

THE GREAT TEMPTATION.

By RAYMOND WRIGHT.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"Doctor," he said in a pained voice. "I want you—to bring my Solicitor—and here he paused for breath—I want to make my will—I want to leave my money to you—if my daughter should not be found within twelve months from my death—Doctor you know it has always been my wish that you should marry Rene—it has been the dream of my later years and—another attack of coughing shook the old man's frame and he made a pause before continuing—"and, and I hoped to see you wedded together. By making my will as I shall make it, I hope to bring it about even now."—"Go and fetch Mr. Gerald for me."

Dr. Cyril motioned for the nurse who was on the other side of the room.

"Just take my place while I carry out Mr. Oakleigh's wish." The young Nurse shot an enigmatical look at the Doctor, and with an assenting gesture, she advanced to carry out his request. Dr. Cyril withdrew.

Nurse Wilson seated herself mechanically beside the old man and adjusted his bed covering. From time to time she would pass a spoon containing some red liquid to his mouth and the alternate groanings of the old man seemed to have no effect upon the tranquillity of her thoughts. Her mind was not on her work, and it was easy to see that she was not troubling greatly about her patient. Her thoughts were of the Doctor; she had worked under his ruling on and off for some time now, and his personality had attracted her. She had heard the old man's words when he had stated a few moments before that his desire was that Dr. Cyril should marry Rene, and somehow or other those words had caused her pain.

She thought of how very much Dr. Cyril's existence occupied her mind, and then after pondering over the subject for some little time she came to the conclusion that she was dangerously near falling in love with him.

Dr. Cyril on the other hand was only dimly conscious of Nurse Wilson's feelings, and this dim consciousness appeared to him to be a state of doubt wherein he sometimes thought of Nurse Wilson as a willing and tender nurse, and at other times affectionately disposed towards himself.

Of the two feelings he could not tell the one which fittingly described her attitude towards him. He realised that she was a handsome and desirable woman. Her hair was fair and her eyes were of a tender grey. She had an appealing face which seemed to seek the protection of a loving heart. She possessed a good figure and spoke with a refined and cultured voice.

This was the first time Dr. Cyril had thought about her to any great extent but her appealing attitude and submissive appearance when he had asked her to take his place by the old man's side had haunted his mind since he had left the house. With an effort he dismissed her from his mind.

"Here is the house at last," he said to himself as he stopped before a big white gate which opened upon a carriage drive leading towards a pretty red-brick house.

A brass plate fastened in the centre of the gate bore the inscription—"Bernard Gerald, Solicitor," and Dr. Cyril looked at it for a moment half in doubt as to how he should approach Mr. Gerald.

He opened the gate and walked boldly up the drive.

CHAPTER IV.

Rene had had a strange experience since leaving her father's house. It had also been an unpleasant one. She could now see that the glories of the footlights which seemed to fascinate her so much beforehand, were quite trivial and empty upon acquaintance. Her fellow workers were mostly of a Bohemian type who cared nothing for custom or convention, and some of them were really bad characters.

She had made but one friend, and this friend was a girl whose name, Elsie Merry, rather belied her character. Rene and Elsie shared the same rooms and spent most of their time together.

This friendship was the only brightness in the gloom of Rene's existence, and the looseness of the stage girls with whom she was forced to mix had come upon her with a sense of horror and loathing.

After leaving her home Rene went to one of the places in London which she had found advertised, and after an interview which she, at the time, thought rather humiliating, she was engaged.

Rene had always been fond of Drama, and the Company in which she had found employment was known as "Gordon Brewster's Company" and the production in which she played was entitled "Violet Desford."

It was a very dramatic piece and told of three men who all loved the same girl, whose name forms the title of the piece. One of these men was an adventurer and loved only for the sake of the money which Violet Desford possessed. This man, being heavily in debt and angered against one of his rivals who was an influential Bank Manager, murdered him in his own Bank and made off with a considerable sum of money. The third admirer of Violet, whose name was Wrayford, afterwards learns that the adventurer was the murderer, but as he realises that Violet is strongly in love with the culprit, he does nothing to effect his capture. Violet and the murderer marry and journey to Paris and the love which Violet bears for her husband had so manifested itself upon Wrayford that he decides to give himself up as the murderer; so great is his despair at having lost her for himself. With nothing now left to live for and having decided upon this course he returns to his rooms for the last time one evening only to discover a bearded detective already there who arrests him for the murder of the Bank Manager. Wrayford decides to plead guilty, and the Court scene is very dramatic. He is sentenced to death, but the public call for a reprieve and he is afterwards given penal servitude for life. A fire at the prison in which he is domiciled gives him an opportunity to escape and he makes his way to Australia where he wins a fortune. By this time Violet and her husband have returned to England where her husband dies after making a confession of the murder. Wrayford also comes to England under an assumed name some little time after the murderer's death, where he meets Violet who informs him that his innocence has been proved. Violet and Wrayford marry bringing the play to a fitting conclusion. A strong sense of the dramatic pervades the whole piece and the play had been a huge suc-

cess for many years and was still being performed to crowded houses.

