

Choice Literature.

One Life Only.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

From that hour Lillith had shut herself up in the rectory, and had been seen by no one—even Una had been excluded, although their intimacy had ripened into a strong friendship, and she felt by no means certain that Lillith would receive her even now. Anything was better than staying at home, however, so, wrapped in a long waterproof cloak, she battled her way through wind and rain to the parsonage gate. Here she encountered the rector who had just arrived from the opposite direction, and he welcomed her with a warmth very unusual to him, and said he was truly glad she had come to see his sister, as she did not appear to be well, and was certainly too much alone. Without consulting Lillith at all, he took Miss Dyrart at once into the room where she was, and left them alone together.

For a moment Una stood looking in silence at the young girl, who did not seem conscious of her entrance. Lillith was sitting at the window, framed in by the heavy crimson curtains which hung on either side of her, and so perfectly still and motionless that she looked in her white dress much more like a marble statue set in a niche than a living human being. Her fair face had the waxen purity of a white camellia—entirely without colour, and wearing an expression of passionless calm, such as is rarely seen except on the face of the dead, who have done for ever with the world and its cares. An open book lay upon her knee; but her hands were clasped over the unread pages, and her blue eyes, fixed and dim, gazed out through the window with a vacant look, which showed that they saw nothing of the objects to which they were turned.

She slowly rose as Una came towards her, and yielded passively to her embraces, without any of the eager affection she had always hitherto shown to her friend, and then dropped back into her seat and turned again to the window, as if to resume her gaze on the unseen far-off vision which seemed to occupy her. Una hardly knew how to address her; she was so unlike the loving, childlike Lillith who had always welcomed her with eagerness, and spoken so freely of all the little interests of her life; of Rupert Northcote, it is true, they had not often talked, for Una respected her delicate reserve on the subject which lay so near her heart; but there had been a tacit understanding between them that Lillith would certainly one day be his wife.

Determined at last to break the oppressive silence in any way, Una began to speak of the gay little flower-garden which lay spread out before the window, and had been one of Lillith's favourite amusements.

"I see your gardener has been making some alterations," she said; "I hope you did not forget to tell him to carry out my special wish, and have a bed prepared to be entirely filled with snowdrops next spring."

"Hervey told him, I believe," said Lillith in a low, measured tone.

"Then, when the time comes for them to appear, you will have multitude of little likenesses of yourself just under the window. You will only have to look at them, to know exactly how you appear to us common-place mortals."

"I shall not see them," said Lillith.

"Why not? have you any plan for travelling next year?"

"No; but I shall not see them—because I shall be dead," she answered composedly.

"My darling! what are you saying?"

"Yes, it is true; and I am very glad of it."

"Oh, Lillith! you must not speak in that wild way; you are simply depressed and morbid. You will live to a good old age, I hope and believe."

"Do you remember the little singing bird Rupert shot?" said Lillith, turning her great blue eyes, with their unnatural calm, on Una's face.

"I remember the dead bird on the hill-side, you pitted so much; but we do not know that Mr. Northcote shot it, do we?"

"Yes, it was his hand that killed it; he told me he was out with his gun in that very place a few hours before we went to it, and for want of better sport, he took aim at a little bird soaring up through the sunny air on its happy wings, and brought it down all faint and wounded to the earth, where it beat about, helpless and quivering, till it died."

"He might have been better employed, certainly; but why think about that poor little bird now, Lillith? I am afraid it only shared the fate of thousands in this sporting county."

"Doubtless; and so shall I; but I shall die as that bird did, Una." She spoke with such a set, rigid face, and so much quiet certainty, that it seemed impossible to answer her.

Happily Una was spared the necessity; a quick, eager step came to the door, and Hervey dashed into the room, his handsome face glowing with excitement and pleasure.

CHAPTER XI.

"What wonderful good fortune to see you here, Miss Dyrart!" exclaimed Hervey Crichton, as he found the two girls together. "Who could ever have hoped for such a visitor on this miserable day? and I so nearly escaped misadventure altogether!"

"That would have been a tremendous misfortune," said Una. "How were you saved from the fatal occurrence?"

