

LORNA DOONE

CHAPTER LV  
GETTING INTO CHANCERY

Two of the Devonshire officers (Captains Pele and ...)

To me the whole thing was purely gratuitous; not from any sense of duty (though that was bad enough), but from the pain and anguish caused by death, and the thought of my own death.

These things cheered him a little now, and a little more next time; and every time we went on, he took it with less impatience.

For a time (as I may have implied before) Master Stickle's authority, and manner of levying duties, had not been taken kindly by the people round our neighborhood.

And perhaps he was punished justly for language so misleading, by the general indignation of the people all around us.

To myself (though by rights the last to be thought of among so much pain and trouble) I had a great deal to do.

In the next place, Colonel Stickle's illness was a grievous thing to us, in that we had no one now to command the troops.

something else. Even the wounded men ate nobly; all except poor Jeremy, who was forced to have a young eldershoon, with the pitch drawn, for to feed him.

Be that as it might, we knew that if they once resolved to go (as they might do at any time, with only a corporal over them), all our house, and all our goods, and our precious lives, would be at the mercy of embittered enemies.

But yet another cause arose, and this the strongest one of all by far, was the need of Stickle's aid, and calamity of his illness.

However, it soon became plain to us that although they might not be honest fellows, at any rate they were not Doones; and so we took them in, and fed, and left them to tell their business.

These two very worthy fellows—nay, more than that, by some accounts, being downright martyrs—were come, for the public benefit, from the Court of Chancery, sitting for everybody's good and boldly redressing evil.

Now, as it fell in a very black day (for all except the lawyers) the Court of Chancery, if that be what it called itself, gained scent of poor Lorna's life, and of all that might be made of it.

The Doones, with a share of that humor which was in their heredit, had welcomed the two apparitions (if that be the proper name for them) and led them kindly down the valley, and told them then to serve their writ.

To this, in some measure, dear mother agreed, though she could not see the justice of it, yet thought that it might not come even, many places may long lie bare, and the field be all in patches; yet almost every vetch will spring, and tiller out, and stretch across the scatterings where the wind pulled.

and went to seek my darling. Lorna was in her favorite place, the little garden which she tended with such care and diligence.

And soon I perceived that she was right, though not so much as afterward; for the fairest of all things in a garden, and in summer-time most useful, is a brook of crystal water; where a man may come and meditate, and the flowers may lean and see themselves, and the rays of the sun are purified.

Now partly with her own white hands, and partly with the sympathy of the sun, she made of this sunny spot a haven of beauty to dwell in. It was not only that colors lay in the harmony we seek of them; neither was it the light of a plant which grows up from even the delicate tone of foliage following suit, and neighboring.

Feeling many things, but thinking, without much to guide me over the grass-plats laid between, I went up to Lorna. She in a shower of damask roses, raised her eyes, and looked at me with some astonishment.

"Darling," I said, "are your spirits good? Are you strong enough to-day to bear a tale of cruel sorrow, but which, perhaps, when your tears are shed, will leave you all the happier?"

"What can you mean?" she answered, trembling, not having been very strong of late, and now surprised at my manner: "are you come to give me leave, you grow very lively, I replied; 'neither do I hope such a thing would leave you all the happier. Oh, Lorna, if you can think that so quickly as you seem to have done, now you labor to do every prospect and temptation you for this? You are far, far above me in the world, and I have no right to claim you. Perhaps, when you have heard these tidings, you will say, 'John is a trifle gone; your life is gone.'"

"Will I?" cried Lorna, with all the brightness of her playful ways returning; "you very foolish and jealous girl, you are a trifle gone, and I am I forsake every flower I have, and not even know that the world goes round, while I look up at you the whole day long and say, 'John, I love you.'"

During these things, she leaned upon me, half in gay imitation of what I so often made her do, and half in depth of earnestness, as the thrice repeated word grew very lively, I replied; "neither do I hope such a thing would leave you all the happier. Oh, Lorna, if you can think that so quickly as you seem to have done, now you labor to do every prospect and temptation you for this? You are far, far above me in the world, and I have no right to claim you. Perhaps, when you have heard these tidings, you will say, 'John is a trifle gone; your life is gone.'"

"Sweetest of all sweet love," I cried, for the sign of a tear detected me, "what possibility could make me ever give up, Lorna?"

"Upon that there was no more for bearing, but I kissed and clasped her, whether she were Countess or whether Queen, I thought not; and she was, at least in heart, and mine she should be wholly. And she being of the same opinion, nothing was said between us.

"Now, Lorna," said I, as she hung on my arm, willing to treat me anywhere, "come to your little plant-house, and hear my moving story."

"Yes, I can hear anything, but although I cannot see her, and have long forgotten, I could not bear to hear ill of her."

