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Helen Wallace
Author of
"The Greatest of These!
"Their Hearts' Desire;"

CHAPTER I. IN THE TAPESTRY ROOM.

old butler awaiting him in the arch of the door-

SIL CONYERS leaped from the station dog cart before the big chestnut was fairly pulled up, and dashed up the broad steps. "Any news,
Sim?" he asked breathlessly of the

way. "Not a word, sir, not a trace! Oh, sir, it's a sore stroke, and it's a sad house you've come
to, but Sir David and my Lady'll be
fain to see you, and you surely can help
the str'' conventioned respect and some us, sir"-conventional respect and some deep trouble struggling oddly together

in voice and manner.
"Is Sir David in?" "No, sir, he's out. I don't rightly know where, but I'll inquire, sir. It's as if he couldn't bide still in the house, but my Lady's in the Tapestry Room,

"Stop, Sim, you needn't announce me," said Conyers hastily. "How-how is she?"
"What could you expect, sir?" said the old servant, shaking his head; and, like one giving himself no time to think or to hesitate, Conyers quickly opened the door, and stepped into the familiar room. A noble room, almost resembling a gallery in its proportions, and lit at the further end by a great three-light window.

gailery in its proportions, and lit at the further end by a great three-light window.

As its name suggested, the walls were hung with rare old tapestry, the work of busy, skilful fingers folded long ago quietly enough. Time, the great artist, had dealt kindly with the results of their toll. The original tints had gently faded to a tender, all-pervading pinkish-gray, making a harmonious background to one or two remarkable portraits, and to the severe, simple lines of the fine old cabinets and tables. To the young man it was all familiar with a lifelong familiarity, and he cast one quick glance almost of stupefaction around at the deep-toned masses of autumn flowers, the books, the prints, the photographs; at the hundred little tokens of a continuity of cultured life, each generation leaving its growing legacy to the next. What had happened was so impossible, so unbelievable, and it seemed a thousandfold more unbelievable here, in this room, which breathed the very essence of stately, peaceful, well-ordered life.

Then his eyes quickly traveled to the solitary figure in the deep window recess. She was apparently gazing steadily out at the ample landscape framed by the three tall lancets—the broad, smiling valley in its autumn bravery of ripening fields, of yellowing leaves, sloping gradually upward till field and meadow were merged in rolling moorlands, beyond which misty peaks and distant summits loomed dim. But her fixed eyes were doubtless seeing little enough of the mellow harvest cheer, or of the bright reaches of the river, gleaming here and there amid tufted woods, for when at last Conyers stepped softly to her side, and she slowly turn or ecognition in her gaze. If till now all had seemed bewilderingly unchanged to Basil Conyers, there was change enough here in the blank, bitter hopelessness, the bids when he are and the reach coking the summer again.

If you could have come sooner, I think you might have brought hope with you, but now—; Her voice broke.

"I would have given my right hand to have been here," said Basil, passion-ately, "but by some cursed change your wire missed me, and has been following me about the Loffodens, and then there was the crossing; but if you can bear to do it, for God's sake tell me about t. Remember, I've only had your wire. I know nothing more. I couldn't bear to question Rogers as I came from the station, nor even Sim-tell me what you can. I can't take it in yet, it seems so impossible but there must surely be something that I could do."

"That is the dreadful part, we are all

"That is the dreadful part, we are all so helpless. If only there was anything more we could do than what has been done. My poor husband tries to cheat himself into the belief that there is—and now you! Oh, my dear boy, forgive me. I was almost forgetting what it means to you. I forget everything now. Yes, you have a right to know." "No, no, I don't mean that-never mind about me. Sir David will tell

"I do not know when he may come in,

mind about me. Sir David will tell me—"

"I do not know when he may come in, not for hours likely—he cannot rest day nor night. I may as well tell you; it is never out of my thoughts. I go over and over every detail, wondering if there is nothing that we have overlooked, nothing that we have overlooked, nothing that would afford some clue, till my mind is like a mill ever grinding out misery." The hands, lying passive in her lap, clasped themselves tightly. "It will be a week tomorrow—" size began again in an altered voice.

"My God!" uttered the young man under his breath.