"By the good offices of an old fairy, in the shape of Mr. Northcote's niece, who now acts as the benevolent guardian of the whole family. Would you like to know what she said? She came to me, when I was lounging in the verandah in a state of the deepest despondency, and solemnly remarked, 'Master Hervey, you don't know what I think you'd like to know—as how Miss Dyrart's in the drawing-room, bless her pretty face.' She is gifted with penetration, you see; and I repaid her kind offices by nearly upsetting her altogether, for I flung my arms about wildly in my surprise, and I believe I jumped over her; but anyhow, here I am."

"Well, I am glad I am in her good

graces," said Una; "she is the dearest old woman possible. But, Mr. Crichton, why do you not take better care of Lillith? she is looking very ill."

"I only wish I could," he said, "but she battles me in every way; she has become a regular splinax. However, it must do her good to have you with her, Miss Dyrart; I hope you will come to us as much as you can. We have not shown you half the wonders of our neighbourhood yet, and we are sure to have fine weather for walking or riding parties after this rain. By-the-way, there is one expedition you must positively make; you have never yet seen the 'Eagles' Nest.'"

"Yes, I have," said Una, a sudden gravity settling on her bright laughing face.

"You do not mean to say so!" exclaimed Hervey, looking much surprised; "when, and how? In what possible way did you get up the cliff—not alone, surely?"

"Alone, on my own two feet, as I told you I should," said Una; "but it was an exploit entirely of my private arranging, and I do not mean to tell you anything about it, Mr. Crichton."

"Did you see the spirit of Fulk Atherstone, as you expected," said Lillith, suddenly turning her white face towards them.

For a moment Una remained silent, with a rather strange expression in her eyes, then she said, "I almost think I did."

"What a pity you must say 'almost,' Miss Dyrart," said Hervey, "otherwise we might hope for quite an orthodox ghost story; but if he was visible in any shape, did you ask him to tell you what your future fate is to be? I hope if he did reveal it, he mentioned me," continued he, dropping his voice to a low whisper on the last words; not so low, however, but that Una might have heard him, had she not been absorbed in the thoughts to which his careless question had given rise. Her future fate! Had not the voice she had heard at the "Eagles' Nest" been prophetic at least of a great change in her existence? Could the world ever again wear the same aspect to her as in the days that closed but yesterday—when it seemed a realm all sunshine and brightness, with free airs blowing through it, and shining rivers bearing joyous spirits on through banks of flowers to the haven of a deep, serene sea? Could it ever look thus again, when the great cloud that hung over Humphrey Atherstone's life had cast its shadow on her path, and made her feel that to disperse that gloom for him, in ever so partial a degree, were a fate more desired by her than all the visions of a happy love, which once had charmed her girlish fancy? She remained silent, thinking on these things, with thoughtful eyes and serious lips, while Hervey Crichton watched her anxiously.

At last he spoke. "I really believe the ghost did foretell your future fate, Miss Dyrart; you look so serious."

"Yes, I believe he did," she answered very gravely, turning her eyes full upon him. Then she rose somewhat abruptly, and saying she would come to see how Lillith was very soon again, she took her leave, declining Hervey's escort in her homeward walk.

Mr. Onnliffe duly arrived next day; he was an astute, hard-headed lawyer, who had so long been employed in administering justice with that inflexible impartiality which is the special characteristic of English judges, that he had become exceedingly expert in adjusting the balance between the intricate developments of good and evil, as they appear in the complex human nature; and Colonel Dyrart thought very wisely that he could have no better guardian of his daughter's interests in the event of his own death. He had, therefore, asked Mr. Onnliffe to become trustee for her property, as well as his own executor, jointly with Mr. Northcote. Of course these arrangements involved the transaction of a good deal of business, and Una was left quite to her own devices, while the two gentlemen were closeted with Mr. Knight in Colonel Dyrart's study the whole afternoon.

