

JUST IN TIME.

BY ADELINE SERGEANT, AUTHOR OF "JACOB'S WIFE," "UNDER FALSE PRETTENCES," &c.

CHAPTER XIX (Continued).

"Ah Miss Esilmont," he said, lifting his hat politely, "it is a lovely morning for a walk, is it not? Good morning Mr. Lockhart; good morning. I trust your cousin is better today."

"The doctor stood before them, evidently meaning to go no further. The situation was a little awkward for Anthony took no notice of his salutation. And Beatrice felt painfully conscious of the doctor's integrity which had just been presented to her mind. But Anthony took the quickest way out of the difficulty."

"I must bid you good bye, Miss Esilmont," he said, looking and speaking exactly as though she were still alone. "Beatrice will be expecting me home again."

"Good bye Mr. Lockhart," said Beatrice holding out her hand with her brightest and frankest smile. "Give Bertie my love, and tell him not to despair. I will take care of Lillias."

Dr. Airlie watched the little scene with curious interest. When Anthony was out of hearing, he said in his softest tones.

"What a fine looking fellow that is. What a pity that his antecedents have been so unsatisfactory."

"What do you know about him?" said Beatrice, suddenly.

Dr. Airlie shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands. "Nothing," he said slowly, "that is fit for you to hear."

Beatrice's old impulses, her old longing, to say satily "I don't believe you," was strong upon her at that moment. But she controlled it, as she had controlled it many a time before. She walked on silently at Dr. Airlie's side. After all she knew nothing of Anthony Lockhart. She had seen him some half-dozen times, and had had a little conversation with him. What was that compared with Dr. Airlie's knowledge of his past life, presumably well grounded and complete?

"By the bye," the doctor said, breaking in upon her meditations in his softest tones, "I have long been intending to ask you a question, relating to the events of the night of the fire."

"The subject is such a painful one," said Beatrice quickly, "that I must beg of you to spare me."

"Excuse me, it is my duty to ask this question, and you are the last person to shrink from the performance of any duty, however painful it may be. Not that this is a painful or personal question," said the doctor, with a smile. "It is simply a matter that may have escaped your memory. Do you remember that you were on the point of showing me some papers that had fallen out of the tin box found in the library in the west wing at Glenberrie?"

"I remember."

"You have the papers still, perhaps?"

"No, they are in the hands of their rightful owner."

"Mr. Douglas?"

"The master of Glenberrie, to whom all papers and valuables found in the house belong," said Beatrice steadily.

"Then—excuse me for asking—you did not give those papers to Mr. Anthony Lockhart?" said the doctor.

Beatrice did not hesitate. "I have answered your question, Dr. Airlie," she said, with complete self-possession, "and I do not see the use of pursuing the subject."

"You mean that you gave them to Mr. Lockhart?"

A flush rose to Beatrice's brow. She set her lips and said nothing. Dr. Airlie smiled.

"And what does Mr. Lockhart mean to do?" he asked amiably, as if she had answered him in the affirmative.

"Excuse me Dr. Airlie. I said nothing of having given them to Mr. Lockhart. I said that I gave them to the master of Glenberrie. Is that not answer enough? Surely you know the name of the master of Glenberrie?"

The doctor smiled, and then shook his head. "You are too sincere for your part, Miss Esilmont," he said. "You had the game in your own hands, and you have—pardon me the expression—you have fooled it away. If you had told me boldly that you had given the papers to Bertie Douglas, I should have believed you."

"But I—" she stopped short, and bit her lip.

"You could not say so. No, for you had not done so. You gave them to Anthony Lockhart. Your silence tells me more than your speech. Admirable as you may be in many ways, you are not fitted for the part of a conspirator."

"And yet," said Beatrice, turning towards him a swift look of defiance, "you may yet find, Dr. Airlie, that I am equal to the task of outwitting you."

The doctor raised his eyebrows. "A challenge!" he said, good-humoredly. "Undoubtedly a challenge. My dear young lady, I would not accept it for the world. We should fight on unequal terms. Our weapons are not matched."

"Possibly not. I use frankness and boldness for mine," said Beatrice, who was angry. "If I wanted to know a secret I would never try to entrap a woman into heedless admissions, or worm out of her what she did not wish to tell. I would ask outright for information, and withdraw my request: if I saw that it gave pain or offence."

"I have had the misfortune to offend you, I see, by my question just now," said the doctor with great interest. "I assure you I did not intend to do so. I thought that I was meeting you on your own ground—using those very weapons of courage and plain speaking on which you pride yourself. The weapons which I meant to represent myself as using were simply those of added age and experience opposed to your own fresh youth and beauty, which make you so much more formidable an opponent than I could ever be. But in accordance with your suggestion, my dear Miss Esilmont, I withdraw the questions that I asked, and apologize."

"It is a little late in the day for that, is it not?" said Beatrice rather bitterly. She meant that he had gained all information he wanted before he withdrew his question. But the doctor only looked amiably obtuse, and said, "I beg your pardon?" Then, as Beatrice disdained to repeat what she had said, the two walked onward for a few minutes in perfect silence.

Dr. Airlie spoke at last.

