which presented itself to Una Dysart within that quiet room was one of such unearthly beauty, that she stood for many minutes gazing on it quite unable to move. It is a fact well known to all who have been present at the departure of those who have died in peace, that for the first few hours after the great change has taken place, the countenance becomes invested with an indescribable loveliness, which seems like a sort of reflection of the beauty and light into which the ransomed soul has entered. It does not last long, and human words cannot attempt to portray it, but none ever looked on that unearthly beauty without feeling that it is a gleam from paradise itself, which falls through the opening gates as they close on the new inmate of the blessed sphere. This lovely wondrous look was on the face of Lillith Orlinton, as she lay with her blue eyes only half veiled by the white lids, and a little soft smile, almost playful in its meaning sweetness, giving expression to her silent lips. She did not appear to be either asleep or dead, but only resting in the consciousness of some marvellous secret, which shied over her whole being in an inexpressible serenity and bliss, while the white lilies with which they had filled the little pleading hands that had so often been raised in prayer, were not more pure and stainless than she seemed in her snowy draperies, with all her fair hair falling round her like a veil. Truly the sight, in its perfection of peace, was one to fill with sorrowful envy the hearts of those yet living in this difficult world, yet struggling with sin and temptation; and as Una drew near the quiet little bed and fell on her knees by Lillith's side, the cry went up out of the very depths of her labouring soul, "Oh, my God, make my life as pure and true as hers was, that my death, when it comes at last, may be as peaceful and as blessed!"

Una Dysart was no wilful self-deceiver, and far as she had fallen from her own standard of right, by means of the sophistries with which she had stifled her conscience, she knew in that solemn hour that if the prayer wrung from her lips by the sight of the blessed dead were to be granted, she had now to look into her life and see wherein it failed to meet the requirements of His most holy law; and she did so. Kneeling there with her face buried in her hands, she commenced a rigid uncompromising scrutiny into her own past actions and future purposes, with all the motives that had prompted them, tearing off the

veil from her fondest heart, and judging herself with unparing severity. She had asked that her life might be pure and true as Lillith's, who had sacrificed that life and all that made it dear rather than so much as connive at evil, when once it became known to her, and Una saw that her own first departure from that truth and purity had been in the hour when by the dim sea-shore she stretched out her arms towards Atherstone's distant home, and registered the vow in her secret heart that she would devote her one only life to him alone, whatever might be the cost of principle it would involve.

Her trial and temptation at that hour had been precisely the same as Lillith's, with but the immaterial difference that she knew not what was the exact nature of the wrong which she would share with Atherstone if she were united to him. But she did know, from his own words, that there would have been even more of connivance with evil in her marriage to him, than there could have been in Lillith's with Rupert Northcote; yet she had fallen where the timid gentle-natured girl stood upright, and she had returned to England fully determined to become the wife of Atherstone, if, as she had every reason to expect, he still desired it; then, following the downward course of those who once depart from perfect obedience to the laws of righteousness, she saw how she had committed a far more glaring sin against justice in withholding from Atherstone the information contained in Miss Amherst's letter. Therein had she not shown in truth that she loved him better than she loved her God, since to save him from suffering and loss, she had held back the Atherstone estates from their rightful owner, defrauded him and his child of their true name and position, and acted a falsehood towards Humphrey himself, by concealing from him her knowledge of the wrong he was unconsciously doing to his uncle's heir? In the clear light that seemed to shine into her soul in that solemn hour she recognised the utter hollowness of the fallacies where-with she had deluded herself into the guilty silence that now appeared to her in so dark an aspect. The justice of Edward Atherstone's claim could in no way be affected by his personal unworthiness, and the pain which Humphrey might suffer in giving up his people to so hard a master, could never make it right that he should retain that which was not his, or that she should hide from him the bitter truth of his usurped possession.

The very same lesson which Trafford had taught to Atherstone himself was now being made known to Una by the silent teaching of those death-closed lips. She saw that the principles of righteousness are ours as unerring guides in every difficulty, but that with the results of our obedience to those principles we have absolutely nothing to do; they can in no sense be affected by human action, for they spring from that essential holiness which is the attribute of God alone, and they are incapable of modification and change.