The rain of the previous day had been succeeded by brilliant sunshine, which tempted Una to spend the afternoon out of doors; but not caring to ride without her father, she started off to take a solitary walk by the river-side. She passed through the village, keeping out of sight of the rectory, as she did not wish to be joined by Hervey Crichton, which was an event pretty sure to happen, if he chanced to perceive her at any distance.

After leaving the last cottages in the little street behind her, the road, or rather path which skirted the river, entered on a wild uncultivated district, where a far-off, lonely little house was the only sign of human habitation. Una met no one whatever, as she walked along, absorbed in her own thoughts, and the whole tract of country seemed entirely deserted, excepting by a peasant lad who was herding cows in a distant field.

Just as she came in a line with the solitary cottage, however, she saw a child standing on the river-bank, who irresistibly attracted her attention. He was a little boy about four or five years old, and he was entirely occupied in watching the fate of a vessel he had just launched on the river, in the shape of his own little tin drinking-cup, freighted with cowslips; but his peculiar appearance, with his keen dark eyes, olive complexion, and the spiral black ringlets hanging round his head, enabled Una at once to recognise him as the child of Edwards and the beautiful gipsy, who had gazed at her so intently on the day of the cricket match. Everything connected with this man had a sort of horrible fascination for Una, not only on account of the singular aversion she had felt towards him on the first occasion when she had seen him, but because she knew by instinct that he was the object of the deep undying hatred, which Atherstone had told her was the one great element in his life. She drew near to the child, therefore, and asked him if he were there quite alone, in the soft low tones which were usually found so winning by all who heard them. They seemed, however, to have quite the contrary effect on this strange-looking boy. He started aside like a little wild animal, and then, when he thought himself at a safe distance, he glanced out of the corner of his eyes at Una with a sly scrutiny, which invested the childish face with a look of preternatural old age and cunning. She

felt only the more anxious to make some sort of acquaintance with him; so in order to reassure him, she went and sat down under a tree, and appeared to take no notice of him whatever. This plan succeeded. In the course of a few minutes he crept stealthily back, keeping his black eyes fixed on her, however, even when he was engaged in the rescue of his boat, which was making an undeniable shipwreck among some reeds. Gradually, however, as she neither spoke nor moved, he seemed to forget her presence altogether, and darted backwards and forwards with supple swift movements, utterly unlike those of a English child, while he collected a new cargo of leaves and blossoms, wherewith to load his tiny vessel. When it was finally arranged quite to his satisfaction, he proceeded to the very edge of the water, and launched it with an energetic push intended to give it an impetus down the stream; but in doing so, as might have been expected, he over-balanced himself and fell headlong into the water, with a wild piercing shriek, which rang in Una's ears for many a day afterwards. The current was at this point exceedingly strong, and in another moment the poor little child was being whirled away with a rapidity which left small chance that his living body would ever be rescued from that fatal stream. But Una had started to her feet the moment the accident happened. Quick-witted, and thoroughly brave, she had seen at a glance that there was but one chance for the drowning child's rescue. Some way further down, a rock jutted out nearly to the centre of the river, and it was possible that his frightful course in the power of the foaming torrent might be stopped at that point, or at least, greatly impeded. If she could reach it before he did, she might find it practicable to save him; for she had been taught to swim like many other girls in this sensible age, although she could not, of course, plunge into the water without great risk to herself, burdened as she was with her heavy clothes, she did not hesitate for a moment to make the attempt. She started instantly along the river-bank at her utmost speed, flinging off her hat and jacket as she ran, to give a little more freedom to her movements, and she succeeded in reaching the rock, before the river had brought its burden quite to that point; it was very near, however. The gleam of colour in the midst of the foam made by the little red frock, was all she could see—and it was within a few yards of her, as she sprang without hesitation into the stream and struck out boldly towards it. For a few minutes she struggled on, gasping, toiling against the fierce current, weighed down by her clinging garments, and half blinded by the spray dashing over the stones. She felt almost in despair, and it seemed to her quite like a miracle, when just as the sinking child was being borne past her, she was able with a sudden effort to catch hold of his clothes, and then exerting all her fast-failing strength, she succeeded in dragging both herself and him unto the rock, where she sunk down exhausted, half in and half out of the water. For some little time she remained thus, grasping the child tightly with one hand, while she maintained herself in her perilous position with the other; but gradually she rallied from the almost overpowering effect of her great exertions, and crawling along the slippery rock she gained the river-bank once more on the path she had so abruptly quitted. Then for the first time she was able to look at the child, and she saw with dismay that his eyes were closed, and he was quite insensible, if not dead. She glanced wildly round for help, and perceived with infinite satisfaction that the boy who had been tending the cattle in the field at some little distance, had seen the accident, and was now making his way towards her. She told him hurriedly, as soon as he reached her, that he must run for the doctor as fast as he could, and asked him if he knew where the child's parents lived.

