

The Sacrifice of Enid

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Wedding.

THE night was cold; a south-west wind was blowing. The sea was not very rough, but quite rough enough for a private steam launch, which was what Ronald had engaged. Enid was a good sailor, but her heart seemed to stand still for a moment as she and Ronald, sitting side by side in the little cabin, plunged into the darkness.

The clergyman, Mr. Wolfe, embarked with them, but he had a strong suspicion he would be de trop on this occasion, and insisted on being outside with the men.

"I have oilskins on, and a little splashing won't hurt me. I like it," he said cheerily.

Both Enid and Ronald preferred his absence.

He held her hand tightly, but said nothing.

"It is a very small boat for the rough seas outside," she said after a time.

"If I had engaged a steamer my purpose regarding Cornwallis would not have been attained. This is a large launch, and thoroughly seaworthy. I trust you believe I would not willingly bring you into danger."

"I do believe it! I am sure of it!"

The thought that went through both minds simultaneously was, might not the best solution of the difficulty be for the big waves beyond the breakwater to close over the launch and engulf them?

But Enid, at all events, instantly put this idea from her as a suggestion of the Evil One. To resign her life willingly in thought seemed to her a species of mental suicide.

What had become of her solicitude for Cornwallis—he who had said he could not do without her.

She sent up a silent prayer for grace and strength.

To Ronald the voyage was one of torture. To be by her side knowing that he loved her with all his heart and yet dared not allude to his love; that he was going to hand her over to another man, for whom he had neither respect, liking, nor even tolerance, was dreadful to him. She, the queen among women, to marry such a man!

The breakwater had long been passed, the sea rose higher. And then both knew that the peril was not inconsiderable. One of the men came forward and spoke to Ronald.

"The sea is getting up, sir. Hadn't we better turn back?"

"Do you consider it dangerous to go on?" asked Ronald, who thought this a direct interposition of Providence.

"Not exactly dangerous now, sir, but I won't answer for what it may be soon."

"What shall we do?" he asked Enid.

A bright spot of colour appeared on her cheeks; she set her lips resolutely.

"We will go on," she said.

She was deeply determined to aid Cornwallis, but the thought that followed was that to die with Ronald was not a fate to be deplored.

"The wind and tide will be with us on our return," he said.

"That is so, sir. But we've all got wives and families, so perhaps you will remember it in the pay—if we get back safely."

"Yes, yes," answered Ronald impatiently, adding as the man retired: "What sharks these boatmen are, some of them! Am I doing my duty in taking you into danger? Am I, Enid?" again calling her by her Christian name.

"Yes," she replied firmly.

A wave dashed against the pains of glass, then another.

"We are protected," said Enid.

"What about the poor men and Mr. Wolfe?"

"They are all right; they have on oilskins and sou-westers," he replied.

But although he spoke cheerfully he was by no means easy in his mind, for he did not feel at all sure they might

By MRS. HARCOURT-ROE

Author of "A Man of Mystery," "The Silent Room," Etc.

not (or one of them at all events) be washed overboard. Once he was minded to give the order to turn back, and said as much to Enid.

"In that case," she replied, "the whole of my endeavours for Horace, from long before the time I first came to Willowbridge, will have been thrown away—and your's also."

He said no more, only continued to hold her hand as he would have held the hand of a frightened child.

But the perilous voyage came to an end at last. The lighthouse was reached and, with great difficulty amidst the dashing waves, landed on. As soon as they had ascended the spiral steps they looked round. The lights of some vessel were not far off, and immediately afterwards a boat came alongside, in which Haselfoot was seated.

They entered the small round room at the head of the steps, and Haselfoot stared in amaze, for he instantly recognized the young lady he had met at Plymouth and afterwards seen at the paper mill. What could be the meaning of it all?

But he did not lose his self-possession, and said at once: "I remember meeting you before at Plymouth." He was on the point of adding "and afterwards," but he refrained.

CORNWALLIS now came down. Haselfoot looked at him attentively, and then beckoned to Ronald to come outside.

"Is that beautiful girl going to marry such a man?" he exclaimed indignantly. "Why he has one foot in the grave. It is patent to the meanest intelligence."

"I know it," replied Ronald. "I have done all in my power to prevent it, but he has set his heart upon it, knowing that the marriage will be merely nominal."

"I disapprove of it entirely," said Haselfoot.

"You or my disapproval counts very little," Ronald answered bitterly. "He is determined to marry her, and she will not oppose his wish. We must not keep them waiting; every moment is of consequence."

"So it is to me. I couldn't have come at all if the order had been for an attack to-night."

The parson had been examining the license and putting on his surplice.

Cornwallis and Enid stood side by side. His hair was trimmed, his dress was careful, but on his face there was the unmistakable stamp of—in his view—the dread King of Terrors.

Haselfoot shuddered inwardly, and the clergyman looked on with grave concern. Enid was really lovely, although she wore a look of fixed resolve. Her eyes were steadfast.

To Haselfoot she appeared like some beautiful martyr, who had entered on a course from which she would not flinch.

"Oh, Enid!" exclaimed Cornwallis suddenly, "why did you wear that black dress?"

"I had only one other with me, which was not white," she replied simply. "You know I had no time for preparation."

But this speech deepened the gloom which seemed to envelop everybody, for all divined why she had worn it.

To Ronald there was something awful in this wedding. The flare of the lamp within, the darkness without, the wailing wind, the dash of the waves were all uncanny, but were yet as nothing compared to the unutterable sadness that must be in their minds. The lighthouse men were aware that something unusual was taking place, but the door was shut; and, although more than one burly form hovered round, nothing could be seen from outside.