Una knew well, as she looked at Lillith, that the rapturous peace upon her softly smiling face was due entirely to the saintly constancy with which the simple child had held to the highest standard of right, at the expense of happiness and life; and she felt that she must follow in her steps along the straight and narrow path of purest equity, if she too would win that serene blessedness to be her everlasting portion. She did not hesitate for a moment as to what her future course must be; once convicted of her error she was ready to repair it. She was no longer called upon, as Lillith had been, to make the sacrifice of her love for conscience' sake, since already it had been deprived of all hope or joy by Atherstone's mysterious desertion, but she was bound to suffer in the infliction of that pain on him which she believed he would inevitably feel when he received Miss Amherst's letter. She resolved to send it to him at once, and if she still retained his dear remembrance in her heart, as she felt she must, she would at least no longer suffer it to be so fatal an influence upon her life as it had been since he had left her. Her replying, her despondency, her enervating uselessness, should all give place to a loyal devotion to her Master's service, for it was to her as though her eyes, following Lillith's redeemed spirit in its flight to the sinless realm, had caught a glimpse of that pure deathless love which alone can satisfy the immortal soul, and in the light of whose eternal beauty the world and all its joys seem scarcely worth a thought.

There was a forest of peace and rest already in Una's heart when at last she rose from her knees and went towards the window, to see if this night, which had been so momentous to herself, as well as to her friend, were near to its close. Lillith's last earthly mission was accomplished, and already it was bearing fruit within her own awakened soul, and as she raised the blind a crimson light from the eastern glow fell full on the marble countenance of the dead, flushing it as with hues of life, and Una felt it did but symbolise the dawn of that eternal day on which she had surely entered, who, simple and unpretending as she was, had been able by her blameless truth and purity to exercise so great an influence for good upon the lives of others. She stooped, and gave one kiss to the cold brow, and then turned away to lose no time in obeying the silent teaching of Lillith's stainless life.

CHAPTER XXV.

Una Dysart's first act on returning to her home from Torquay was to enclose Miss Amherst's letter to Humphrey Atherstone, and send it to the Abbey, with directions that it was to be immediately forwarded to the absent master.

She wrote inside the envelope the briefest possible sentence from herself, merely saying that it was her painful duty to send him the document she enclosed, for she felt that in the very delicate position in which she was placed towards him it was simply impossible that she could write to him, on this or any other subject. She could not tell him why she had so long delayed conveying to him a communication of such extreme importance, although he would plainly see from the date of the post-mark, that it had been in her possession some months. It was a hard and bitter duty to

perform in whatever way she did it; but if she could have dreamt how completely Atherstone would misunderstand her whole conduct in the matter, it would have caused her suffering almost too great to be endured. She had hardly dispatched it, however, when the current of her thoughts was changed by the arrival of Wil. Northcote, who came in, with her bright face and anxious, to ask Una to tell her the particulars of Lillith Orlinton's last moments.

This was not altogether an easy task for Miss Dysart, as she shrank from letting Wil. have the pain of hearing what had passed respecting her brother Rupert; so she told her friend in few words how blessed and peaceful had been the departure of that gentle spirit, like the calm setting of a bright pure star into the glory of the opening dawn; and when she had finished the account, she looked up, to meet Wil's dark eyes fixed on her with a keen and eager gaze.

"Una," she said, "you have not told me all, and you have omitted just that which it most concerns me to hear; for I know that Lillith must have spoken of my brother. I feel but too certain," her voice trembled as she spoke, "that he had quite as much share in her death as he has had in bringing sorrow and gloom on our house. Tell me all she said."

"Dear Wil, I am afraid it would pain you very much if I did; I wish you would not ask me."

Wil. flung herself down on the ground at Una's side, and putting her arms round her waist, she looked up at her with an earnest pleading expression. "Una, listen to me," she said, "I know already all that you can have to tell me of Rupert's error; it has been the bitterest trial I have ever known, and I can well imagine in how dark an aspect it would appear to one so pure and true as Lillith Orlinton; but I cannot help hoping that her death may have a powerful influence on him for good, if only you will help me in bringing it home to him."

"It might well do that if he could have seen her die as I did," replied Una. "I know that she has wrought a work in me which will alter my whole life; she has opened my eyes to errors of my own, as great, perhaps, as your poor brother's, and made me long to repair them; but, oh! above all, Wil., she has taught me how little it matters whether we pass through our brief earthly course in sunshine or in gloom, if only we live so as to win at last the love which lights eternity—the love that cannot die."