"There is no ill to hear, sweet child, except of evil done to her. Lorna, you are of an ill-starred race."

upon the sensitive maiden, was more than she could bear all at once; as any but a fool like me must of course have known. She lay back on the garden bench, with her black hair sheathed the oaken bark, while her color went and came; and only by that, and her quivering breast, could any one say that she lived and thought. And yet she pressed my hand with hers, that now I might tell her all of it.

And herein differs fact from fancy, things as they befall us from things as we would have them, human ends from human hopes; that the most are moved by a thousand, and the last on two wheels only (which being named) are desire and fear. Hope, of course, is nothing more than desire with a telescope, magnifying distant matters, overlooking near ones, opening one eye on the objects, closing the other to all objections.

Whether I am right or wrong in these small mortalities, one thing is sure enough, to-wit, that hope is the fastest traveler, and any rate, being fully proved in youth. And so I hoped that Lorna might be proved of blameless family, and honorable rank and fortune; and yet none the less for that, love me and this lay not with me, but with the which house, and she fell into my mother's arms; and I left them to have a good cry of it, with Annie ready to help them.

"Dear, I have you," she cried; "you and only you. All my life is one with yours. Oh, John, how can I treat you so?"

"I cannot believe, in the pride of my joy," I whispered into one little ear, "that you could ever so love me, beauty, as to give up the world for me."

"Would you give up your farm for me, John?" cried Lorna, leaving back and looking with her wondrous power of light, at me; "would you give up your mother, your sisters, your home, and all that you have in the world, and every good thing you love?"

"It is true that I do," she answered, in a tone of deepest sadness; "and it is true that I would give up the world, and all I love you so. No good can come of it; no good. God's face is set against selfishness."

"Does it, then, so frighten you?" she whispered, coming close to me; "but it never frightens me. It makes me sad, and very lonely till I can remember?"

"I'll tell you a remember what?" I asked, with a long, deep shudder; for we are superstitious.

"Until I do remember, love, and that you will soon come back to me, and be my own forever. This is what I always think of, when I am alone."

"How on earth can I tell, dear John, what you will be content with?"

"You and only you," said I; "the whole of it lies in a syllable. Now you know my entire want, and want must be my comfort."

"No, Lorna, that I never shall. I can understand my mother well, and one, at least, of my sisters, and both the Snow girls very easily, but you I never understand; only love you all the more for it."

recalled every word and gesture, wondering what lay under it. Even now, while it was impossible one to doubt those clear deep eyes, and the bright lips trembling so, nevertheless I felt how much the world would have to do with it, and that the best and truest people can not shake themselves quite free. However, for the moment, I was very proud, and showed it.

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though since I have talked with a man of medicine, I am not so sure of it. And when rather we should have stopped the hole, and let the oxide do its worst, with a plug of new flesh on both sides of it.

At last I prevailed upon him by argument that he might get better, to save himself from being injured and unjustly superseded; and hereupon I reviled Sergeant Bloxham more fiercely than Jeremy's self could have done, and in defiance to such a pitch that Jeremy almost forgave him, and became much milder.

And after that his fever and the inflammation of his wound diminished very rapidly.

However, not knowing what might happen, or even how soon poor Lorna might be taken from our power, and falling into lawyers' hands, have caused to wish herself most heartily back among the robbers, I set forth one day for Watchet, taking advantage of the visit of some troopers from an outpost, who would make our house quite safe.

It had cost him a handsome pearl and ruby necklace to soothe her ladyship's wounded feelings, wounded because (as she but it in her sweetly, womanly, reasonable way) George cared more for the feelings of his party than he did for his own.

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and we were sure of one another. "Now what will you please to eat?" she asked, with a lively glance at the size of my mouth; "that is always the first thing you people ask in these barbarous places."

LADY KITTY'S DINNER

BY ISOBELA PLATAU  
"George, I'm going to be of real service to you."

Judging from the tone of this monosyllabic exclamation, Sir George did not greet his wife's offer of help with joy and acclamation. Lady Kathleen had evidently expected.

"Much, Kitty?" he spoke in the gloomy tone he employed when discussing Lloyd George's Budget.

"I mean you—you are so busy; you've got such a lot of serious things to think about; there are your clubs and the kids, and—"

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he had been saved from the dinner party and it was not until Lady Kit had prepared that the horn fell on his soul like a truth.

"And really, George, the greatest difficulty in preparing the dishes I presume, is going to walk out of the house, and then to her how ineffectually helping you, she was simply raised her wages on the simple fact, I do think you ought to do me," she sighed.

"Oh, yes; there are so many and so many a man, Maesoni and Proteid Sul, and a whole lot of nice—"

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Chafed and Aching Feet

Make walking a misery to many who do not know of DR. CHASE'S OINTMENT

How far can you walk without suffering in one way or another from discomfort to your feet?

Modern footwear is a prison house and the result is chafed, scalded, inflamed feet.

Sir George was elected. It is publicly and party vote.