"She had not been quite so bright, you know, since we came back from town; how often I have wondered if we let her overtax herself, but there—that's over. Her home had always been so much to her that I thought the little"—hesitating for a word—"depression would soon pass and that it would pass all the sooner if we were quietly alone together here. That was why I encouraged you to go to Norway—perhaps I was wrong there, too," signing. "Perhaps I let her fall too much into her old solitary ways. She would spend hours by the riverside or in the woods alone. She seemed happier so. You know," fixing pleading, miserable eyes upon Basil's face, "such very young girls often are fanciful, and that was always her fancy—to be alone."

Basil nodded rather gloomily.

"And—and did the depression seem to pass?" he asked a little awkwardly.

Lady Stormont was silent for a moment.

"Not so much as I had hoped," she said with evident difficulty, "but, indeed, it was only the old desire to be alone. I began to think that I had perhaps yielded too much to her whims, that unconsciously she was moping here alone with only us two old people. I thought I would write to you and ask you if you wouldn't shorten your cruise. I thought of asking one or two people—young, amusing. I proposed it to her, but—"

"I think I ought to know exactly what happened," said Conyers gravely, "it seemed to excite her," went on Lady Stormon with the same difficulty. "She said she wante

eyes of a child in their absolute in-nocence and vague wonder, and yet for imaginative onlookers there was a subtle suggestion that these bridal flowers were waking some new emotion in the young bosom under the swathing folds of maiden white-was it shy hope, or fear, or chiefly be-wildered shrinking?

There were few, however, who re-marked what might after all be a mere trick of the fancy, born of the conjunction of that embodiment of youthfulness and the white flowers. symbol of the fulfilment of a wom-an's life. Those were inclined to remark rather upon the superb brush work of the picture—the majolica pot, a joy of color in its gaze of blue and green, the waxen flowers, the golden fruit and the glowing leaves with cide that but for the wonderful hair, the colorless young face and the slender white figure would have been overpowered by the sumptuous accessories. But that bright cloud of hair of Li unusual tawny-red shade would have given distinction to a face far less fair than the delicate one for which it formed such a glowing

"The Stormont hair" was as well known as the old family name. Not only was it repeated in the one or two notable portraits, a Romney and two admirable Raeburns among them, which adorned the Tapestry Room, but Lady Stormont, one of the family by birth as well as by marriage, had her share of the family inheritance, though the last few days had robbed it of its brightness and given it a blanched, lifeless look.

This one striking peculiarity was not the only characteristic of the race. There was, besides, a marked similarity of type, and under Cavalier lovelocks or Georgian peruke, above the soldier's scarlet, the clerical lawn, or the lawyer's black the same cast of features was more or less discernible. To the women it gave at least, as to Lady Stormont, a haughty comeliness, while here and there, as in the youthful face upon the canvas, it flowered into positive beauty. The family tree had spread into many branches, but a certain "clannishness," not to speak of questions of property, had led each succeeding laird to marry among his cousins till the main stem had at last put forth this one frail blossom, the fragile girl looking down upon them from the wall—the last descendant of so many stalwart an and vigorous, capable women.

Basil Conyers knew this world and

"The Stormont hair" was as well

wall—the last converse women.

Basil Conyers knew this world and knew too well that with some girls as tenderly nurtured and as zealously sheltered as Isobel Stormont had been there might be other reasons to account for this bewildering disappearance than those which all who loved her dreaded. But, while like an honest man he would have deemed such things impossible in his own womenkind, one glance at that young face would have made such a thought, had he been capable of it, a blesphemy. Still, as he sat zazing at it, his mind a whirl, a slow red rose under the tan of his young face, which had been pale enough before.

"Will you tell me one thing," he said, slowly. "This—depression"—he said, slowly. "This—depression"—he stoo, halted over the word—"had nothing to do with—with me—had it? You don't think she was regretting—anything? She was—she is so good and sweet and gentle that perhaps because she knew that you and Sir David wished it—and I wished it," the last words—came in rather like an afterthought. "Oh, you know what I mean," he broke off, help-

E. C. T. Vinn and attended to the



"You—you have no news? he blurted out, hardly knowing what he said, but feeling that the silence was unbearable and must be broken."

gates, perhapseby the East gate, where there is no lodge, some passerby, you would think, must have seen her in the road. But we can hear of no one, At first, when it seemed that a few hours must put an end to our suspense, that there must be some simple explanation, we only inquired cautiously. I could not bear that there should be any talk, a whisper even, about my darling's name—good God." with a sudden harsh laugh. "I am long past that now. The whole country is ringing with her name, and yet not a word—not a word. Oh. Basil, where can she be—where?" the flood of her anguish breaking out at last. "My darling, my own flesh and blood—the one child that I bore, the child for whom I cried to God—'Give me children or I die—and the little baby for whom I thanked Him day and night—my child whom I have watched and tended since her eyes opened on mine! I trembled if the wind blew on her, and now—where, where can she be these six days and nights? Think what that means," gripping his arm hard.

