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## The Heir of Bayneham

—AND—  
Lady Hutton's Ward.

### CHAPTER XIV.

"I fancy our responsibility will soon end," said Dr. Greyling with a quiet smile. "Lord Bayneham will be very happy, I think, to relieve us of it."

It was nearly the end of June when Hilda and Mrs. Braye returned to Brynmar, Barbara having given her promise to meet Hilda when the London season was quite over.

When she returned to her early home Hilda resolved to search among Lady Hutton's letters and papers, to see if it were possible to find any clue to her adoption and parentage.

In the grand library at Brynmar stood a large oaken bureau, where the poor lady had been wont to keep all letters and papers. There Hilda searched, there she found letters worn and yellow with age, love-letters, written by the gay and dashing Lord Hutton to the quiet, dignified Miss Erskine; but neither there nor anywhere else could she find any mention of herself. She questioned the older servants who had lived long with Lady Hutton, but they could tell her nothing. One of them spoke of a beautiful woman who had brought Hilda to Brynmar—a nurse, they supposed. The story of Madalen Hurst was a sealed book to them. In despair Hilda gave up all hope of ever knowing anything of a secret so well kept, so she tried to forget it. Neither the doctor nor the lawyer could enlighten her, for Lady Hutton had not taken them into her confidence.

"Make yourself quite happy," wrote Mr. Abelson; "Lady Hutton was a just woman. Most probably you are a distant relative of her own. Few people will ever remember you were not her child, especially as she treated you as such. Respect the secret of the dead as she respected it living."

After that Hilda was content to leave the mystery a secret still, and as weeks passed on she recovered from the great and sudden shock; but while she lived Hilda never ceased to mourn the kind and stately lady who had loved her so well. In the quiet and silence of Brynmar her health and spirits returned. Something of

the old beautiful bloom was on her face when, six weeks afterward, Barbara came, saying that in spite of all remonstrances Claude would come too—not to remain, but only for a few hours, just to see how his newly-won treasure looked.

Hilda went with him to the shady green glade in the woods where he first saw her; and there, with tears shining in her eyes, she told him Lady Hutton's dying words, and how impossible she had found it to discover who her parents were. He loved her too deeply to care; and he kissed the tears from her face, and told her never to think of it again. She was Hilda Hutton to all the world, and would soon be Hilda, Lady Bayneham. He made her promise that when the spring blossoms came she would be his wife.

As the time drew near Lady Bayneham made some faint remonstrance, but it was soon withdrawn, because she saw the whole happiness of her son's life was involved. Unless he married Hilda he would never marry at all. Outwardly she was amiably indifferent, but in her heart there was something resembling dislike for the beautiful young girl who had unconsciously thwarted the one plan and wish of her life and heart.

Spring came, with its blossoms and budding leaves. The wedding was to take place in the pretty country church at Brynmar, and a gay party of guests assembled there. Bertie Carlyon had gladly accepted his old friend's invitation to officiate as the best man, for he was longing to see Barbara again. Diffidence or delicacy—he hardly knew which—had prevented him from calling since he knew she was free.

The flowers Hilda loved were blooming on her wedding-day when the words were spoken that made her Claude Bayneham's wife, and no one wished her joy more truly or more kindly than Barbara Earle. Lord Bayneham took his young wife to Switzerland. He wanted to show her every beautiful place in the world all at once. Barbara told him laughingly, he must be content with one, and Hilda had chosen Switzerland.

Barbara's words were gayest when the hour of parting came. Barbara's face was the last that smiled as the carriage, containing perhaps the two happiest people in the world drove away.

Bertie Carlyon stood by Barbara's side, watching with love's keen eyes every change in that noble face. He saw no trace of sorrow there. Barbara did not keep her woes for the world's amusement. She was calm, kind, and serene, thoughtful of Claude, for Hilda, and for Lady Bayneham. It would have required more shrewdness than Bertie possessed to discover any sign of an aching heart in those calm, clear eyes and smiling lips.

"I think they will be happy," he said, as the carriage disappeared. "Some mortals have an enviable lot. I should imagine that Claude has not one cloud in his sky. I, on the contrary, have no sunshine."

"You!" cried Barbara, turning to him quickly; "why, ever since I can

remember anything at all, I have heard my cousin cite you as the happiest man he knew."

"I made no complaint," said Bertie. "I have enjoyed my life hitherto as the birds and flowers enjoy theirs, without thought or care. I never woke to realities until I became sure of obtaining a certain treasure. Looking within myself I found I was unworthy of it. He who would win must fight."

"Why cannot you fight?" said Barbara, interested in spite of her own secret sorrow. "You are too diffident. A man should never mistrust his own powers if he would have others respect them."

"Miss Earle," said Bertie suddenly, "will you make a compact with me?—will you be my friend? A man can do noble deeds if he has a noble woman to influence him. Be my friend, and there is nothing too high or too difficult for me to attempt if you will aid me. I should value your friendship more than the love of all the world put together."

Bertie was most sublimely unconscious that his words were a declaration of love in themselves; and Barbara smiled as she looked at his handsome, eager face.

"I will be your friend," she said, "if, as you think, I can be useful to you."

"The mouse once helped the lion," said Bertie; "and it is just possible the time may come when Bertie Carlyon, the poor younger son of a not over-rich baronet, may be of some assistance to Miss Earle. Remember," he continued, "if the time should ever come that you want a strong arm or a strong heart, my life is at your service." And Barbara remembered his words.

"Lady Hilda Bayneham will be the belle of the season, I presume," continued Bertie, after a pause of a few minutes. "Poor Captain Massey is wearing the willow to some intent and purpose. I do not think he will ever care to look even at the fairest of belles after this."

"He is a noble, brave man," said Barbara, who had heard from her cousin how well the gallant captain loved Lady Hutton's ward.

"Miss Earle," cried Bertie, "you make me ambitious. I must do something to win from you the same praise. I wonder what I could do that would make you call me a brave, noble man."

"Many things," replied Barbara. "Lead a forlorn hope. Get into Parliament and serve your country; do anything that will make your life a blessing to others and to yourself."

"I wish the days of chivalry were back again!" cried Bertie. "I would call myself your knight, and beg for your glove to wear upon my shield."

"Chivalry is not dead," said Miss Earle; "it will live as long as Englishmen last; there is more hidden under the half-indifferent, half-nonchalant manner of the men of the present generation than many people would believe."

"When shall you leave Brynmar?" asked Bertie suddenly.

"Lady Bayneham spoke of returning to-morrow," replied Barbara. "We shall have much to arrange before the return of our bride and bridegroom."

"May I call upon you sometimes?" said Bertie humbly.

"Certainly," replied Miss Earle. "Call when you will; have I not promised to be your friend?"

With those words ringing in his ears, Bertie Carlyon returned to London. To use his own expression, they "made a man of him," for they gave hope and vigor to his life.

(To be continued.)

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