



Happiness Secured AT A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER XXIV.
IT WAS NOT TO BE.

I dare not go to her yet! Some instinct tells me that she would like to be alone with her trouble—to fight with her great temptation—and conquer it if she can.

And, meantime, unconscious alike of my presence and Addie's departure, the other actor in this miserable little drama remains as she has left him, his anguish-stricken face buried in his hands!

One look at that handsome bowed head, and all the bitterness and resentment in my heart disappear. A strong man in the first agony of a bitter grief—a grief for which, as it seems to me, there is no help either in heaven or earth, is not one to escape my sympathy; and, laying my hand on his shoulder, I force him to meet my eyes.

"Lesley, is it you, child?" he asks, taking my hands in a grasp that makes me wince. "You know my trouble," he presently adds, searching my face with those dangerously fascinating dark eyes of his. "Will you tell me what is to be done? You are a kind-hearted little soul, and you pity me, I know. Won't you talk to Adelaide for me and persuade her—"

"That wrong is right!" I ask, a trifle sarcastically. "Believe me, Ernest, it would be waste of breath. She is right, and you know it as well as I do."

"Right?" is the bitter reply. "Right in striving to ruin her happiness and mine, too, I suppose? Don't be so hard and pitiless. That I did wrong in not taking steps to prove the invalidity of that marriage before I ever spoke to your sister of love, I admit. But if I live I will prove it yet."

"Can it be proved?" I ask, at a loss as to whether it is truth he is telling me, or whether he is striving to deceive me.

"It shall be proved. If she will but

be reasonable, everything might be set right yet. It is my darling's scruples, her strained sense of duty, that I fear—that I always have feared," he replies, in a tone of dejection.

"Ah, Lesley, if you did but know all I have suffered, you would pity me! If ever a man paid dearly for a brief infatuation, I have paid dearly for mine."

"Yet you must have loved that woman when you married her," I return.

"Or thought I did," was the reply. "A fallacy that was of remarkably brief duration. From first to last she deceived me. It was under a false name and character both that I first met her. But the fatal step once taken, the veil dropped from my eyes with remarkable rapidity. You have heard the story of that mad marriage, therefore you know how that woman was dragged from my side on our wedding day, arrested on a charge of forgery and fraud—a suspicion of murder!

"That I had been wild and gay, sultry thoughtless and extravagant, I admit," he goes on. "But surely my follies were heavily punished when I learned that the woman I had married was a notorious adventuress, with whose name and character the papers and police courts were only too familiar.

"In one awful flash of enlightenment, as her real name and identity were revealed to me, I saw the utter shipwreck I had made of my life, and my idiotic infatuation died out on the spot.

"Had anything been wanting to add to my degradation and disenchantment, the glimpse of her antecedents which the trial revealed would have been sufficient.

"My wisest course—I see it all too plainly now—would have been to have taken steps to have had the marriage set aside at the time. But as my name had not transpired in connection with the affair, I shrank from letting the world into my secret. I ought to have repudiated the connection from the first; but, instead of this, when that woman who called herself Maud Lennox came to me at the end of her term of imprisonment, and claimed her right to my name and support, I was glad to purchase her silence at any price.

"Nothing on earth could have induced me to own her as my wife; but from time to time I complied with her demands for money, and, at last, feeling that England was not large enough to hold us both, I offered her a large sum on condition that she would leave it, never to return. Tempted by the money, she closed with my offer; and a few weeks later the ship in which I supposed her to have sailed for Australia was lost at sea.

"With a thrill of pity, of horror, and relief, I read her name in the list of drowned, and once more I began to breathe freely! Once more I felt that I could lift up my head among my fellow men, and look the world in the face without fear or shame. About this time my father died; and, a sadder and a wiser man, I came back to St. John's and settled down to the practice that had been his.

"A doubt of my freedom—of that



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woman's death—never once crossed my mind, until one day, nearly two years later, when a visitor walked into my office, and, on lifting her veil, Maud Lennox, whom I had so long believed to be lying dead at the bottom of the sea, stood before me, sneering at my surprise, taunting my credulity, and fastening upon me once more like the harpy that she was.

"The miserable truth was but too plain. To quiet my suspicions she had permitted me to pay her passage money; but from the first she had never intended to leave the country; and now the bribe I had paid for her silence being gone, she came to me for more.

"If I had loathed and hated her before, I hated her a thousand times more, now that I saw her sunk—degraded as she was—with all the marks of an evil life, and the hideous symptoms of incipient madness in her every word and look. A few months later her malady declared itself, and she was a raving maniac! I had her removed to an asylum, where she remained for some time. By and by reports of her improvement reached me, and later on—supposed to be cured—she came back to the world.

"The improvement was but temporary, however. Her mind was permanently affected, though her symptoms had undergone a complete change; from uncontrollable violence she had sunk into a condition of hopeless melancholy, and in this state she has ever since remained.

"Not knowing what else to do with her, I took the cottage in which she still lives, and engaged Mrs. Martin, who, without knowing what claim her charge can possibly have upon me, has always been faithful to my interest to look after her.

"Until I met Adelaide, the question of the legality or non-legality of that marriage never troubled me. The possibility of my ever wishing to marry

again was too far off for that; I did not become a misogynist, as some men might have done under the influence of such an experience as mine; but I did become a convert to that particular school of philosophy of which Thackeray is the head, and according to which all good women are fools, all clever ones female Machiavels!

"Under these circumstances, my temptations to marry again were not great! I detest a pretty, stammering nonentity, however angelic she may be; and of the other sort, I had had enough and to spare! That any woman would ever again have power to touch my heart, hardly to excite a passing interest in my mind, I did not believe possible until my darling came to me that day like a revelation of all that was bright and pure in womanhood.