"Then she has done for you all that Mr. Trafford's teaching has done for me," said Wil.; "you would hardly imagine how differently he has made me look at all things here from what I used to do. I was then only bent on using life for pleasure and excitement, and I had but one ruling motive in all I did, and that was to get my own way at all times, cost what it might; but now—his words have been like flames of fire burning out my frivolity and selfishness, and showing me that I am not my own, but His who bought me with the price once paid on Calvary; and now, dear Una, I want only to be good," and she hid her face on her friend's lap.

"I think you are very good, little Wil.," said Una, fondly, "and I can well understand the influence such a man as Mr. Trafford would have over any one. I have been afraid of him hitherto, just because of his uncompromising goodness; but I mean to ask his help and advice now."

"You will like him very much! but, Una, you will not scruple any more to tell me all that passed between Lillith and yourself?"

And Una told her; word for word she detailed their interview, and described the sudden passing of the martyr's spirit to its great reward, and as she finished, Wil. burst into tears, exclaiming, "Then Lillith died for him; and surely not in vain! It cannot be but that the sacrifice has been accepted, and she will save Rupert by her death instead of making him happy by her life. Oh, Una, you must help us in this, you will not fail us I am sure, you will bring him back, my dear and only brother!"

"I would do anything I could for you, dear Wil., but I do not understand. What is it you wish me to attempt?"

"I will explain it all," said Wil., and rising up, she took a seat quietly by Una's side. "I suppose you do not know what happened to Rupert after he and Lillith parted?"

"No, I know only what she told me, and that she never saw him or heard of him again."

"He left the Manor that same day, without taking leave of any of us, and we never knew where he was till I received a letter from him written at Vienna; but long before that came his great fault became known to us." Wil. flushed crimson as she spoke, and Una pressed her hand in sympathy. "Great as it was," she continued, "I think he tried to appease his conscience by the fact that he knew the money would all be his ultimately, and that it was only his father's name he used unwarrantably."

"I know how one makes false excuses to oneself," said Una, mournfully; "but when one comes to look without flinching on the glory of truth, one sees that it cannot admit of so much as a speck on its purity."

"No, I feel that," said Wil., sighing, "and so does my father. He was perfectly furious when he came to know what Rupert had done, and his anger was increased by hearing that my unhappy brother was squandering his ill-gotten money in the most reckless and even wicked manner at Vienna, and it ended in my father writing him a terrible letter, telling him he would have nothing more to do with him, and that he never wished to see his face again."

"I am sure he does not feel that now," said Una.

"No, indeed; he has bitterly repented of it long ago. But Rupert has never written to any of us since he received it, and my poor father is breaking his heart about him. I know very well," and Wil. burst into tears as she spoke.

"But surely he will come back, dearest Wil.; he can never bear to be an exile for life."

"My whole hope is in you," said Wil., drying her eyes, and I am sure you will do what you can."

"Indeed I will, if you will tell me how."

"Well, I want you to write to him and tell him the whole history of Lillith's death; he would think it only natural that you

should do so, as you alone were there, and, indeed, it seems almost due to Lillith; for I believe if she had lived a few minutes longer she would have given you some message for him."

"Probably she would," said Una, thoughtfully; "I think she would have tried to win him to follow in her steps."

"And that is just what I want you to do yourself, dear Una. If you will describe the whole scene, and the efforts her martyrdom in the cause of truth had had upon yourself, I cannot help hoping that the example of her pure saintliness will set on him as powerfully as it did on you; for my poor Rupert has noble qualities, believe me, Una, only he has never cared to think of religion, or of anything beyond this life at all; and I feel sure that the thought of Lillith reaping at her Master's feet the eternal reward of her constancy and suffering, must awaken him to a sense of the tremendous importance of that future state, and its bearing on our existence here. I am sure if only he would so think of it all as to repent and turn to God he would feel that he must have the forgiveness of his earthly father no less than that of his Father in heaven."

"And do you authorise me to tell him that your father would forgive him?"

"Oh yes! if Rupert would but give up his evil habits and come back to us, my father and mother both would welcome him with all their hearts; he was never publicly disgraced, for, of course, our agent was instructed to pay the money he got unlawfully at once, and no questions were asked. I am certain that if he would only express regret in an open manner to his parents for all the past, and show that he was changed, the whole affair would be entirely condoned and forgotten, and we should be so happy; it would be like new life to us all."