"Sure and I do; it's little gipsy Edwards," he answered; "they lives up yonder, all by their-selves;" and he pointed to the lonely house Una had noticed as she came along.

"Then I will take the child there, and you must go and bring the doctor. Tell him Miss Dyrart sent you. You know where Dr. Barton lives, I suppose?"

"A baby might know that," said the boy, who was a somewhat uncouth specimen of the British peasant; "but will you mind the cows, while I be gone?"

"Never mind the cows," said Una, laughing, in spite of her anxiety about the child; "I will pay you well only go quickly."

The assurance reached even the remote gleams of intelligence which were existent somewhere within the lad's thick skull, and he started off at once in the direction of Valehead.

The Good Work in India.

From the Indian Missionary Directory, issued at Lucknow, it appears that the number of native Christians now is 266,391, against 224,258 four years ago, and the number of communicants 68,389 against 52,816, a gain of about 4,000 a year in the latter item, and of about 10,500 in the former. The Directory gives the name and present address of 960 living missionaries and ordained native pastors in India proper, excluding Burmah and Ceylon. Then there are about 800 other names of retired and deceased missionaries, together with brief sketches of their lives wherever such could be obtained. Furthermore, in an appendix appears a list of 116 lady missionaries connected with the various Women's Societies, the year of their arrival, their sphere of work, and place of labor being also given. "Not the least valuable feature of the book," says the Lucknow Witness, "is a short, well-written sketch of all the Societies and Missions at present working here, prefixed to each chapter of names, so that one gets in small compass a clear, correct account of the whole field." There has been an increase of 31 missionaries and native ordained agents since 1871. The American Methodists and Baptists have considerably increased their forces, while the English Societies have been expending their energies more in the direction of Africa and some other fields.

For the Presbyterian.

A Scotch Minister's Love Story.

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

The suit of clothes arrived on the Monday morning, and were safely delivered into the hands of Betty, who, afraid of being discovered if she substituted at once all the new clothes for the old, placed in the minister's dressing-room the trousers and waistcoat, leaving the coat for the next morning's experiment. Mr. Dunning always rested longer on the Monday, feeling exhausted from the Sunday. And when at length he arose, and "hung on his clothes," the unwonted difficulty of buttoning seemed to rouse him from his lethargy. But his mind was too full of the great purpose he was to fulfil on the morrow, and soon, to Betty's relief, he relapsed into his usual abstraction. That day he met Dr. Malcolm in the parish, and the Doctor quickly noticing the new trousers and the old coat, wondered what had come over his friend, and in the evening remarked to Catherine, his daughter, that surely Mr. Dunning was going to get married; but Miss Malcolm only blushed and said nothing, not daring to ask why her father had such a thought.

All that day a wonderful change showed itself in the dissenting minister. He could not read, nor sit, nor walk. He was restless and nervous. He retired early to bed, but it was only to toss up and down, and get no rest. In the midst of his broken slumbers, he fancied Dr. Malcolm was purring him with a hay fork, and that he was brought to bay in a corner of the manse study, and then the sweet form of Lucy Malcolm stole upon his favored imagination, and he saw her pleading fervently before her father in his behalf. And then he awoke in the act of kissing that fair young lady in token of his gratitude for her kindly interference.

