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The Broken Circle!

CHAPTER XLVII

"I can understand those words," Leah added, musingly; "a passionate misery must be a burning pain." The dinner-bell rang, and the general offered his arm to Leah.

"We will leave these two to make friends," he said. And Basil in silence went to Hettie.

"We shall never be able to bear it," he thought. "I must retire, or she." Hettie laid her hand timidly upon his arm. He seized it with a vehement, passionate grasp—his very heart was on fire—and the next suddenly let it go.

How many hours of this torture would there be to pass? He thought. The blood ran like fire through his veins; every nerve and pulse thrilled with the sense of her presence; yet he must sit there as the happy lover of Leah, smile and talk and laugh unconcernedly.

"What, in Heaven's name, shall I do with my life," he cried to himself, "if I find one day so hard to bear?" Hettie was excused from all effort, and her pale face was accounted for by the fact that she had been ill.

The dinner passed, and Leah was dimly conscious of something being wrong, something she did not understand. She was just a little disappointed that Sir Basil was not warmer in his manner to Hettie. He spoke to her but seldom, and it was always with averted eyes. She wondered if it were his great love for her which made him so indifferent to the charms of her sister.

The ordeal was over at last. When the two girls had left the dining-room, Sir Arthur turned with a laughing face to his companion.

"It is not of much use for you to remain here," he said. "Your heart has gone into the drawing-room, and you may as well follow it."

"That is true," assented Sir Basil. "I told you," continued the general, "what a difference it makes to have two pieces instead of one, though

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happy love out of his sight, he would have felt less distressed. "Better than all the world!" continued Leah. "How weak and worthless a half love is! I would sooner have hate. When Ebnone's love was over, her life was ended. No half love is worth having—is it, Basil?"

"Heaven knows that it is not," he said, with a great sigh. He saw the golden head move with a gesture of weariness. "How hard it must be for her to bear this!" he thought; and his mind went back to that one hour by the sea, when mad hope, love and despair had mingled. He whispered some words that comforted Leah—she was so easily made happy by him—and then he said to her: "Let us do something to amuse your sister; she looks very lonely there."

And Leah, full of regret for her momentary forgetfulness, hastened to her. The face that Hettie raised to her sister was ghostly in its pallor.

"You are ill, Hettie!" said Leah. "Oh, my dear, what is wrong? I will get a glass of water for you" and she hastened away.

"I cannot bear it, Basil," said Hettie, looking at him with miserable eyes. "I have no strength."

"Oh, my darling, I would give my life to undo it, to save you from the consequences of my fault, my wretched, miserable fault!"

"What shall we do?" asked the girl despairingly. "What will become of us? Leah loves you so. Help me to be true to her and true to myself, Basil. How can I turn traitress to the sweetest of sisters, the kindest and the dearest? I must go away; I cannot stay here!"

Was it fancy? When Leah returned with the water in her hand, it seemed to her that Sir Basil suddenly drew back from Hettie. Was it fancy? And, as she opened the door, she thought she heard the words, uttered in a soft, murmuring sigh, "I cannot bear it!" She must have been mistaken. She smiled as she thought what an absurd fancy it was.

CHAPTER XLVIII

Sir Basil's thoughts were gloomy ones as he walked home to Glen. What was he to do? This state of things could not last. Even if he could control himself, Leah was so quick that she would soon perceive what it was that was amiss with Hettie and then—well he thought it would be far easier to meet death in any shape than to meet Leah after she knew his secret. He could not witness Hettie's suffering, nor could he bear to think of Leah's despair. He could not understand the difficulties by which he was encompassed; he was like one groping in the dark. He determined that he would rest his brain and his thoughts, and then decide.

It was easier to plan than to do. No rest, no sleep came to him that night. The sisters seemed to stand on either side of his pillow—Hettie whom he worshipped, Leah who loved him. He told himself that, if this lasted much longer, she should go mad.

The morning brought him sad intelligence—a note from Leah saying that Hettie was ill, and that the doctor, for whom they had sent in all haste pronounced it a dangerous case of brain fever.

"Come over as soon as you can and comfort me, Basil. I cannot endure to think that I have found my sister only to lose her."

"If she dies, I have murdered her," he said to himself bitterly.

He went over at once and found the whole household in despair. The general met him with outstretched hand and grave face.

"Brain-fever!" he said, "Basil, what can have caused brain-fever? I cannot understand it. And she is in danger—really in danger? Poor pretty Hettie! What is to be done?"

There was no need for Sir Basil to express his sympathy. If anything could have comforted Sir Arthur in this hour of his distress, it would have been the hearty, honest, evident grief of his young companion.

"I have seen and known very little of illness," continued the general. "I can tell a case of jungle-fever, and I understand ague; but brain-fever—it is positively awful. Basil! I thought brain-fever was the result of trouble, worry, sorrow, or some great mental anxiety."

"So I have always understood," said Sir Basil; "but then you tell me she has had a troubled life."

(To be continued.)

Trees Give Milk in British Guiana.

In British Guiana and the West Indies, particularly on the banks of the River Demerara, there grows a tree known to the natives as the hyahya, which yields from its bark and pith a juice slightly richer and thicker than cow's milk. The tree is about 40 feet high and 18 inches in circumference when full grown, and the natives use its juice as we use milk, it being perfectly harmless and mixing well with water.

The Guianese have a tree—they call it kirighams—which yields a fluid in all respects like milk; while in the forests of Para grows a tree called the massonodron, which gives a milklike juice. It can be kept for an indefinite time and shows no tendency to become sour.

On the other hand, certain trees in the valleys of Aragua and in Canguana yield a similar fluid, which, when exposed to the air, begins to form into a kind of cheese which soon becomes sour.

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In Russia men are starving and starving are their wives; there are no roasts for carving when dinner time arrives. The kids in vain are calling for liver-wurst and pie; the cultures see them falling, and tear them when they die. These facts I said by reading a book just from the press; I see poor Russia bleeding, and weep in my distress. But here's a volume printed a few brief days ago; and in this book it is hinted that Russia has no war. The people, fat and hearty, have cake and pie and bread, and laugh at any smarty who says they are not fed. The yarn that Russia suffers, is reckless and unkind; it's spread abroad by dufers who have an ax to grind. They have it in for Trotsky, and Lenin's name they hate, and they are writing rotals at quite a vicious gait. I read one book and

matter, in sympathetic tones, "Poor creatures in the gutter! I'll send them fifty bones!" And then I read another, and say, "I'll keep my mon; the Russian man and brother is having lots of fun." Alas for human vision! Two people look at things; one says they are elysian, and one the hammer swings.

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