Rene had a very minor part and had a keen desire to play the leading role of "Violet." Elsie Merry, her companion, played the part of a Maid in Violet Desford's home, whilst Rene's piece was that of Violet Desford's Aunt.

It was a small part and she only made her appearance in one act and then only for a short time.

One thing, however, had forced itself upon Rene's life with tragic suddenness to herself and caused her many vague misgivings. She had been attracted by a man of Spanish descent who acted in the same Company, and whose name was Wilde.

He was a singularly handsome man with refined features, eyes of the darkest brown and a black moustache curled half Kaiser fashion, revealing to advantage a full mouth, and a chin which told of determination.

Rene's first meeting with him had taken place just before an afternoon rehearsal, and she being new, he had given her some information relating to the production, had helped her on many points and had proffered to give her his assistance at any time she cared to command it.

He had since pressed his attentions on her and Rene found that she was fascinated with him. She kept away from him as much as possible, because in her fascination there was also a little fear.

She had not entrusted her whole mind with Elsie as yet and although the two girls were in each other's full confidence, Rene had neglected telling Elsie about the Spaniard. She, however, decided to do so on the earliest opportunity.

When Rene and Elsie were preparing for bed on the same evening of Rene's decision, the latter broached the subject to her companion,—

"Elsie!"

"Yes!"

"Tell me what you think of Mr. Wilde, will you? You have seen more of him than I have, and he interests me greatly."

"Well," answered Elsie, "if I were you I should keep as far away from him as possible."

"Why Elsie Dear?"

"His record is not a clean one," was the rejoinder, "and although I am only going by hearsay, my own opinion does not conflict with what I have heard. His name has been coupled with many other girls, and I should be sorry for your's to be treated in the same—"

Here she paused. "I suppose," she altered, "he has never made love to you has he?"

Rene hesitated.

"Ye-es," she said.

"Anything else?"

"He has—he has asked me to marry him."

"And have you consented?"

"No, not yet."

"And is that all that has passed between you?"

Rene did not answer.

"—in anod jo pomsno pu sqissod meo nof H,"

fatuation and avoid marrying him I should advise you to do so."

Rene heard the words as she toyed with the locket she wore around her neck. It was the last thing she took off before getting into bed. She opened it and gazed at the photographs it contained—her mother on the one side and her father on the other.

As she looked upon it her eyes filled with tears.

She closed it with a snap and without answering her companion she blew out the light.

Silence and darkness reigned.

CHAPTER V.

Dr. Cyril's patient died; and he died calling for his daughter. Dr. Cyril returned with the Solicitor just in sufficient time to enable the old man to direct how he wished to leave his possessions. The Will had been drawn up and signed in the presence of the Solicitor, the Nurse and a witness, and it provided that the whole of his fortune should go to his daughter, should she be found within twelve months. Should she not be discovered within that time the estate was to go absolutely and unconditionally to Dr. Cyril with the request that he should search for the daughter and if possible win her love and make her his wife. This request, the old man knew, was quite superfluous for he was aware that Dr. Cyril had a strong affection for his daughter, nevertheless the request was embodied in the Will to satisfy the old man's desire.

And after this was done, the old man closed his eyes, called out his daughter's name and then died.

The grandeur and rigidity of Mr. Oakleigh's death impressed the Doctor more than any other such experience had ever done. The fiery old man once so big and strong with a commanding air and aspect of power—now struggling under the cold clammy hand of death and now overpowered—complete submission and the grim ferryman Styx claimed his own.

All this happened in the month of May and the Doctor had since left the scene of the old man's death.

It was now December and the ruthless hand of Fate had cast the die against the Doctor. A chronic illness resulting in the neglect of his practice and ultimately compelling him to dispose of it, had brought him down to the extent that he had been forced to accept a situation in one of the larger hospitals in Manchester which received most of its patients from the poorest of the slums.

In playing the Game of Life with Fate as a partner there is often a strange card played against one—and sometimes it is a card which one never suspects is in the pack. Dr. Cyril, like all the rest of us—mere human specks on the boundless Sea of Circumstance—had experienced a reverse in his fortune and the turn of Fortune's wheel against him had left its mark.

He became silent and morose. Sometimes in his more manly moments he felt a saddening tenderness and these moments were on those occasions when he thought of Rene Oakleigh.

After all what is more beautiful than a lovely girl who is virtuous, refined, intelligent and loving; who cares nothing for flattery and deception, and whose chief aim is to be womanly? Think of the blessing of her. Such a love as she can give would inspire the most dejected of men to the greatest efforts for a higher and nobler existence.

