



Lord Cecil's Dilemma

The Picnic

Woodall Forest

CHAPTER XLIII.
A pink flush mounted to her pale cheeks, and she looked at him questioningly.

"Sir Charles is very anxious about you," he continued, then added, gravely, "and I am anxious about him. He does not improve so well as he ought to, and a relapse at this stage might terminate fatally. Get well quickly, for I am sure that he misses his favorite nurse! Good-by."

For an hour Ada lay perfectly still, having dismissed the nurse, and reviewed with terror the events of the past few weeks. She had bound to her the man that she loved, but at what a fearful sacrifice! He had promised to marry her, but she had extorted that promise from him by unfair means. Her whole conduct had been wicked and despicable. She leathed herself for it, and she knew that one day he must hate her for the deception she had practiced. His hatred, his contempt, even, would be worse than the lash of the knout—it would wither her to death! His condition was not improving, he was regretting his new bonds, he was drifting for love of Gladys! He would die rather than be a disloyal to her!

Ada raised herself on one elbow to get her strength. She must see him, and perhaps reveal to him her wickedness! The nurse thought she had here with misery—she would then be desolate; indeed!

She touched a hand-bell that stood near her, and the nurse came in. "I want you to assist me to dress," she said, and her tones brooked no denial or argument. "I am strong enough to walk. The doctor says that Sir Charles will not recover while he is doubtful about my fitness. I am not ill now; I will see him!"

When her feet pressed the carpet, she tottered, ready to fall, her senses reeled, and she feared that she would faint; but, with a magnificent effort of will, she clutched at the bedclothes and steadied herself, saying:

"I shall be all right presently, nurse. Get a warm bath ready, please."

When she was dressed, Lady Hastings, looking pale and worried, came to see her and kissed her almost hysterically.

"I have had no rest since you became ill," she murmured. "And Sir Charles is worse, I am sure. He never speaks, and seems to have lost interest in everything. It is very thoughtful of him, but, of course, I know that he is worrying about you."

"Have you written to my mother?" asked Ada.

"No, I forgot," confessed Lady Hastings. "All this trouble quite upsets me."

"I am glad that you have not; it might have bothered mamma and Flossie, and you see that I am really not ill after all."

"How sweet and kind you are," Lady Hastings said, weakly. "How proud my son ought to be of such a wife as you will make."

"Don't! Lady Hastings, never say such words again!"

Ada covered her eyes with her hands, and a bitter sob escaped her, but she quickly recovered herself, saying:

"I will see Sir Charles now; I am sure that my presence will cheer him. You may help me to his door, please." And, when the old woman came near, she whispered: "And the other matter, we will attend to, also. I will write to Mr. Gardner—I will tell him all to-day."

The nurse's mouth twitched, and a look of fear came into her eyes, but she nodded and muttered:

"Yes, miss, it will be better so."

Lady Hastings was a trifle puzzled by Ada's strange manner and half-inclined to resent it by a show of childish petulance. What right had any one to be ill and cause so much inconvenience? It seemed that her life was to be never without its disappointments and crosses. Like all people of weak natures, she took offence at the most trivial actions and words which did not exactly please her, and when Ada looked round again my lady was gone.

She was glad of this, for if Sir Charles was in her eyes a king among men, his mother did not even command her respect.

"I shall write all to Mr. Gardner to-day," she again told the nurse, "and you have nothing to fear. I ought not to have delayed until now."

A servant met them in the corridor with two letters for Miss Craythorne. One was from her mother—the other bore the crest of the Stanhopes—and she was so shocked with sudden dread that she nearly fell.

The handwriting was bold and flowing—evidently masculine. Whose could it be? She put both letters into her pocket, and, dismissing the nurse, guided herself carefully with a fierceness that almost outcoated her.

The baronet was lying still, his eyes closed, and when she spoke to him softly, tremulously; he started murmuring:

"Gladys! Gladys!"