The service was as short as possible. In a few minutes' time Cornwallis and Enid were pronounced man and wife.

The bridegroom kissed his wife, and

then there was a painful pause, for no one either could or would offer any congratulations.

Haselfoot broke the silence.

"I am afraid I must be off," he said.

Now came the moment for which Ronald had been planning. He was extremely anxious that Cornwallis should not land in his company to be again compromised by his presence. However dark the night there might be spies about.

"We had an extremely rough passage," he said. "The launch is not at all fit for an invalid. Could you give my friend"—he purposely avoided mentioning his name—"a passage back."

Haselfoot looked disturbed.

"I am very sorry, but I'm afraid I could not possibly take a lady to-night. If it were only a man I could."

"Oh!" exclaimed Enid hastily, "please don't mind about me. I will go back in the launch with Mr. Westlake and Mr. Wolfe. But it would be most kind if you would take Mr.—" a warning look from Cornwallis checked her—"take my husband," she added with a vivid flush.

"Why, of course I will," said Haselfoot heartily, "but I warn you"—turning to Cornwallis—"that you will be very uncomfortable, and that in all probability the launch will get in first. But I will do my best for you."

Cornwallis then spoke apart to Enid.

"I shall be with you soon, dear," he said. "Sorry I cannot go with you. He"—indicating Ronald—"says it won't do. Remember our name is Walford. To the landlady, and Haselfoot, and everyone. This is most important."

"More lies," thought Enid, but she recognized the fact that they dared not be known as Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis.

HER husband said good-bye to Mr. Wolfe, and then to the lighthouse men, after which he followed Haselfoot down the spiral steps.

The entire visit to the lighthouse had not occupied more than twenty minutes, although to those who had taken part in the ceremony it had seemed like hours.

"And glad am I to see the last of that poor chap," said one of the lighthouse men, "for I thought he would have died on our hands. He isn't long for this world."

He was, of course, quite unaware of Enid's new relationship, but he noticed that she turned very white at his speech.

"May you be related to him, Miss?" he asked, in some anxiety at the effect of his words.

"Yes," she replied. "I am related to him. And—and—I am afraid you are right in what you have said. But I thank you and all very heartily for all your kindness to him."

"Very welcome, Miss," returned the man in a gruff voice, for Enid's sweet face and voice had made him feel more than he cared to show.

"It is quite time to be off," said Ronald, and they departed.

The waves, as usual, were dashing on the reefs round the lighthouse; some of the cruel rocks were at times visible. But the wind had moderated, and, with the tide, was in their favour.

At Enid's request, Mr. Wolfe sat in the little cabin with her and Ronald. Neither he nor she wished to be by themselves now. There was little or no conversation as they sped through the darkness. The launch rolled and pitched, but all physical sensation was dormant in Enid; her mind was entirely abstracted. What would the end of all this be, and when would it come?

The breakwater lights came into sight, then the town lights; their voyage was at an end. They landed at a different pier to that at which they had embarked, for Ronald considered they could not be too cautious. The clergyman went off at once.

"I must not see you to your rooms," said Ronald to Enid. "It is necessary that you should hold as little com-

WESTBOURNE School for Girls

278 Bloor Street West

TORONTO, CANADA

A residential and day school—small enough to ensure for the pupils a real home, careful personal training and thoughtful supervision. Pupils prepared for the University. Class instruction in Folk and Aesthetic Dancing as well as Physical Work. Outdoor Sports. Affiliated with the Toronto Conservatory of Music.

F. McGillivray Knowles, R.C.A., Art Director.

School reopens September 14th.

For Calendar address the Principal, Miss M. Curlette, B.A.

ROYAL VICTORIA COLLEGE

MONTREAL

THE RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN STUDENTS OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Students (both resident and day) prepared for degrees in Arts, Pure Science and Music. Scholarships are awarded annually. For Prospectus and information apply to the Warden.

Bishop Strachan School
College Heights Toronto

Forty-Ninth Year
A Church Residential and Day School for Girls.

New buildings—Beautiful healthy situation, with 7 acres of playing fields.

Junior School to Matriculation Course. Household Science, Music, Painting.

President, The Right Revd., The Lord Bishop of Toronto.
Principal, Miss Walsh, M.A. (Dublin).
Vice-Principal, Miss Nation, M.A. (Trinity College).
Head Mistress, Junior School, Miss A. M. V. Rossiter (Higher Certificate National Free School Union), late of Cheltenham Ladies' College.

FOR CALENDAR APPLY TO THE BURSAR

BISHOP BETHUNE COLLEGE
OSHAWA ONTARIO

Visitor: The Lord Bishop of Toronto.

A Residential School for Girls.
Young Children also received.

Preparation for the University. Art Department, including drawing, painting, wood carving and art needlework. Toronto Conservatory Degree of A.T.C.M. may be taken at the School. Fine, healthful situation. Tennis, basketball, skating, snowshoeing, and other outdoor games.

For terms and particulars apply to the Sister-in-Charge, or to the Sisters, of St. John the Divine, Major Street, Toronto.

COLLEGE RE-OPENS SEPTEMBER 14.

Westminster College = Toronto
A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Situated opposite Queen's Park, Bloor Street West

Re-opens Thursday, September 9th

Calendar mailed on request

J. A. PATERSON, K.C., President MRS. A. R. GREGORY, Principal

Alma (Ladies) College

A Christian college-home, healthful situation.

For prospectus and terms, write the Principal
R. I. Warner, M.A., D.D., St. Thomas, Ont.

63