Basil shuddered. What might it not mean indeed?

"She was wearing one of her little white frocks like—like that," went on Lady Stormont, glancing hastily at the picture. "She had only her little slippers on, and no hat, Justine says." the poor mother's voice faitering over these details, which had gained such polymancy now. "Where could she go like that?" plercingly. "Do you know what is always in my mind, her voice sinking—"the Alder Pool in the river, where the water is so deep and black."

"No, no, dear Lady Stormont—don't—you mustn't"—Conyers began Incoherently, when she suddenly checked herself, the despair in her eyes changed to a pale ficker of expectancy, as a tall man entered the room.

gled up again, one glance at the newcomer was enough to quench the feeble flame. His wife had no need to put a question to him. She turned away to the window as Sir David, seeing Conyers, exclaimed almost

turned away to the window as Sir David, seeing Conyers, exclaimed almost angrily:

"So you are here at last! Perhaps you can help us with some suggestion now that you are here?"

He was a tall man, rather spare and thin for his height, from which a slight stoop detracted a little. In spite of his easy old shooting suit, his appearance did not suggest the country gentleman or the man of outdoor pursuits. Rather he had something of the bookish, student air. The grief which had crushed his wife into at least outward quietude seemed to have well-nigh unhinged him. Under the heavy eyebrows, of the same reddish tawny hue as his air, the gray eyes, red-rimmed by nights of sleepless misery, looked out—fierce, desperate, shifty—like those of soms batted creature. Ever seeking, and ever seeking in vain, they darted their hungry, questing, craving glances on all sides, and the same consuming fever of unyest possessed the man's whole frame. He could not sit, he could not stand still. His feet uneasily shifted, as if they would fain carry him in some new direction; his hands worked ceaselessly while he hastily recounted to Conyers all that had been done, his voice harsh with the strain of repressing the inward passion of revoit.

"I am getting two more men down from London. I've lost faith in those they sent, and in our own men, too. We should have hit upon some clue before now," walking up and down, driven by a goading impatience. "Marian, I know, is losing hope," with an upbraiding glance toward his wife's stately figure. She started round in swift appaal, but he went on unheeding. "But I will not give up hoping—never—i can't—I can't—violently. "God could not tay such a punishment on any man; it would be too dreadful, too horrible"—the restless, redrimmed eyes roving from the one to the other. Under all the misery of the worse than bereaved father, some other feeling, some deeper dread, seemed to look out from these strained eyes, from that haggard face.

Lady Stormont came quickly to his side.

"David," she said gently,

held her grief down with so strong a hand why she masked it with that set, still face.

For himself a sense of nightmare oppression was growing on him. Was this Stormont? Was that stricken, tragic pair his kind old friends? Was it leobel—Isobel, his little play-fellow, the gentle girl his wife almost, who had

tile slippers-how these crifies stung—out of this sefe, shakered life into—what? I like the of revoil.

"No, I will not give up hope either, I cant—I won't despair, I believe she is alive, and if she is alive, by God, I will find her."

Brave and honest words, and coming from the very depths of his nature, a nature beyond the pleasant, easy surface of which the young man knew as little as yet, perhaps, as his acquaintance did. Now for the first time that outer crust of cool, easy good nature had been pierced, and the slumbering forces beneath had been stirred to a passion of pity, to a white-heat each into action, or rather into action which seemed to he desired into action which seemed to he desired into action which seemed to he desired into action which seemed to he had seay enough to be fullely busy to told himself bitterly, as he wet over every rood of ground within the bark walls in the vain hope of finding some clue that might have escaped other eyes, and questioned and crossquestioned every soul about the place, and for miles around.

From Justine, Isobel's little French maid, he got no satisfaction. Between hysterical grief and the gruesome importance attaching to her amid her fellow-servants, as the last person who had seen 'poor Miss shoke hald. She lurst linto passionate tears at Conyers' first words.

"And to tell it; what cas at say that I had not already say?"

"But there might, the committee triffe which might help, which might strike me though the others did not notice it," urged Conyers.

