

Happiness Secured AT A Heavy Cost!

CHAPTER II.
OFF TO DEEPDENE.

"Suppose we go and talk it over with Len?" Addie suggests, evidently becoming as deeply bitten with the Deepdene mania as I am myself. "The scheme certainly does seem to have a good many advantages; but the question is, how Len would like it? Fancy that dear, town-loving, thorough-paced old bohemian existing in his summer without a chance to quarrel over a London fog," she adds, with a laugh, as she follows me up to the little painting room Len calls his "den," and in which, looking very handsome and picturesque in his shabby, old velvet painting coat and scarlet fez, he is just now at work amid a grand chaos of dirty cans, palettes, brushes, sponges, soiled cloths, and miscellaneous odds and ends, that go to make up an artist's paraphernalia.

Bursting with excitement, I proceed, without waiting for Addie to speak, to unfold my plans.

"Well, yes; it certainly would be a capital thing if we could manage to turn the old property into some small account at last," Len admits, with a reflective sigh as I pause, more for the want of breath than anything. "If we were living here we shouldn't be paying rent here; but what is to compensate me for the loss of the studios and picture galleries? Country life may be all very well for people who like it, but it strikes me that some of us would be developing a tendency toward softening of the brain before we had been there a month," he adds, taking up a fresh supply of

paint on his brush, and touching up the nose of the St. Cecilia on the easel before him with a redemptive pucker on his white forehead, that shows his thoughts are not of the pleasantest. "Still, the suggestion is worth consideration; and if Doctor Fuller approves of Devonshire air and all that sort of thing, I don't know but we might do worse than carry it out. I'll talk to him about it when he comes in presently."

Twenty-four hours later it is a settled thing. To my satisfaction the doctor emphatically approves of the scheme; and by that gentleman's advice it is also arranged that Len is to stay on for another week in London, while Addie and I set out for Devco at once, in order to get the old house a little aired and prepared for the reception of our invalid.

"But don't you think I had better write to Warden, and get him to send a woman or somebody over to the old place just to light fires and let in a little air and daylight before you get there, girls?" Len inquires, in a high state of edginess at the bare idea of allowing us to undertake a journey without his protection.

"Not for worlds!" I reply, negating the proposal as soon as started. "I very much prefer exploring it myself, like a second Stanley or Livingstone. One never knows what one may come upon in a ghostly, romantic old house that has been shut up for ten of fifteen years."

"Bats and mildew, most likely," as the grim reply.

But so far as the woman is concerned, Len gives in to my wishes, though he writes off to Mr. Warden immediately, informing him of our intention of coming to stay at Deepdene for a time.

Allie and I, who have never been out of London for more than a few hours together in the whole course of our lives, are in positive raptures at

the idea of spending a whole summer in the country.

The thought of living in a great, rambling, picturesque old house, where we can do as we please from morning till night, with no one to find fault with or object to us in any way, strikes me as such a delightful prospect that I am in a positive fever of excitement to be off.

But the best of it all is the garden! Only think of our having a really good old-fashioned garden, with quaint borders, shady walks, and tall, ivied walls! I exclaim, quoting from Len's oft-repeated description of Deepdene, as Addie and I sit drinking in the pleasant glimpses of ferny dell and primrose-covered banks revealed through the openings of the trees as the train whirrs us along with such speed toward the little Devonshire station at which we are to alight, that the rattle of the brakes and the cry, "Hanbury: change here for Colton and Gadsmead!" comes upon me as a positive surprise.

"And now, Lesley, the first thing we have to do is to find some one who can direct us to the Red Lion," says Allie, referring to Leonard's parting injunction about taking up our quarters for a few days, while Deepdene is being cleaned and aired, at the quiet hotel which claims that sanguinary and ferocious animal as its distinguishing sign. "I dare say we shall not have much difficulty about finding it," she adds, gathering up our wraps and parcels in a little flutter of excitement as the train pulls up at a dreary little country station, on the platform of which one solitary mortal besides the station master—a gentleman with his hands in the pockets of a careless but well-cut coat, and a handsome beard on his splendid dark face—strolls leisurely up and down.

"There is a porter coming this way; now, I dare say he can tell us all about it," I reply, as the uniformed

official comes leisurely up.

"The Red Lion? Oh! yes, miss; turn to the right, and five minutes' walk will bring you straight up to it," is the reply, as I spring lightly out onto the platform just in time to meet the eyes of the stranger, who, cigar in mouth, strolls calmly back, bestowing upon us a half-curious, half-wondering glance that brightens into sudden and unmistakable admiration as he passes.

CHAPTER III. THE LANGUAGE OF THE EYES.

LOADED with shawls and parcels, Addie stands on the step ready to follow me, when, with a pleasant "Pray allow me," the stranger advances and politely assists her to alight.

A courtesy that is accepted as easily and pleasantly as it is offered; though I cannot quite make out whether she is conscious of the intense admiration with which she is being regarded as she rests her hand for a moment on the strong arm put up to receive it.

What is it I read in that glance—admiration, interest, or the beginning of something stronger and deeper than either?

I wonder, as I stand passively by, while the gray and dark eyes meet, speaking together in a language more eloquent than words—a language that brings a swift, bright glow to the face that droops so shyly under the dark eyes of the stranger, who looks as if he could never take them off it any more.

Love at first sight! A modern Romeo and Juliet, I think, with a smile, as I remember all I have ever heard or read of the swiftness with which that mighty passion which rules the world sometimes springs into existence; and the next moment the stranger, who looks to my admiring eyes like a very king among men, has lifted his hat as respectfully as if we were a couple



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of duchesses—or, rather, as if Addie were a duchess.

