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OR,
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CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Austin Ambrose walked back to Lee with a step that had regained its usual elasticity, and with hope again beaming in his eyes.

Few men would have been sharp enough to notice, in the midst of such excitement, so trivial a fact that Mrs. Day's shawl was dry; but Mr. Austin Ambrose was not an ordinary man, and in an instant his acute brain was hard at work.

If Mrs. Day had been out in the boot all night, as she would have then believed, then her shawl would have been still wet; but as it was dry, then Mrs. Day must have been somewhere to dry it, and Austin Ambrose felt, with that kind of conviction which is more a matter of faith than reason, that Margaret had been with her.

He felt as certain as that he was walking along the road that the Days had rescued Margaret from the rock, and had taken her to some place of safety, and that for some reason, best known to themselves, the Days had agreed to conceal the fact, and lead the public to believe that Margaret had perished.

"That woman wasn't crying," he muttered to himself as he walked along; "her eyes were as dry as the shawl! No; Margaret is in hiding somewhere, and those Days know where. Now, if Blair will only kindly pull round, I am all right."

When in the Holme, he learned that "Mr. Stanley" was still unconscious, and that there had been no change in his condition.

"Get some one from London," he said to the old doctor with an energy which surprised him. "Get the best man—the very best; we must save him!"

"You can send for Sir Astley," said the doctor, quietly; "but if we send for the whole college of physicians, they can do no more than we are doing. It is concussion of the brain, and the poor fellow's magnificent constitution will fight for him far more effectively than we can. He shall have every attention, trust me."

Austin Ambrose acquiesced. Sir Astley might have seen Blair, and recognize him, and, in any case, might talk about the affair when he got back to London, and cause inquiries to be made.

So the days wore on. No man could have received more attention than Blair got at the hands of the old doctor, whose interest in the case increased as it became more critical.

Austin Ambrose, too, watched over him, as the people of the house declared, "like a brother!"

The case still puzzled the doctor, and he went one day and looked at the spot where Blair had been found; but the feet of the people who had searched for him had blotted out the impression of the struggle between Pyke and Blair, and there was no trace left of the murderous assault.

Change had worked hard in Austin Ambrose's behalf, and if Blair should only recover, all might yet go well with his plans.

On the eighth day, toward evening, the doctor, who had been bending over the bed with his fingers on Blair's pulse, looked up suddenly, and motioned to the nurse and Austin Ambrose.

"Shut out the light," he said in a low voice.

They drew the window curtains, and Austin Ambrose stepped up on tiptoe.

"Is—he coming too?" he asked breathlessly.

"The doctor nodded."

"I think so. Let no one speak to him but me."

They waited, and presently Blair opened his eyes and looked round with a dazed inquiry.

"Margaret!" he said.

The doctor held up his hand warningly to the others.

"Madge! Where are you?" he said again, almost inaudibly.

"Your wife cannot come to you at present," replied the doctor quietly. "Do not speak just yet."

"Where am I? Have I been ill?" inquired Blair, knitting his brows, as if trying to remember. "Ah, yes; the horse! Is the horse all right?"

"The horse is all right," said the doctor. "I will tell you all about it after you have had a good sleep. You have been very ill, and will be worse if you do not sleep."

"All right," he said, with a sigh. "Madge, my wife, is asleep, I suppose? Have I been ill long? Don't wake her or distress her; I shall be all right! Stop!" he exclaimed; "the paints and things, they are in my pockets, and the easel will be sent on to-day. Give them to her! I hope they haven't come to harm!"

"They are all safe," said the doctor, soothingly.

"I'm glad," said Blair, with another sigh; "and the horse is all right? Well, it's not so bad! I thought he had settled me, confound him!"

The doctor thought he referred to the coat, but Austin Ambrose's cheeks paled.

He stepped forward noiselessly.

"I am here, Blair," he murmured softly. "Take the doctor's advice, and don't talk yet."