At length Mr. Dunning got up and dressed. But his mind was so full of the great matter that was before him, that Betty found him clothed in his fine new clerical garments, without his having observed the loss of his old friend of a coat that had stuck by him so closely for many a long year. In a moment of great mental abstraction, he threw himself in the arm-chair and lay back, his eyes gazing upwards. During this absorption, Betty contrived to put round his neck a new white stock she had purchased to be in keeping with his dress. He would probably have remained there all day in that attitude, had not his housekeeper reminded him that he had an engagement at the manse, and so with a sigh he took up his old umbrella (for the ladies had not dared to touch that tried and constant friend) and walked out. He passed on quite unconscious of the fact that he had become a great centre of attraction, and that he was followed by a crowd of little boys and girls, all passing various comments upon the minister's unwonted appearance. At last he came to the manse, and asked if Miss Malcolm was at home; to which he received a reply in the affirmative, and was accordingly ushered into the parlor. But alas! fortune does not always favour the brave. Mr. Dunning had not thought of time, and that it was too early for the Doctor to be out on his parish work. There was the Doctor seated comfortably at the fire, and reading from a large volume. He turned round greatly surprised at the early visit of his brother minister, but what was his astonishment when he surveyed Mr. Dunning's outward man. Politeness restrained him from enquiring or laughing. And poor Mr. Dunning took his seat so awkwardly that his friendly host could hardly receive him with his usual warmth. And so, to take away his wondering eyes from his metamorphosed friend he opened the book—a volume of "Calvin's Institutes"—and said, "You'll believe me orthodox now, Mr. Dunning, that I am making your favourite author my morning's study." "Oh yes," said Mr. Dunning, recovering himself at the mention of Calvin's name, "We should all study that book a great deal more than we do." "Yet, I think," said Dr. Malcolm, "that I prefer the truth set forth more in a lively form than in this cold, abstract manner." "What," said Mr. Dunning, waxing hot at the very thought of Calvin's name being culminated, "to hear a man like you speak thus! What more admirable than Calvin's Institutes! What a perfect system!" "Yes, perfect," replied Dr. Malcolm, "as a skeleton is perfect." And so their conversation became animated. A long discussion ensued, and soon Mr. Dunning, forgetting himself, forgetting all about the lady he had come to see, and about the object that had brought him hither, took up his hat and umbrella and rushed out of the house.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Dunning was pursuing his way in hot haste and with a burning face towards his own house, when he suddenly remembered the purpose of his recent visit to the manse. He quickly turned, and was soon again at the door of his friend's house. By this time Dr. Malcolm had gone out, feeling discontented at the occurrence of the morning. And now fortune seemed to smile upon Mr. Dunning's wooing. But alas! for his purpose, when he asked for Miss Malcolm, she sent a message that she could not see him. She had been offended at his apparent indifference. She had been anxiously awaiting a favourable opportunity of seeing him, but he had gone off in hot haste without one thought of her, and now her indignation would allow of no excuse. She therefore hastily asked her sister Lucy to go and see him, and get him out of the house as quickly as possible. When Lucy entered the parlor, she was no less bewildered than her father had been at the unwonted spectacle presented by her friend. Mr. Dunning was walking up and down, evidently laboring under intense excitement. The moment he saw her, he turned round, he seized her by the hand, and what was her amazement to hear him say hurriedly, "Oh, I have come to ask you to be my wife. Old Betty is going away, and I must have some one to take care of me. Now, Miss Malcolm, promise to consider

earnestly and prayerfully my proposal. Oh, I do pray you will consent! Oh what a happy man you will make me! Excuse me now," and with that he rushed nervously out of the house.