At the mention of that name Ada sank back with a half-stifled sob. It was ever that name! It was always Gladys! Oh, how he must love her! He had no thought for Ada Craythorne. He had promised to marry her—but he would learn to loathe her yet! The mad, hopeless passion that she felt for him blazed for an instant in her eyes. Why should she renounce him? Was he not hers alone? The struggle was bitter, and had he not opened his eyes full upon her she would have crept from the room to pour out her misery in tears where no one could hear or see.

"Ada," he exclaimed, "you here? I am glad that you are not very ill. I feared that you were. I feared that they were keeping something from me. I have reproached myself for demanding so much of your attention. For my sake you have sacrificed yourself."

There was a listlessness in his manner that filled her with pain. He looked and talked like a man whose interests in life were dead.

(to be continued.)

LADY IRIS' MISTAKE;

Hero of 'Surata'

CHAPTER II.

He was sad and silent all the rest of the day. The motto of his race embossed everywhere struck him with fresh force: "Held with honor." Was it always so easy to follow?

"After her last conversation with the earl, Iris went once more to the gallery to look at her mother's portrait. She wanted to study the face, to find out from it the traits of character which had won such deep worship from her father. She formed a fair picture as she stood before the portrait, with her long white dress trailing on the floor, the sunlight falling full upon her fair hair and upon her lovely face and white throat, her hands clasped, and her earnest eyes riveted on the painted lines. She did not in the least resemble the noble, stately-looking lady who had been Countess of Caledon.

Lady Iris was tall, with a slender graceful figure. There was something queenly in her careless ease and proud bearing; and every movement was perfect in its beauty. She had an oval face, fair as the whitest petal of a lily, with the exquisite color that one sees in the heart of a wild rose. Her eyes were of the color of a wood violet, shaded by long lashes; and her mouth was simply perfection, with the proudest and daintiest of curves. Straight dark brows and a mass of fine fair hair completed her beauty.

The face in the picture was dark, having the hues of a damask rose, with dark hair and eyes. There was something almost melancholy in the face, as though the shadow of early death lay there. One white shoulder was covered with crimson velvet and ermine, the other rested lightly on it.

"No child could ever be less like a mother than I am like mine," said Lady Iris to herself. "My eyes and hair are quite different. Why am I so unlike you, mother?" she asked, addressing the picture.

As she stood there, she thought how different life would be for her if that dear mother were still living.

"I may not talk to papa about her—and perhaps no one else cares to hear; but every day I shall come here and see her."

A footstep in the gallery disturbed her, and Mrs. Bellow came up to her. "My dear Lady Iris, I could not find you. What are you doing here?"

"I am talking to mamma," was the answer, which somewhat startled the good chaperon, who laughed a little surprised laugh.

"You are so strange—you have such peculiar ideas! Lady Clyffarde is here and is very anxious to see you. Will you come?"

"Certainly. Of all people, I long most to see Lady Clyffarde. I will go with you now."

"She is in the drawing-room, and the earl is with her."

With quick light footsteps Lady Iris quitted the gallery and hastened to the long drawing-room. A lady rose to greet her, a tall handsome woman of noble presence, dressed in a dark gray velvet. She held out her hands with a kindly smile.

"Lady Iris!" she cried. "Why, when I saw you last you were a child—and now you are a beautiful woman!"

"The beautiful woman" is very pleased to see you, dear Lady Clyffarde," said Lady Iris, laughingly, "I have been longing to see you ever since I came home."

(To be continued.)

Generally Ancestors.

They were sight-seeing in Boston, and had reached the Old South Church of Revolutionary fame. A darky custodian who looked as though he might have survived from Revolutionary days, showed them about. His shabby black finger pointed the empty pews with Boston notables of long ago. He could tell just who sat where.

"Yes, but do many people come to this old church nowadays?" some one asked.

"Oh, yes, sir, yes sir. Dis heah church is well filled every Sunday. As' mos' of dem dat comes is ancestors."



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The Earth as a Star.