For me I instinctively feel he has a better eye for thoughts; and with a few of thanks we have parted, never in all human probability, I imagine, to meet again.

We set out, as directed, down the broad, white, breezy road that leads to the little town of Hanbury, the tall spires and twisted chimney stacks of which are peeping prettily up through the trees in the bright spring sunshine, and quite on the outskirts of which we come upon the Red Lion—one of those quaint, old country hotels, the glory and prestige of which has long since departed, together with the post chaises and mail coaches of our grandfathers' day.

A victim to innovation and the march of progress, the old house stands as lonely and deserted to-day once was full of life and bustle; and just inside of the entrance we are met by the landlady, a portly, red-faced woman in a violet dress, every seam of which is evidently sustaining as great a strain as it can possibly bear, and a cap that is a mere garland of scarlet poppies and pink roses.

"I've a couple of nice rooms that will suit you exactly," she declares, in answer to our inquiries; "everything comfortable and quite private, you see," she adds, ushering us into a low-ceilinged, queerly shaped room, which, rather scant as to furniture, is scrupulously clean and replete with dried lavender and spring violets.

"While you take off your wraps, I'll send the servant up to light the fire. It is the end of April, but I always notice that London people are inclined to be chilly," she adds, bustling off toward the kitchen in quest of something wherewith to satisfy the demands of the very excellent appetite our journey has produced. "A chop, with a good strong cup of tea, my dears," she suggests, with a cheery good nature, that makes me feel as much at home as if I had been here a year.

"Did you notice that gentleman who spoke to us at the railway station, Lesley?" Addie inquires, as the door closes behind our attendant, who has just brought us in a tray with the tea and chops. "What a splendid-looking man he was! Such a singular fascination in that careless manner of his!"

"Yes, he was nice looking," I admit, in an absent tone, more interested for the moment in the subject of tea than the appearance of the stranger. "But, for all that, I don't think he need have stared at us quite so hard, though. Ah, talk about nectar and ambrosia!" I add, a little irrelevantly, cutting rather deeply into a nice, crisp, home-baked tart as I speak. "Do you suppose that it ever came up to chops and tea, with Devonshire butter and cream?"

(To be Continued.)

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WAR REVIEW.

The Germans apparently are on the eve of trying to end their retreat from the Soissons-Rheims salient and turning and offering frontal battle in France to the Allied armies. The day of rearguard action seems to be drawing to a close. Violent counter measures against their antagonists already are in progress by the Germans over most of the front, and seemingly for the present at least the Allied advance has been materially slowed down. Further gains have been made by the Allies, but only after the bitterest kind of fighting, and these gains have been considerably less in extent than those of previous days when the Germans stiffened the retiring armies by rushing numerous fresh divisions to their aid and adding greatly to the aggregate strength of their fighting forces within the fast disappearing pocket between Soissons and Rheims. As a result of violent counter attacks delivered with huge effectiveness, the Germans have been able to force the falling back by the Americans and French on several positions, but nowhere were they able to find a spot weak enough through which they could penetrate the Allied line. Standing firmly and giving ground only under absolute necessity the Allied troops everywhere have exacted a huge toll in men killed, wounded or made prisoners from the Germans in their every effort, partly to retrieve their losses of ground. Particularly heavy has been fighting in the center of the salient and on the right and left anchor points of the salient resting respectively southwest of Rheims and south of Soissons. It is still on the two anchor points that the enemy is keeping a watchful eye, fearful that the Allied troops may yet press back the line and threaten the armies of the German Crown Prince with the pincer manoeuvre, for the enemy is not yet far enough out of the pocket to have passed the danger of such a contingency. In the centre of the pocket north of the Ourcq river the Germans, in a counter attack, drove the Americans out of Clerges, but this slight gain was thereafter overcome later by the penetration of the Americans north from Serzy. Bougnere, lying on the west side of the pocket, northwest of Fere-en-Tardenois, also was taken by the Germans but later the Franco-American troops recaptured it, and with Grand Rozier in their possession they still hold vantage points for a small turning movement towards Fere, which, if successful, would give them a goodly number of prisoners. Southwest of Rheims the enemy delivered violent attacks against the French from both sides of St. Euphrase. Their effort to capture the village, however, was futile, although they pushed their line slightly forward on the west side of it. Southwest of Ypres the Australian troops are keeping up their attacks against the Germans, and have captured the town of Merris and 169 prisoners and a number of trench mortars and machine guns. The Germans at last reports were heavily bombarding the new positions of the British American troops fighting north of the Ourcq in the Soissons-Rheims salient have enlarged their victory of Monday at Serzy, where they defeated divisions of Germany's picked troops and took and held the village against counter attacks. Notwithstanding continued heavy opposition by guns, machine guns and large numbers of the enemy, soldiers from the Middle West and East States drove their line north from Serzy on Tuesday for a distance of about two miles, and were resting at night on the slopes approaching the woods beyond the town of Nesles, where they stood at last reports. The Americans formed the apex of the long line running across the salient. While the fierce fighting was going on between the Americans and Germans, the French on both sides of the battle front also moved forward for goodly gains northeast of Fere-en-Tardenois and east of Serzy. In the Nesles forest the Germans are holding strong positions, from which they are shelling, but thus far ineffectively, the remaining Allied lines before them. Prussian Guards and Bavarians were in the thick of the fighting throughout Tuesday, but again they were outmanoeuvred and outfought and again suffered heavy casualties.

A FABULOUS SUM.

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