"You, Austin, old fellow!" exclaimed Blair, trying to hold out his hand. "Why, how did you hear of it? To come the same night. That's kind. But how did you get here? and Madge—have you seen Madge? Don't let her be frightened, Austin, I shall be up in an hour or two. Tell her—no, don't tell her anything; leave it to me."

"Very well," said Austin; "and now get some sleep, old fellow. I shall say another word."

Blair closed his eyes, and presently the doctor looked up and nodded.

"He is asleep, and is saved, please Heaven!" he said in a grave voice.

All that Austin Ambrose had accomplished was as nothing to the task that loomed before him.

The time must come when Blair would ask for Margaret, and insist upon seeing her.

Many men would have shrunk from such an ordeal, but Austin Ambrose was not the man to allow sentiment,

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as he would have called it, to interpose between him and a long cherished design; so that when, on awakening from the deep sleep which saved his life, Blair asked: "Where is Margaret?" Austin Ambrose was prepared.

"Blair," he said, laying his hand upon the sick man's, "are you strong enough to hear what I have to tell you? I trust so, for I cannot keep it from you."

"Keep it from me! What is it?" demanded Blair, trying to raise himself. "Is it anything to do with Madge? No, it can't be, of course. But why doesn't she come? Ah, I see—give me a minute, Austin," and he turned his head away. "My accident has frightened her, and she is ill."

"Yes, she is ill!" said Austin Ambrose, watching him closely. "Blair, for Heaven's sake, be brave, be calm."

"What is it? You haven't told me all!" he exclaimed. "Don't turn your face away; tell me. Anything is better than suspense. Let me go to her—bring her to me. She can't be so ill—!" He paused, breathlessly.

Austin Ambrose laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Blair, dear, dear Blair," he murmured; "she cannot come to you; you cannot go to her. She has been very ill—Blair, your wife is dead!"

The sick man looked at him and laughed.

"That's a pretty kind of joke to play upon a man lying on his back," he said. "Go and fetch her, and we'll laugh at it together—perhaps she'll see the fun in it; I don't."

Then, as Austin Ambrose remained silent, Blair looked from him to the doctor, who had entered—an awful look of anguish, fearful scrutiny.

"I'm—m dreaming; that's what it is," he muttered. "Madge—don't leave me. Take hold of my hand. I—I dream somebody had told me you were dead. Don't cry, dear. It's I who was nearly dead, not you; and I'm all right now. Did you find the painting things? They're all right, are they? I told Austin—I told—!" he stopped short suddenly, and uttered a cry, a heartrending cry, and raised himself so that he could see Austin Ambrose's face. "I'm not asleep," he moaned; "I am awake. And you are there—and you have just told me, dead! Dead! Austin—don't—keep it from me! Tell me all. Look! I'll be quiet. I won't utter a sound. Doctor, for Heaven's sake make him tell me!"

The doctor turned his face away. It was wet with tears; there was not a tear in Austin Ambrose's eyes.

"Shall I tell him—or wait?" he whispered to the doctor.

The doctor nodded.

"Better now than later," the shock will be less now he is weak. Poor fellow, poor fellow!"

Austin Ambrose bent down, and in a few words told the story. He said nothing of the visitor, who had come, nothing of Margaret's anguish. According as he told it, Margaret had strolled down to the rock and remained there too long, until the tidal wave had caught her and washed her out to sea.

Blair listened, his face pallid as that of death, his wide eyes fixed gleamingly on the speaker's face, his hands clutching the quilt. Every now and then his lips moved as if he were repeating the words as they dropped cautiously from Austin Ambrose's lips, and when he had finished he still

leant upon his arm and looked at Austin with horror and despair.

Then, without a cry, he sank back upon the pillow and closed his eyes.

"He has swooned," said Austin. "It was too soon."

The doctor shook his head.

"No; better now than later."

After a moment or two Blair opened his eyes.