"Well, dearest Wil., since you feel quite certain he would not be offended at my writing to him under the circumstances, I will do so, and you may be sure I shall do my utmost to bring him back to you; it is what Lillith prayed for daily, I am certain, and I earnestly hope I may succeed."

"Oh, I hope you may! and, Una, you will make another person besides us happy if you do. You will not be surprised to hear that I am engaged to Hervey Orlinton."

"No, I quite expected to be told so; I am so glad, dear Wil. I suppose you will be married when the mourning for Lillith is over?"

"Only if you succeed in bringing Rupert back to us, for it seems to me impossible that I should leave my father and mother while their only other child is completely lost to them, and they are so unhappy about him; I have not the heart to desert them in their loneliness, much as I love Hervey."

"I can well fancy it would be like taking away their last gleam of sunshine, if you left them, Wil."

"That is what they say, though they would not prevent my going if I wished it; but I cannot bear to leave them alone in their sorrow, and yet you see I have a terrible prospect before me in a few months, if Rupert does not come to take my place, for Hervey's regiment is ordered to India, and how am I ever to endure it, if he has to go away for years and years without me!" Poor Wil. broke down completely as she spoke, and hid her face in her hands, sobbing aloud.

"Darling Wil.," exclaimed Una, "do be comforted, for I will do all I possibly can to bring your brother back; I am sure the thoughts of you will give me eloquence, and if he comes all will be well, will it not? Your parents will not feel the separation from you nearly so much when he is restored to them."

"Oh no! for Rupert, their only son, has always been a great deal more to them than ever I could be; if he were with them I should go to my Hervey with such a light heart!"

"And so you shall," said Una, "if I can compass it by any means; meantime, you must be brave and hopeful."

(To be continued.)

The Late Rev. Dr. Henry Nisbet, Missionary, Samoa.

The following is an extract from a letter to Mr. William Logan, Glasgow, respecting the late Rev. Henry Nisbet, LL.D., from the Rev. Dr. George Turner. The letter is dated, Malua, Samoa, August 31, 1876. "Four days ago," says Dr. Turner, "I resumed my classes in the Mission Institution—but what a blank the absence of our dear departed brother is! I cannot tell you how much I miss him—the companion of my boyhood. We were at the same Sabbath School; went together to the same Young Men's Sabbath Morning Prayer Meeting; joined the Church together; fanned the Missionary flame in each other's hearts; went before the Directors of the London Missionary Society together; studied together in Glasgow, Paisley, and Cheshunt; were ordained together by the then Relief Presbytery of Glasgow; sailed to the South Sea Islands together; fought side by side in that terrible battle with the savages of Tanna; and here for three and thirty years we have been associated together among all the varied scenes of Missionary life in Samoa.

"For the last sixteen years, as you are aware, we have been associated as fellow-tutors in conducting our Mission Seminary; and no one knows better than I do how faithfully and conscientiously he did his work. He will still speak, as I told the students to-day, and be a teacher of many, by means of his printed commentaries and manuscripts, which have been copied by hundreds of students. He was thorough in everything he did; had an extensive and very idiomatic knowledge of the language, and was able with much clearness to make his instructions tell on the native mind. He has joined many, I doubt not, whom he was instrumental in leading to heaven; and rests in the presence of that Saviour to whom in early years he devoted his life; and in whose service he was literally 'faithful unto death.' May we all, in God's good time, know what it is to be there!"

Those are most likely to walk cheerfully, that walk circumspectively.

Scientific and Useful.

ENGLISH PUDDING.

One cup of chopped suet, one of chopped raisins, one cup of molasses, and one cup of sweet milk, five cups of flour, one tea-spoonful of soda. Steam three hours.

CREAM CAKES.

One cupful of cream, one cupful of sugar, one egg, one tea-spoonful of saleratus, one tea-spoonful of salt. Stir in flour until the batter is as thick as in making pancakes.

TO CLEAN THE INSIDE OF ANY TEA POT.

If the inside of your tea-pot, or coffee-pot, is blackened from long use, fill it with water, throw in a small piece of hard soap, set on the stove and let it boil from half an hour to an hour. It will be as bright as a new dollar and cost no work.

