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Canadian Cereal and Flour Mills Limited, Toronto, Canada



## Beautiful Cynthia;

### Victory After Many Defeats.

CHAPTER XIX.  
"GOOD-BY—NOT SWEETHEART!"

"It is very good of you to let me dine with you to-night, Lady Alicia. I am not likely to prove a very cheerful guest."

"It is very good of you to come," she said, and her voice shook a little, for she loved him. In her way, as passionately as did Cynthia, and she had all the woman's craving to draw him to her, to press his face to her bosom, to comfort him as only a woman in love can comfort the man she loves. "We are sorry for you. Northam is a great friend of yours, and I"—her voice faltered, her eyes were raised to his with tenderest pity, then drooped—"I am more sorry than I can say. If there was only something one could do! But the best, the dearest friends are helpless in such a case, though they would give anything,

their very lives, to console, to lighten—"

Darrel was touched by this demonstration of her regard. Of course, it was only friendship; but friendship was very precious to poor Darrel at that moment. Northam came in. He was in morning dress, and explained that he was returning to Aldershot that night.

They went in to dinner. Mrs. Clinton, the chaperon, had gone to a Girls' Friendly, in which and similar philanthropic movements the poor lady escaped for a time from her position of nonentity in the Burton Crescent household.

It was a dainty little dinner, but Darrel could not eat much, and Lady Alicia did not press him.

"I've been to the War Office," said Darrel to Northam. "They've got a sick man in the Rexford Fusiliers, and

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ous, bullet-ridden pass, and the mental vision tortured her. And she was so helpless. She could not plead with him, could not reveal her heart, could not use her love as an argument, a lever.

She would have to let him go without a word, without even letting him know of her all-absorbing love for him. For she knew that this was not the moment in which to show him her heart—that, if she did so, he would recoil from her with a kind of disgust.

Even Cynthia, if she had been aware of Alicia's duplicity, could almost have found it possible to pity the woman who paced up and down, her lips writhing, her hands strained together, almost distraught in her agony.

Meanwhile Darrel and Northam drank their wine in silence; Northam could sit mute and motionless for quite a lengthy period. At last Darrel, with some embarrassment, said: "I didn't tell Lady Alicia the whole truth, Northam; I didn't give her the whole reason, though that which I gave her was enough. I'd better tell you—in fact, I ought to do so. My engagement with Cynthia—Miss Drayle—is broken off."

Northam finished his glass of claret deliberately before he asked. "Oh! Why?"

"Because—because she changed her mind," said Darrel, with a touch of color in his pale face.

"Changed her mind?" said Northam, in his wooden way. "That doesn't sound like Miss Drayle."

"No," assented Darrel, a trifle bitterly, "but she has. She made a mistake and found it out before it was too late. You see," he went on slowly, as if he were accounting to himself rather than to Northam for Cynthia's action, "you see, we were old friends, old playmates. We used to meet each other as boy and girl at Summerleigh, at my place—I mean, a place that used to be ours. We were like brother and sister, and I suppose she regarded me as a kind of brother, and was—was carried away for the moment; but on thinking it over she—she saw that she did not care enough for me to marry me."

"Do you think that was it?" asked Northam stolidly.

"What else could it be?" said Darrel. "It wasn't because I had lost my money. Cynthia wouldn't care about that. She's not that sort of girl."

"No, she's not that sort of girl," agreed Northam.

There was a pause, then Darrel said, with a touch of embarrassment: "Look here, Northam, I'd better out with all that's on my mind. I know that you proposed to Cynthia. She didn't tell me—"

"No, she wouldn't," said Northam, in exactly the same tone.

"No, Lady Westlake blurted it out. It was that that made her so furious when I asked her for her consent. Of course, even if I had not lost Summerleigh and all my money, I should not have been in the running with you in Lady Westlake's eyes. It is only fair that I should tell you how matters stand; we've been good friends, I'm out of the running now." He tried to speak steadily, stoically, but his voice broke somewhat.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Northam, as he re-filled Darrel's glass and his own.

"Oh, yes," said Darrel gravely. "Cynthia knows her own mind now; she's not likely to go back upon it. I'm done for. But I—care for her all the same. I want her to be happy—it doesn't matter about me." The poor fellow gulped down some claret. "She is very young; she is in the power of that old dev—I mean, Lady Westlake. All sorts of men will come to her, like wasps after honey. She hadn't any one to take care of her; her father is away, globe-trotting somewhere or other, and she has no other friends in the world excepting you. You're a decent chap, Northam"—it was the highest praise which men of their class permit themselves—"and I should be—I could feel more at ease about her if I knew you were going to be a friend of hers and keep guard over her. Will you? I'm afraid you'll think it a rum kind of request."

(To be continued.)

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Ladies' House Dress.

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