Although it is possible for an aviator to be invisible from the ground and yet for the ground to be visible to him, it is equally true that while an aeroplane can be seen from below, the ground cannot be seen from the aeroplane.

The condition of this latter phenomenon arises when a large part of the sun's rays are prevented from reaching the ground by a low-lying mist.

Of course, the machine, being above the mist, is lighted by the full blaze of the sun, but the sunlight which is reflected upwards from the top of the haze overpowers the feeble rays of the less brightly lighted ground.

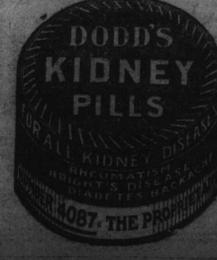
It is astonishing how much glare really can be reflected from a cloud—for a low-lying mist is but a cloud resting upon the ground.

If, for example, we were transported to some other planet in the Solar System, we should see the earth as brilliantly illuminated as Venus or Jupiter, owing to its cloud-laden atmosphere, the sunlight being thrown back into space by the clouds.

Hence, it is not surprising to learn that the reflected sunlight from a thick ground-mist is bright enough to overpower the feeble rays issuing from the less brightly lighted ground.

The effect, as has been pointed out by a high authority, is similar to that of a lace curtain over a window, which enables the occupants of a room to see out, while the interior cannot be seen from the outside.

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Earliest Known Loan Negotiated 430 B.C.

Two thousand and more years ago there were creditors and debtors just as there are to-day. Originally the loans were not of money, but of actual commodities.

The earliest loan safeguarded, according to modern investment standards and of which we have any record, was made in 430 B.C. It consisted of 30 bushels of dates secured by the land of the debtors. The clay brick on which it was recorded was dug up in the ruins of Nippur, Mesopotamia, by an archaeological expedition of the University of Pennsylvania.

Translated, the inscription on the brick reads as follows:

"Thirty bushels of dates are due to Bel Nadin Shun, son of Marasbu, by Bel Bullitau and Sha Nabu Shu, sons of Kirebt, and their tenants. In the month of Tashri (month of harvest) of the 24th year of King Artaxerxes I. they shall pay the dates, 30 bushels, according to the measure of Bel Nadin Shun, in the town of Bit Balasau. Their said, cultivated and uncultivated, their set estate, is held as a pledge for the dates, namely, 30 bushels, by Bel Nadin Shun. Another creditor shall not have power over it."

Note how carefully the loan is recorded and how the time and place of payment are named. The creditor is, in fact, given a first mortgage on the land of his debtors, for the document declares "another creditor shall not have power over it (the land)."

The brick was found with 730 similar clay tablets in the remains of a room that had once been part of the business establishment of a wealthy firm that would have, according to the parlance of to-day, been known as Marasbu Sons, Nippur, Mesopotamia.

The fact that the first loan of this kind was of dates testifies to the antiquity of dates as a food and to their lasting popularity through the centuries.—Baltimore Sun.

Black Magic.

The native of Africa is a simple soul. Before his existence was complicated by the arrival of the European his wants were few and his thoughts were strictly regulated by his surroundings and the beliefs of his father, so far as they had been translated into things material.

Among the beliefs which came from the east, the most striking to him is a life beyond and that the spirits of those who have passed over can guide the destinies of the living. The African is a spiritualist.

In the midst of a Western civilization Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his friends seek to probe the future for the benefit of the present. With medium and seance, a touch of mystery and a deal of propaganda, they seek to revive interest in a new faith by trying to prove an age-old hope. The African has never heard of Sir Arthur but the latter could tell him nothing.

A woman, the daughter of a European settler in the Nandi district of Kenya, had her curiosity aroused one day by signs of unusual excitement among some of the native squatters. Inquiry elicited the information that there had arrived among them one who could speak with dead friends.

The woman was frankly sceptical, but Western scepticism is of little use against a simplicity of faith which has its roots in the past.