"No, no, not possible! I had tell it so often to miladi, to Sir David, to the solve and the same show to forgive myself," winging she say—Justine, feels me in the place of the place of the same show to forgive myself," winging she say—Justine, feels me in the place of the place o along the path they had so often trodden of late—to the Round Wood, where,
between two silver-stemmed birches, the
hammock of gaily colored twines still
hung. He stood gazing at it for a blank,
desolate moment, then he moved aimlessly away, taking, as a sleep-walker
might, the first natriew path which offered. A few listless steps along the
silippery, gilstening carpet of pineneedles, and, like the sleeper awaking,
he was orought up with a sudden shock
-he was on the brink of the river!
The broad stream lay dark and gissily still under the overhanging trees and
the dense screen of aider bushes which
hemmed it in on either side. Their
branches dipping to the slow, gliding
water. Conyers looked around him with
a freezing thrill of dread, a dread
which, though fierely repelled, was
steedily growing—for this was the Alore
Pool the thought of which haunted the
poor mother, sleeping or waking. Did
the answer to that unanswered question lie here among the knotted roots
of the crowding alders, or amid the long
water weeds swinging in the slow current? Had isboel's light feet trodden
the same path, had she stood where ac
now stood listening to the cool lap-lap
of the water? Had she—a cry almost
broke from him as up from the shadowed dorfloat toward him.

Then he tried to puil himself together,
for it was only a puff of white vapor
sailing high overhead, and doubled in
the dark, placid surface; but as he looked from the soaring trees, ranged fire
slient spectators on the banks, to the
surlen water, he suddenly recalled SirDavid's twitching fingers, seeking the
clairvoyant's letter again. Little wonder
if he were ready to snatch at any means
to burst the bonds of sense and
walked swiftly away, going where he
did not heed, so long as it was away
from the river, feeling only the need
for the place from him. He turned and
walked swiftly away, going where he
did not heed, so long as it was sway
from the river, feeling only the need
for the place from him self at last out
on the open moorland fronting the s

relentlessly into his brain; a spray of lvy rustling against the window pane whispered ceaselessly, "Where?" Every wandering breeze murmured it-till Where?" filled all the darkness and the silence. He had long ceased to wonder at Sir David's unbearable restlessness, at his almost savage impatience. Secretly he was conscious that they were taking possession of himself, and long before it was light he had decided that he would go to Eddleston, a big seaport and manufacturing town, a long day's drive distant, and try to follow up a suggested clue there. Only too likely it would end in nothing. like so many another-overeager eyes deceived by some chance likeness-but at least it would be better than eating his heart out at Stormont.

Though he had tried to discount a probable failure beforehand, Conyers realized that he had hoped more than he knew from the bitterness of disappointment when his quest proved unsuccessful. A night at a "commercial" shrinking from the return to Stormont,

hotel did not tend to raise his spirits, and in the morning, as he stood aimlessly gazing out over the dirty wire blinds to the narrow, busy street, he was conscious chiefly of a weary bringing nothing with him but slain bringing nothing with him but slain hopes and deeper disappointment. How was he to face the silent question in Lady Stormont's eyes and Sir David's restless misery? It suddenly occurred to him that he might drive back by a series or cross roads, and make inquities by the way. The roads were little irrequenced, and so far as he knew they had not yet heen specially explored. He had little hope of any result, but when it was an blind enance, one way was as good or as bad as another. It would at least postpone the bitter, inevitable acknowledgment of another failure, and keep desparr at bay a little longer. It was the last thought perhaps which chiefly decided him, and in a short time he was driving out of Eddleston by the northern road in a light trap and behind a smart horse.

The weather had changed in the night, and the smiling harvest calm had given place to a raw, blustering wind, dreary with driving clouds and rain. The few wayside houses had their doors closed against the blast, and the unreaped grain lay fiattened under the beating rain. It was a long, dreary business, but Conyers kept doggedly at it, and the day was well advanced when at last he stopped perforce to rest the horse and have a long-delayed lunch.

At the little inn he went again through the form, as he was rapidly beginning to feel it, of making inquiries. On this side of the hills, Stormont was not a name to conjure with, as it was far and near in Sir David's own county; but every one had heard of the missing girl, and the stout landlady's sympathy was quife sincere, if it were not so great as her curiosity. While Conyers struggled with some curiously tough mutton, she stood over him, exclaiming and questioning, while he tried vainly to stem the flood with an occasional query of his own.