Let not our readers be indignant at the conduct of the reverend wooer, and condemn him for trifling with woman's fluttering feelings. Let them remember in charity the character of the man. Thrown out of his usually absorbed, metaphysical state of thinking, and called upon suddenly to enter the arena of the practical, to make proposals for a wife, what confusion of ideas to which all this led! He could not calmly reason about the election of a wife, as he could in his solitary study about the subject of election in general. Nor could any amount of reasoning have made him aware that the ladies had prepared the elder sister for the reception of his proposals. And then we must ever remember the suggestive words of our noble Scottish poet, "that the best laid scheme o' mice and men gang aft agley," or the words of the king of poets, "there is a providence that shapes our ends, rough how them as we may." What a providence there is, especially in marriage! It is a three-fold tale of how men fall in love, and how they plot and plan to accomplish their designs, and yet some circumstance occurs that changes the whole current of their lives; that separates them for ever from the object of their affections, and leads them to marry other persons altogether, of whom they never had a thought as to being their partners in life's thorny path. This receives many illustrations from our everyday experience, not only in regard to marriage, but to many other important concerns in life. And so all we can say of Mr. Dunning's courtship, viewing it philosophically, is that providence intended Miss Lucy Malcolm to be his wife, and plan and work as deeply and actively as possible, all the ladies of the parish church and dissenting congregation could not accomplish the union of Miss Malcolm and Mr. Dunning.

But to return to the manse. How are we to describe what took place there after the minister's sudden departure? Lucy at first was completely overwhelmed by the proposal that had been made to her. She stood irresolute a while, not knowing what to say or do. At length she ran to her sister's room and flew into the arms of Catherine, who was wondering impatiently at her delay, and then burst into tears. Catherine at once forgot all about herself, and calmly asked what had taken place to make her sister act in this way. At length Lucy mastered her emotions, and interrupted only now and again by a nervous sob, told what had happened; how Mr. Dunning had seized her suddenly by the hand, and proposed then and there to make her his wife; and how, without waiting for a reply, he had abruptly left the house. Then Catherine, fairly overcome by this intelligence, sat down in a chair, and with her head resting in her hand, seemed entirely lost in reflection. She saw at once how the affair had taken this turn, and thought at first tempted to be severe towards Mr. Dunning, she considered that her sister had always been more intimate with him than she herself—that Lucy entertained a deep affection for him as a friend, and that with her fine sensitive nature she would be the more likely of the two to be an excellent wife for him—and then, what weighed most in her mind, that as her father had learned to trust to her as the head of his household, Lucy would not be so much misled as she would have been. She resolved further to say nothing about the part she had played in Mr. Dunning's courtship, and so, after a considerable lapse of time, she broke the silence and said, "Lucy, dear, this has happened very strangely; but I cannot dissuade you from accepting Mr. Dunning. I know he is a good man, and will make an over-kind and devoted husband; and oh, dearest, I am sure you will be a tender, loving wife. I'll speak to father about it when he comes home." And having said so much, she fairly broke down and burst into tears. Lucy, who had been weeping quietly as she sat on her chair, at length said, "Oh Catherine, my dear sister, I have always loved Mr. Dunning as a friend, and now I feel I can love him as my husband." Then Catherine rose and kissed her, and prayed that God's blessing might attend them both.

The Vatican.

The Examiner and Herald says:—"The Vatican seems to have awakened to the conscientiousness that it is hardly safe to go too deeply into the general miracle business. The remarkable apparitions which have been so frequent of late are all very well, as long as they reflect glory on 'the church' and its priesthood; but if they happen to reflect something else—why, that is another matter. Thus recently a young Savoyard girl, Theotiste Covarel, very pious but very ignorant, had a vision of the Virgin, who it appears manifested herself, not to denounce modern progress, but to complain of the conduct of the clergy of the diocese, and to order prayers for their conversion, because many of them said mass while in a state of mortal sin! The Bishop unwittingly, on the report of two canons and several priests, accepted the miracle. This created a terrible stir among the clergy in general, and the matter was finally referred to the Vatican. Shortly after, the Prefect of the Department confined the unfortunate girl in a lunatic asylum on the pretended certificate of two doctors, who have since denied having signed the declaration. The credulous canons who reported on the case have been obliged to make a humiliating denial of the authenticity of the miracle, and the Bishop has quietly been superseded. It is thought the affair will put a stop to the numerous apparitions with which the credulous have been deluded, since a great scandal has been so narrowly escaped."

Every branch of the true vine produces the same kind of fruit, let that be much or little.

What are Raphael's Madonnas but the shadow of a mother's love, fixed in a permanent outline forever?