Ultimately the native said, "If you don't believe, come and see." She followed into the low grass but, and when her eyes had become accustomed to the darkness and the smoke from the open fire on the floor, she discerned a circle of her father's labourers around one who sat in the centre of the hut.

There was nothing unusual about his appearance, and it may be that imagination, or a leaping flame from the fire, placed a strange light in his eyes. In front of him, on the earthen floor, stood an ordinary native gourd.

Presently the silence was broken by low moanings and strange mutterings and the circle of natives swayed inwards to listen. The woman was thoroughly conversant with the Nandi language, and she was amazed to hear the sounds form into words and the words into sentences, giving forth details of the worldly goods and transient things of those around her, and, most astonishing of all, the past history of those who had died and their fathers before them.

Still unbelieving, she watched the lips of the guardian of the gourd for signs of motion, but there was no movement visible. Ultimately, she brought her Western knowledge to her aid again and charged him with being a ventriloquist.

The fire flared up fitfully and she saw that he was indignant. He protested most earnestly, and finally suggested that he would leave the hut altogether. He went outside and squatted some distance away, where it was impossible for his voice to carry.

But in the silence of the hut the words still came from the gourd.—Daily Mail.

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SIDE TALKS.

By Ruth Cameron.

ON A PINK SASH.
It is wrong to feel a tenderness that is almost an affection for one's most cherished possessions? Is it foolish to care so much for immaterial objects? I do not know. But of this I am sure that if it is, it is a kind of sin which the youngest child, at least the youngest girl child, comes naturally by.

Did you ever have a pink sash when you were a child? A pink sash was the motive power that started my thoughts traveling in this direction: I saw one in a window and it carried me back to the days when I had a pink sash, and awakened the memory of my love for it.

Sunsets and Pink Ice Cream. It was a very broad sash of the loveliest shade of pink, a pink that suggested pink ice cream and sunsets and roses. It was somewhat unusual, having checkerboard squares of silk and satin, and it was finished with a fringe. Mother kept it between tissue paper in the lower drawer in the spare room bureau. I can see that drawer now with its layers of tissue paper and its little treasure trove of pretties. My best gump was kept there, and the handkerchiefs with a bit of real lace on it that my aunt brought me from New York and that I was allowed to carry only to parties.

The Second Drawer. Later, as I grew to years of dis-

cretion, the little treasure trove of pretties was removed to my own room and kept in my second drawer. (Don't you think the second drawer is almost always the depository of the daintiest things: the top drawer for gloves, hair-ribbons, handkerchiefs and such like, the lower drawers for underwear and prosaic daily needs; but the second drawer for the dainties). The pink sash had passed on by this time but there were other treasures to receive its need of tenderness—a red chiffon scarf with one's coat, tied in a bow; a little white feather-fan with pink and blue flowers painted on it, a grown-up corset cover with yards of blue ribbon woven through it. How vividly they come back to me out of the past, what tenderness they can call forth even yet!

Can it be wrong to feel such affection?

SHIRTSOCKS. Of course it can't. Or if it is, then are we all wrong from the child that was I, watching with eager eyes the pink sash being lifted from its tissue paper nest in the spare room bureau, to the old lady who showed me her pretties one day not long ago—the lavender scarf and the bit of old lace, the collection of best handkerchiefs and the three pairs of grey silk stockings.

One can let the love of pretty things dominate, and crowd out other natural loves, and that, of course is wrong. But so long as the love of our pretties—the solace we get from visiting the little nest, where in tissue paper and sachet our daintiest pos-

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SIGNS OF AGE.

I know the yellow of the leaves of the tree that my father has planted in his garden. I have seen it in all the autumn months. I have seen it in the same place as I've seen it in the autumn of my father's life.

When He Wakes.

"I once had an employee who was a construction gang," says an adolphus contractor, "and I was Irishman by the name of Michael O'Connell."

"One day Michael was walking along a street when he came upon a man who was in the shade of a tree. The man was with a stern expression observed:

"What an you, brother, sleep in the shade of a tree? You've got to get up and go to work in the shade of a tree."