"I am afraid that I have in some way incurred your displeasure," he said. "If I can do anything to alter this melancholy state of things, I shall be only too happy."

Beatrice drew her warm wrap rather more tightly around her and answered with a frankness which showed her determination to use no unfair method of self-defence.

"It is true," she said, "you have offended me, Dr. Airlie; that is to say you have acted in what I think is an unbecomingly manner. You advised Lord Morven to refuse Mr. Douglas's proposal for my cousin Lillias' hand. You will pardon me for saying that I have never been able to understand why you gave your opinion in the matter at all."

"That is a hard saying, Miss Esilmont. After my long connection with the family I take an interest in it which surely justifies me in my anxiety for the welfare of its members. Besides, allow me to make a little correction. Lord Morven refused Mr. Douglas's application as soon as it was made; and it came upon him with all the force of a surprise. You were present, I believe; you know for yourself that Lord Morven had had no conversation with me on the subject when he dismissed Mr. Bertie Douglas."

"He had said to me that you had foreseen it," said Beatrice quietly. "You discussed the matter before Bertie came back from India."

"My opinion being asked by Lord Morven, I could not avoid giving it," said Dr. Airlie.

"And why, may I ask, did you give such an opinion?"

"Why did I say that I should not permit the marriage, were I in Lord Morven's place? Because I thought—to speak quite frankly, my dear young lady—that Bertie Douglas was a very poor match for Lady Lillias Ruthven."

"He has inherited a fortune from his father's old friend in Bombay."

"I did not know that fact when I gave my advice."

"But now that you know it, you think differently, I suppose."

"No," said Dr. Airlie softly. "No. As long as Mr. Douglas has Glenberrie only, he was no fit suitor for Lady Lillias. With Glenberrie and the Indian nabob's fortune, he was not altogether—impossible. With the fortune alone and without Glenberrie he relapses once more into his old condition and is inadmissible."

"But he has Glenberrie!"

"Yes. But he may not have it long."

"Who told you that, Dr. Airlie? I never did!"

"Ah, that is my secret," said the doctor joyously. "You never did; and Lockhart never did; and yet I know all about it. Old John Lockhart of Glenberrie made a will, did he not? Ah, Miss Esilmont, we know what he said in that will, if the world does not. And Anthony knows, and Lord Morven knows, and another person whom I will not name knows too. It is only poor Mr. Douglas who does not know."

"He rubbed his white hands together, and looked at her with such thorough enjoyment of the situation that Beatrice shrank back angry and yet appalled."

"You think you know a great deal, Dr. Airlie," she said at last, in a very cold tone, "but remember that it is not always safe to act upon knowledge gained by underhand means."

"Certainly not. You are quite right, Miss Esilmont, as you always are. But I am not driven to underhand expedients as yet, thank God! My knowledge comes to me in ways that are perfectly legitimate, and I shall make all the use of it that I choose."

"Mr. Lockhart is not the man to brook interference in his affairs," remarked Beatrice.

"You take a good deal of interest in Mr. Lockhart's affairs," said the doctor with a smile. "Perhaps I may be allowed also to remind you that Mr. Lockhart does not brook interference, neither does the Earl. And it seems to me that by enlisting your sympathies on his side in clandestine interviews Mr. Lockhart is in danger of being accused of interference, in what is most especially the Earl's business."

Beatrice's surprise alone had made her listen to the end of his speech. When it was concluded, she looked at him for one moment with a chill disdain which even he felt the influence, drew herself up to her full height and said a few words in a very haughty tone.

"I will remember what you say, Dr. Airlie. You bear in mind also, that I never forgive an insult! I wish you good afternoon. Come, Leon."

She placed her hand on the dog's head and turned resolutely in an opposite direction from that in which she had been walking with Dr. Airlie. The doctor did not venture to follow her. He watched her graceful figure until it was lost to sight between the trees, and then he smiled to himself and waved his hand ironically.

"Brave words, my lady!" he said, beneath his breath. "You think to lord it over me when you are Countess of Morven, do you? You will find out your mistake. I have a hold over your future husband which even your influence will not serve to loosen!"

Presently he turned around, and walked quietly back to his writing-table. His face was still ashy white, but his voice was steady and unconcerned as he made some trivial observation about the weather. Beatrice replied in the same tone. Evidently he wished his recent outburst to pass without any remark.

"You will be on your way to the Alps tomorrow," he went on, "I hope that Switzerland will give you back some of your bloom, Beatrice. You have been losing it of late."

He stretched out his hand to her with a tender yet melancholy smile. She laid both her hands in his, and leaned forward a little towards him as she spoke.

"You need change as much as we do, Morven. Why do you not come with us?"

He shook his head. "Not just yet. There are some business matters that I must attend to."

"But you will come whom they are finished?"

"I hope so."

"And before I go, Morven, will you let me say one word to you about Lillias?"

Lord Morven's brow darkened slightly. He made a movement as if to draw away his hand, but Beatrice retained it firmly.

"No," she said, "you must not begin by being angry with me before you hear what I have to say. Morven, Lillias is very unhappy."