"Have you told me all?" he demanded, and there was something in the tone and the wild glare of his eyes that smote Austin Ambrose and made him quail.

"Yes," he said, after a moment's pause, "everything has been done, Blair. Everything. I think you will know that without my saying it. There is no hope—there was none from the first. She was not seen after the tide reached her—she will not be seen again. Blair, you will play the man for—for all our sakes," and he pressed the hot hand clutching the quilt.

Blair looked at him and withdrew his hand; they saw his lips move once or twice, and guessed whose name they formed; then he spoke.

"Austin, did you ever pray?" it was a strange, a solemn question. "If so, pray now, pray that I may die!"

Over the weeks that followed it will be well to draw a veil; enough that during them the strong man hovered between life and death, at times raving madly and calling upon the woman he had loved and lost, at others lying in a stupor which was Death's twin sister.

As soon as he was able to walk with the aid of a stick, Blair got out of the house unnoticed and made his way to Appleford.

Pale and trembling, he stood on the beach and looked at the rocks where Margaret had been seen—looked until his eyes grew dim, then he crawled back to the cottage.

"You have been to Appleford?" said Austin, who had watched him.

Blair lifted his heavy eyes.

"Yes, I have been to Appleford," he said, in a hollow voice. "I have seen the last—!" he stopped, and his breath came and went in quick gasps. "Austin, while I live, my poor darling will be with me in my thoughts, but—but never speak her name to me. Never! I—I could not bear it."

"Yes," murmured Austin Ambrose, sympathetically. "I understand. You will fight your sorrow like a man. Blair, Time—Time, the great healer—will close over even so great a wound as yours; and you will be able to speak of her, poor girl."

Blair looked before him with lack-luster eyes.

"Do you think that a man who had been thrust out of Heaven could ever learn to forget the happiness he had lost?" he said, in a low voice. "While life lasts I shall remember her, shall long to go to her! That is enough," he added, sternly; "we will never speak of her again!"

(To be Continued.)

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War News

Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

RESPONSIBILITY RESTS ON GENERAL NIXON.

LONDON, April 17.—(AP)—British troops on Banda will be sent in the forced retirement of Kut-el-Amara where he is still besieged, reports General Sir John Nixon, who at the time was in command of the forces in Mesopotamia. This statement was made in the Commons today by J. Austen Chamberlain, secretary for India, who added, "no communications were made to the Government of India or the Imperial War Office."

SHIPPING CONTROVERSY IN COMMONS.

LONDON, April 17.—(AP)—The controversy which has been carried on in the newspapers by ship owners in Britain and interests in Italy, charging the expense of Italian merchant vessels, was aired in the Commons today by a series of questions answered by Robert H. Houston, M.P., a large ship owner of Liverpool, in letters to the press, detailing Italian charges, opened the matter first asking whether Italy had a right of war on German ships, and Lord Robert Cecil, Minister of Trade, was in the negative. Mr. Fringle, Liberal, asked why ship owners should be drawn out along this line, and that notice be given of the decision. Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, replying to their questions, based on the justice for the statements that shipowners were bleeding Italy in matter of freights. The decision closed by the War Trade Committee statement that the British Government fully realized the importance of providing sufficient shipping for Italy, and is doing everything in its power to ensure ships be available at reasonable rates.

NEUTRAL SHIP OWNERS WARNED.

LONDON, April 17.—(AP)—Neutral ship owners were warned by the British Foreign Office, that all cargoes or bunkers of German origin on neutral vessels would be liable to seizure under Order-in-Council of March 1915. Foreign Office advised neutrals to obtain certificates from British consular officers, showing that the cargo of their ships did not originate in Germany.

BRITISH ADMIRALTY WANTS CANADIAN RECRUITS.

OTTAWA, April 17.—(AP)—The British Admiralty wants recruiting party, headed by Lord Guinness, is on its way to the Atlantic. The party will

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