"I loved her from the beginning! Call me a romantic sentimentalist if you please!" he adds, rising from his seat and pacing the floor impatiently; "but with my very first look into that dear face the thought came to me that I had met my wife!"

"Oh, Ernest, if you had only been free to marry her!" I reply, my heart aching as I think of all he has suffered. "You would have made her very happy, I think, for she loves you so well."

"Free!" he repeats. "I was free! No one in their senses would think of regarding that miserable marriage as binding or legal. What kind of a wife has that woman been to me? What duty or consideration do I owe her? And but for the adverse fate that brought that meddling curate across her path, my darling would have been very happy with me, in spite of everything!" he replies. "I had made arrangements for quitting Hanbury before our marriage was announced; and if I could have got her away before this contretemps happened, all might have been well, in spite of that miserable old story in my past!"

"But it was not to be," I reply; "and thank Heaven that it was not! It is a poor happiness that is built on a base of falsehood; and fancy what Adelaide's feelings would have been had this revelation come upon her a few years hence instead of now!"

"Miserable little fatalist!" he replies, half passionately, half despairingly; "and do you think that I will ever give her up? Do you think that this is to be the end?"

This is precisely the question I am asking myself, and my heart dies faintly within me as I wonder how and when the end is to come.

For the next few days Adelaide keeps her room entirely—partly for the reason that she is too ill to leave it, and partly that she is struggling for strength to bear the dreadful sense of calamity that is overwhelming her; and, although Mr. Warden comes every day to Despairé, she is firm in her refusal to see him.

"There is nothing to be gained by going over the old ground, by suffering the dreadful pain of parting with her; it is the inevitable reply to his passionate entreaties for just one more interview.

"I could not trust my judgment with his dear face before my eyes; his loved voice in my ears!" is the bitter little confession with which she one day receives the message I bring her; and with a set, white look on his handsome face that has grown so hard and reckless of late, Mr. Warden is compelled to depart day after day as hopeless as he came.

"She never cared for me, or she could not steel her heart against me now!" he exclaims, one day, when hope and patience are alike exhausted. "My sin looks very black to her now; but the day will come when she will know that, bad as I am, I am not so very much worse than other men!"

"Adelaide is right, Ernest, and you know it!" I reply, utterly at a loss what to say or do to comfort him.

"She is very hard and pitiless!" he says; "and may she never regret the severity with which she has judged me! Well, Lesley, allow me to wish you good-by," he adds; and, without offering me his hand, he walks out of the house—and closes the door behind him with a force that makes me tremble with fear.

"But he knows I am right, Lesley—he must know that!" Addie exclaims, when I repeat this conversation to her a few days later. "He would despise me, as I should despise myself, if I could not bring myself to sacrifice my self-respect even for love of him!"

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(Militia Orders No. 16, by J. R. Bennett, Esq., Minister of Militia.)

Leave of Absence to Men in Class 1 Under Military Service Act 1918.

On the recommendation of the Military Service Board, leave of absence without pay until Tuesday, the 15th day of October next, is granted to all men in Class 1 who have been ordered by the Registrar under the Military Service Act, 1918, to report at the Armory for duty on September first.

W. F. RENDELL, Lieut.-Col., Chief Staff Officer, Dept. Militia.



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CABLE NEWS

BRITISH FOLLOW UP THEIR SUCCESS.

LONDON, Aug. 23. (By the A.P.)—The British armistice this evening are vigorously following up their success to-day which apparently has been one of the most disastrous ever experienced by the Germans. The Germans have lost stretches of ground, and numerous towns. The British have taken thousands of prisoners and large quantities of guns and material. To the south of Miramont the British have crossed the Ancre River and have pushed the enemy forces back in the direction of Coucoulet. Already Field Marshal Haig's forces are reported south-east of Grandcourt. The British have reached Hamelincourt and are pushing towards Ervilleux, St. Leger and Oiselles. The British troops seem to be progressing well up the road from Albert to Bapaume, south of the Somme. Thirty officers and 1,600 of other ranks have been taken prisoners by the British.

FRENCH TAKE PRISONERS.

PARIS, Aug. 23. (Havas.)—Between the Oise and the Aisne during the advance of Wednesday and Thursday, General Mangin's army took five thousand prisoners, according to advices reaching Paris.

ENEMY ATTACKS REPULSED.

LONDON, Aug. 23. A battle is being fought on the line between Lihons, south of the Somme, to the Cojeul River, southwest of Arras, a front of more than 25 miles, according to to-day's war office statement. The British troops are making progress at a number of places the statement says, and adds that two enemy attacks east of Beaucourt were repulsed during the night. On the left front the British line was slightly advanced east of Le Touret, northwest of Naut Kraain and east of Outreux.

FRUITS OF VICTORY.

PARIS, Aug. 23. The Allies are reaping the fruits of the victory on July 18th and Aug. 8th in the present critical situation in which the German command finds itself. The German retirement around Noyon, it is held here, is the local sequence of these victories. The French and British are pressing the enemy so close that he is obliged to throw in his best troops to save himself from disaster in the north, and in the south the Allies are dashing upon the Germans and snapping up prisoners and booty and getting into the main enemy defense positions. General Mangin's pressure between Aug. 18th and 20th resulted in the capture of more than 10,000 prisoners, and on the 22nd he forced the enemy to retire beyond the Ailette. The army of General Von Frenck is in such a predicament, it is believed that he is bound to make a formidable counter attack to halt General Mangin, or be obliged to withdraw from the Aisne and Neule



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