ERASIVE SOAP.

A genuine erasive soap that will remove grease from clothing is made as follows:—Two pounds of good castile soap, half a pound of carbonate of potash, dissolved in half a pint of hot water. Ont the soap in thin slices, boil in the potash until it is thick enough to mould into cakes; add alcohol, half an ounce; color with half an ounce of pulverized charcoal.

EGG-NOGG.

Break the yolks of three eggs in three table-spoonfuls of light brown sugar, and beat them until perfectly light; add three table-spoonfuls of good brandy, beating very hard. Have the whites of the eggs ready (they should be whisked until stiff), add at once, and stir quickly in. The success or failure of egg-nogg generally depends upon having the ingredients well-beaten, and ready to mix at once, or, as is often the case, partly mixing, and then waiting for the remainder.

BAKED RICE.

Boil a tea-cupful of rice, or half a pint, as directed above. Place it in the bottom of a baking dish, mixing with it a lump of butter the size of an egg, a tea-spoonful of salt, a well-beaten egg, and a tea-cupful of milk, or enough to make the dish conveniently full. Set the dish in the stove, and let it bake until nicely browned. Add a tea-spoonful of salt in boiling the rice. As a vegetable change from the ordinary way of preparing rice.

STEWED BEEF.

Cut from a cold roast of beef as much as will be sufficient for your family, in nice, moderately thick slices, fat and lean mixed together. Slice into small bits a carrot, a whole cucumber pickle, and two or three potatoes, with a tea-spoonful of all-spice powdered or whole. Add a large lump of butter—say a table-spoonful—a little water, and thicken, not too much, with a little brown flour, and stew until very tender. Send to table hot and under cover.

VIRGINIA SWEET-MEAT PUDDING.

Take what you think will be required from a jar of any nice preserve, quince or peach being the very nicest for the purpose. Fill a baking dish with alternate layers of sliced loaf bread, buttered, and the above-named preserves. Then to a dish holding two quarts add a raw custard, composed of one pint of milk and three well-beaten eggs, flavored with a little lemon or nutmeg. Put the dish in an oven or stove, and let it bake for half an hour, when it will be ready for the table.

CHICKEN JELLY.

Boil a pair of chickens until you can pull the meat from the bones; remove all the meat and the bones to boil half an hour longer; stand this in a cool place and it will become jellied; the next day cut the meat into small pieces, melt the jelly and throw it in; then add two table-spoonfuls of Worcestershire sauce, two of walnut sauce, one table-spoonful of salt, a pinch of powdered mace, cloves and allspice; slice ten hard-boiled eggs and two lemons, line a large bowl or form with these slices, then pour in the mixture and let it stand in a cool place (but not to freeze). The water should just cover the chickens when put to boil. This is a very ornamental dish and keeps for a long while.

FATHER ADAM.

This is a plain family dish, familiar to English families, but apt to be extremely relished, especially by children. It is a convenient way of using meat the second day. Take as much cold roast beef as will half fill a baking dish suited to the size of your family. Add enough gravy, saved from the day before, or, lacking that, enough butter and water, in which to stew the beef until quite tender. Then having ready enough potatoes, boiled, mashed, and seasoned with butter, pepper, and salt, and made smooth with a little cream or rich milk, fill the dish with them to the top, and place in a well-heated oven to bake until nicely browned. It has a very inviting appearance. Tomato catsup or any nice store sauce may be served with it, but should be added at table as individual taste may suggest.

DRINKS FOR INFANTS.

Children are only adults in miniature, and of course have about the same wants, the same appetites. They must drink as well as eat, like their superiors in age. It is always well, especially in hot weather, when adults are dry, to offer infants drink whenever they fret or cry, since a little water can do them no harm, and since they will drink but little, if any, when they are not thirsty. Water is the safest of all drinks, that is intended for us by the Creator. Infants may be thirsty and not hungry, though they will nurse when they do not need it simply to satisfy the thirst, and in that way derange the stomach, and make themselves sick, as they often do when judiciously nursed for thirst. Children will drink as often as adults when water is offered, and it is cruel not to satisfy their thirst, or to nurse them when they are not hungry, as most mothers do.

One of the highest characteristics of manhood is purity of speech. Nothing will send a man's influence and reputation so far below par more speedily than improper conversation.