"I am sorry for it. But I can do nothing, I fear, to make her happier. Beatrice, you are a woman of the world, you ought to understand my motives. Bertie Douglas is no fit suitor for my sister."

"Dr. Airlie's very words!" said Beatrice, withdrawing her hands in swift displeasure. "Has he been influencing you?"

"Steven Airlie is my friend," replied Morven, coldly. "If I ask him for advice he is bound to give it."

"But you are not bound to follow it," said Beatrice, rising and standing before him. "Why should you be subservient to his wishes? You consult him at every turn. You set his advice above your sister's happiness. It is not right."

"My dear Beatrice, you surely do not know what you are saying," said the Earl quietly. His face was pale, almost rigid in its impassiveness. Beatrice knew the look; it was one of inflexible determination, before which even her proud spirit quailed a little. "I am the best judge of my own actions. Lillias will not marry Mr. Douglas with my consent."

"If it is you who speak, Ralph?" said she reproachfully. "You, who used to be such a loving brother—so kind, so indulgent, so anxious for her happiness? I seem not to know you now. You would surely not sacrifice her whole life to pride and worldly feeling? Do not know what you are doing. Lillias will break her heart. I have never asked you anything for myself; but see, I beg of you now. For my sake let Lillias have her way. I will do anything to please you if you will grant me this, Morven. How can I touch you? Shall I kneel to you for it—the only thing that I have ever asked? You said that you loved me once."

She was kneeling in very truth as she spoke. She had slipped down upon a hassock at his feet, and her clasped hands were lifted supplicatingly. He thought that he had never seen her look so beautiful before. Her magnificent dark eyes were suffused with tears, the carmine color came and went in her expressive face. The very pride of her demeanour gave effect to this unwonted exhibition of humility, and endowed it with a womanly charm which to most men would have been irresistible.

Did Morven find it so?

"You won't deny me, Ralph?" she said, taking one of his hands in hers and putting it softly to her lips. It was an act of delicate homage that pleased him more than all beside.

"Beatrice," he said, "my darling, I cannot bear to see you pleading in this way. Get up and let me give you an answer."

"I will get up when you have given me one answer, and only one," she said. "Say yes, like your own noble, generous self and I will be content. If not—"

She never finished the sentence. Morven started back with a hasty warring movement. The door-handle had clicked. In another moment Dr. Airlie walked into the room as calmly as if it belonged to him, and not to the Earl at all. Morven made a furious gesture of dismissal, of which the Doctor took no notice. He advanced to the writing-table and looked smilingly before him. Beatrice did not rise; she was still holding Morven's hand in hers and kneeling on the footstool, but her attitude was no longer a beseeching one. She glanced at the Doctor with supreme scorn, and then turned back to her cousin, whose melancholy face expressed more perplexity and embarrassment than any sign of yielding. The charm was broken—the good moment was already past.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A growing evil. Scrofula, or king's evil, as an enlargement of the glands of the neck is termed, may be called a growing evil in more than one sense. Mrs. Henry Dubbs, of Berridale, was cured of enlarged glands of the neck and sore throat by the internal and external use of Hayward's Yellow Oil.

The energy and cheerfulness with which Gladstone is preparing for a tremendous struggle against apparently insurmountable odds are marvellous. Other men would be cast down and dejected, but the blacker the sky grows the more merrily he claps on sail, and whistles for more wind. There must have been the making of a Prince Rupert in him in his younger days. It is difficult to foretell what effect his swing and dash may not have upon the masses. We shall be better able to guess after he shall have applied the torch to the hearth.

It can do no harm to try Freeman's Worm Powders when your child isailing, feverish or fretful.

For lame back, side or chest, use Shiloh's Porous Plaster, price 25 cents. For sale by J. Wilson, Druggist.

No, Ethel; when you hear of a young girl having made a good "match" it doesn't signify that she has got something that will get up in the morning and light the fire.

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Giles' Lincture Iodide Ammonia. Removes all Unhealthy Bubbles. Cures Lameness in Cattle. Spinal Meningitis. Sprung Knees. Founder, Weak Limbs. Quittor. Spavin, Ringbone, Wounds.

No stable should be without it. Railroad, mining and express companies all use Giles' Lincture and in the great racing stables of Belmont and Lortland it has achieved wonderful success. One trial will convince.

Write D. R. GILES, Box 242, N. Y. P. O., who will cheerfully give advice on all diseases and also on the management of cattle. Sold by all druggists at 50c, and 60c bottle. In 4 quart at \$2.00, in which there is great saving. The Lincture in white wrappers is for family use; the yellow for cattle.

Giles' Lincture Ammonia Horse and Cattle Powders.

Used by all the leading horsemen on Jerome Park, Fleetwood, Brighton Beach, Sheepshead Bay and Bull's Head. Never disappoint, are Tonic, Curative and Hygienic. Destroy Worms, Cures Indigestion, Colic, Bots, Sore Throat, Catarrh, Quittor, Ringbone, and Rheumatism. The dose is small and the power is great. The Powders are guaranteed and Purchasers failing to obtain a cure Money Refunded.

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Fresh Groceries, which will be found to compare favorably, both as regards quality and price, with any other stock in this vicinity.

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