At last, as if struck by some sudden thought, she turned to a strapping servant-lass.

"Jean wasna there a red-heided lassie wi' they gangrel folk that gae'd through the toon yesterday?" hopes and deeper disappointment. How was he to face the silent question in vant-lass.

"Jean wasna there a red-helded lassie wi' they gangrel folk that gae'd through the toon yesterday?"

Jean would probably at another time have tossed her head, "as if she had time to heed a tramper-lass!" but the fact that the "young gentleman" was concerned in the answer put a different color upon it. She knitted her freckled brows.

'White' Odd that wad be a ferlie indeed amang sic folk. It wudna be white long. As far as I mind, she had on a bit dud o' an auld black frock, and as for what like she was, except that she had a lot of red halr hanging about

MR. BORDE

Eloquent Appeal by

Closing his very able speech address debate in parliament

opening of the present session

There are other matters of

tion referred to in the speed

propose to refer to at the

moment. These as well

French treaty, will come before

House in due course. But I

say that so far as the bill

purpose of reforming the e

laws of this country is concer

will be prepared to give it m

hearty support. I brought

subject in 1906, upon motion

committee, when the presen

Justice of Canada was min

justice. I did not introduce ; partisan way, I informed r

friend, Mr. Fitzpatrick, at tha

that I did not propose to ma

attack on the government in

tion with what I was proposi

cause I desired that both

should join together to perfect

sible the electoral laws of thi

try. A committee was formed

took the matter into consid-

but owing to the elevation

Fitzpatrick to the bench, no b

brought down. Legislation wa mised last session but it w passed, presumably because not intended that parliament be dissolved before holding session. I am prepared to joi heartily in any action of the

ment looking to a reform in o toral laws. I think the gove should see that our electoral l placed at least on as high a Canada as that which prevails British Isles. Notwithstand tain illegal acts which from time come to light in the Bri lands, we know that the stand electoral purity there is much than, unfortunately, it has !

Canada during recent years. lieve that we should follow ample of some of the A states, and either prohibit co contributions altogether, or make it a penal offence for a poration, or any member of a ation on its behalf to contrib any campaign fund, unless it

public and unless the people the

tribution and the purpose for it was devoted. I think that

tributions to campaign funds be made public. At the present hose of the candidates the

Great Britain a very much

rule prevails. There the ca

fund under control of any

club, any political association ganisation, must be disclose oath, and no contribution made without violation of unless it is made in a public the amount of it is verified t I think further that we shou an independent investigation for, when necessary, into any

where there is good reason to that corruption has taken pla er by one party or the other both, and where neither one the other sees fit to take ac think also that provision s made for the disfranchiseme rupt constituencies where co has widley prevailed, that as

the Throne which, however,

Conservative leader, Mr. R.

den said :

FOR CL

Clean Elect

Ottawa, Dec. 18.-In the afternoon, Richard Blain, tive, Peel, registered a stro plaint against the damag shipped into Ontario on

Hon. Mr. Fisher said he preciated the danger, but as is being used for feed, the be ground and the foul troved. While he did not danger serious, Mr. Blain's bringing the matter up wil good purpose as a warni farmers not to use it for se The last two hours before journment for the Christi tion were devoted to a dis the Japanese immigration both leaders speaking. Mr. R. L. Borden raised

by moving for copies of all council. correspondence, this year. He commented of that no minister had taken Monday's debate. He challe stitutionally the pract which as indicated in sp British Golumbia repres members of the House had ished with assurances on t Japan that a large influx be allowed. Taking up the previous statements, Mr. E terpreted them to mean t could be treated with con cause they had no army, J power must be treated wit What a doctrine this for t

Reviewing the various wa Borden stated that the firs Morrison in his demand in



"A cry almost broke from him."

comfort. But a young man's endurance is short-lived. There must be something to be done. He laid his hand gently on her rigid arm.

"Dear Lady Stormont, can you bear to speak to me—"
She started at the touch, and looked up like one waking from a dream.

"Oh my poor boy, it is you at last.

iast season's Academy. The picture was that of a very young girl in a diaphanous white frock of almost childish simplicity. She was standing on a fiagged terrace walk beside a dwarf orange tree in a huge majolica pot—one slim hand in the act of breaking off a white spray of blossom. The limpid light gray eyes were the