These were the thoughts that sometimes came to Dr. Cyril, and when they came he felt an intense desire to discover what had become of Rene. His duties in the sordid Hospital were boring and unwelcome to him; his life lacked something and although the "something" was indefinable to himself, the knowledge of the incompleteness of his existence was always evident. He lived for each day awaiting developments—awaiting circumstances to confront him which would make his life more joyful.

He treated his patients with the same care and attention that had always characterised him, but his actions seemed more mechanical,

and his eyes told the fact that he had lost someone; a vacant enigmatical expression announced that someone had gone out of his life. A look of passive submission also gave evidence that Fate had conspired to hinder his progress on the road of life.

Seven months had passed since Mr. Oakleigh, his wealthy patient, had died, and according to the Will made by the old man the whole of the estate would fall to him (Dr. Cyril) unless Rene was found before twelve months from the time of her father's death had elapsed. Five months only remained in which Rene could come and claim her fortune.

Five months was not a long time; yet it was possible that he might never return. She might even be dead.

Thus thought the Doctor and with thoughts of this kind continually presenting themselves to him, he sometimes became angered against Rene's existence. Why did she not show herself? Why was he to be kept in suspense with Anger, Love, Envy and Hatred gnawing into his heart?

It was possible that Rene was unaware of her father's death. It was possible that she was married; in fact almost anything was possible. And had the Doctor but chanced to look upon the boardings which were numerous in the locality of the Hospital, he would have seen the name of Rene Oakleigh on the play-bills advertising the production of "Violet Desford" to be played in the Manchester Empire that evening.

(Another long instalment next week.)

POPPING THE QUESTION.

A bashful young Scot had no courage to speak for himself. At last one Sabbath night he said, "Jane! Dye ye ken I was here on Monday night?"

"Aye!"

"And I were here on Wednesday and Thursday?"

"Aye!"

"And once more on Friday, and again last night?"

"So you were!"

"And here I am to-night?"

"Yes."

Finally, in desperation: "Woman, do you smell a rat?"



WOOD PIPING.

Wood stave pipe, like wood stave tanks and silos, is superior for many purposes to those of metal and concrete, for wood pipe is not affected by water containing salt, sulphur, etc., which quickly rusts iron pipe.

NEW SUBMARINE DEVICE.

A new device, which will enable a submarine to find her own position under water, and will do away with the dangerous necessity of coming to the surface for that purpose, is announced by Mr. Hudson Maxim, the inventor. Mr. Maxim says that the implement permits the command of a submarine to find his position on a map at any time within 100ft. or so. A position indicator, of a cruiser design, Mr. Maxim claims, is now in use in practically all the navies of the world. Its installation on a submarine costs about 17,000 dol., whereas Mr. Maxim's device could be installed for only 1,000 dol.

SEEING AT A DISTANCE.

According to "Engineering," the visibility of an object in a searchlight beam depends, of course, on the object as well as on the searchlight. One employs khaki or grey uniforms in order that they may approximate to the colour of their surroundings, and so be less easily visible, but the effect works both ways, and it is said that it has not always proved convenient for our men to be too difficult for our own gunners to see. A further point is that at night grey or khaki will be more easily seen than the French red. The method of rendering an object difficult to see at a distance by spotting or checkering its surface is well-known. The old Southsea forts are an example. The effect of the process is, in effect, to break a large object up into a number of small ones. The method is a very common one in nature. In such cases, however, one usually has the imitative effect. A tiger moving among reeds and long grasses is striped vertically; while a panther moving among foliage is spotted. Mr. Dow says that if one has a donkey and a zebra in a field, and they both run away at the same speed, the zebra will disappear first.

EARLY POISON GAS.

The earliest use of deleterious gases in siege warfare is recorded in the history of the Peloponnesian wars from 431 to 404 B.C. During this struggle between the Athenians and Spartans and their respective allies the cities of Plataea and Delium were besieged. Wood saturated with pitch and sulphur was set on fire and burnt under the walls of these cities, in order to generate choking and poisonous fumes, which would stupefy the defenders and render the task of the attacking forces less difficult. Another form of the same method of attack used about this date was to fill a cauldron with molten pitch, sulphur, and burning charcoal, and to blow the fumes with the aid of a primitive form of bellows and airblast over the defenders' lines. Greek fire, about which much was heard in the wars of the middle ages, was a liquid, the composition of which is now unknown, that was squirted through the air, and was used for setting fire to the buildings or places attacked. It was employed chiefly in sea fights in order to set fire to the ships of the enemy, and it was used by the Byzantine Greeks at the sieges of Constantinople in the years 1261 and 1412.

SOME WIND.

Visitor: "What became of that other windmill that was here last year?"

Yokel: "There was only enough wind for one so we took it down."

The Canadians did noble work at the front yesterday, and WHAT THEY TOOK THEY HELD.

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