

One in a Thousand, BUT TRUE TO THE LAST

CHAPTER XXV.

In the meantime I tell Madame de Vooght—she prefers being styled "madame" to "Mevrouw"—my whole story and my real name, though, of course, I do not give her all the details of the quarrel between Adrian and myself. "Daddy" arrives early in the afternoon. I do not go to meet him, for I have never yet got over my horror of the Dutch race and lan-

guage; it is such a discordant, screaming tongue, and the people are so rough and uncouth. I feel afraid of being suddenly pushed into one of the canals, or run against by the numerous handcars which crowd the streets.

"Well, my little woman," says "daddy," when he has kissed me twenty times and made himself quite sure I am his very own Audrey in the flesh; "but this is a sad business."

"Yes, daddy," I say, with a piteous sigh. "And so you don't love Adrian any more?"

I bury my face against him and sob bitterly, but I cannot say a single word.

"It is a sad mistake," he continues; "and poor Charteris himself is completely knocked up by it."

"Oh, daddy, daddy," I wail, "I do love him so—I do love him so!"

"Then why ever did you run away?" he asks, in blank amazement.

"It is he who has made a mistake," I answer, with a sobbing sigh. "It is he who has grown tired, not I."

"I think you are wrong, child—I do, indeed," he says, seriously. "He came to me at once, and seemed in the greatest distress; but he didn't say a word about either of you having made a mistake."

"I dare say not," I say, sarcastically, brushing the tears away from my eyes; "I dare say not. Adrian is one of those people who do not blame themselves until they can't get out of it in any other way."

"But, my darling child," remonstrates my father, "I don't think any man could feign such a grief as he gave way to. I don't, really, my pet."

"Why—did he cry?" I ask, with curious calmness.

"I think he did," my old "daddy" answers me, with the reluctance most men have, even to speak of a scene.

The utter absurdity of Adrian getting up a "cry" in honor of my departure strikes me as being so supreme that I go off into such agonies of hysterical laughter that my father is really frightened. When, at length, I have calmed down a little, he says, in a voice of grave reproach, that he really does not see what I can find to laugh at.

"Ah, it was no wonder he took you in, daddy," I say, sadly; "for he made me believe, until six weeks ago, that he really loved me!"

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"And does he not?"

"He loved another woman when he married me," I answer; "and he loves her now, as he will never love me or anyone else in the whole world."

"But why did he marry you?"

"Because she had married some one else; and— But I cannot finish my story. I cannot tell my father the extent of his daughter's falseness. I cannot tell him, even, that she is the only one whom Adrian has ever loved. No; it is pain enough for him to know that one of his little women is not happy. It will do no good, so I will keep my knowledge to myself."

"But Adrian is anxious to have no break. Can't you forgive it, and try to win his love? Think of the world, and what everyone will say."

"I can't help that," I answer. "I have tried, oh, so hard! But it was of no use; and I cannot live through such misery again. I would rather die!" I end, passionately.

"Then you shall do as you like. We must write to Adrian, and tell him you won't have anything more to say to him. I wonder—ah, if he only knew!—that Theo did not say anything about it. Surely, she must have seen something of the unhappiness which was going on. I asked Loys but I couldn't get a word out of her, though it was evident that she knew a great deal. She cried terribly, but said she wasn't surprised; and she wondered you had stood it so long. I wondered what she meant, but she wouldn't explain herself."

Darling Loys—true always!

"I want to ask you something," I say that night, just before I go to bed.

"After to-day, will you promise me that you will not even mention my husband to me? I want to forget him entirely—if I can." Ay, "if I can," I wonder does a woman ever forget her lover? I do not mean all the men she may have flirted with, or fancied herself in love with, but the one great love? I think not. "You will promise me, daddy?" I say, wistfully. I seem as if I am trying to shut off every chance of hope—as if I cannot trust myself to keep my resolutions.

"Yes, my lassie, I promise," and then I go away quite hopeless. I almost wish he had refused.

(To be Continued.)

A Millionairess; Countess Westerleigh.

CHAPTER I.

(Continued.)

The landlord came down through the narrow path cut through the cliff, and approached them.

"Well!" said Vane, springing backward on to the wall and swinging his legs. "Got the horses?"

"Yes, sir," said the man, in the broad dialect of the country. "I've loaned a carriage for the gentleman"—he looked at Senley, who lounged against the wall, smoking his cigarette with languid indifference—"and a man to drive us to the station."

"And a horse for me?" said Vane. "I hope it's a decent one."

The man nodded.

"I'll carry 'ee," he said. "I'll carry 'ee as far and as long as 'ee pleases; but it's young and free."

"All the better," said Vane, cheerfully.

The man eyed him critically.

"It's a rare rough road," he said, "specially 'cross the Witches' Caldron."

Vane turned to Senley Tyers with a laugh.

"Might he in Corsica, eh, Sen?" he said. "The Witches' Caldron! Sounds like a name in one of the old-fashioned plays, doesn't it? And I expect I shall find it about as tame as Brighton Downs."

The man eyed him with the stolid attention of the rustic who rarely sees a stranger.

"More than one man has lost his life crossing the Caldron," he remarked, placidly.

Vane stared at him, then laughed.

"Going home with too much of your cider on board, eh?" he said.

The man shook his head slowly.

"A body needna be drunk to miss his foothold where you be going, sir. There's none in these parts would go through the Caldron after nightfall."

Vane was much amused. He and Fear had not yet made acquaintance. That any one should lose his life riding along the west coast of England seemed incredible to him.

"Look here, my good man," he said, half amused, half curious. "Do you mean that the road is hard to find, or precipitous, or what? Surely there must be a coach road, or mail road, or high road of some kind or other along the coast."

"That's true enough, sir," said the man; "but you be going off the main road. You follow it for a couple o' miles. See here, young sir," he broke off, and climbed a little way up the cliff.

Vane followed him, but Senley Tyers remained on the jetty and looked after them with very languid interest. He had scarcely listened to the discussion. To him, also, the man seemed to be making a fuss—perhaps as an excuse for getting more out of Vane for the loan of the horse.

The man pointed along the road as it wound along the coast line.

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"By George, it is a good nag," he said. "I expected to see a screw of the most confirmed type." The boy brought the horse to a stand-still with some little trouble, and Vane Tempest, after examining the girths and the bit, mounted. Men do not wring each other's hands and part with tears in their eyes nowadays, and although these two men were friends, their leaving-taking was characteristic of this fin de siècle.

"Well, you'll see me back in St. James's Street before long, Sen," he said. "Don't work too hard, and"—he bent down in the saddle and lowered his voice—"don't carry those Republican ideas of yours into effect and cut off poor Lady Florence's head." Senley touched the hand held out to him, and colored faintly.

(To be Continued.)

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