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A Terrible Tangle.

CHAPTER V.

"We've none of us got too much cause to like that man," Mary said, "but, indeed, Miss Beth, one can't help being sorry for him just now. I've seen his brother—such a nice-looking boy he was, and nice spoken too. Why, back last winter it seemed like as if he was always on the road 'twixt here and Warminster, and he'd always got a kind word and a smile. It's just awful to think he's dead; and they do say, Miss Beth, as it was a strange kind of accident; though, to be sure," added Mary, shrewdly, "there's never wanting folk to say them sort of things. Still, it do look funny that he should have been cleaning a gun this time of year. A gun's no use in summer, 'cept to frighten birds." Yes; one can't help being sorry for Mr. Barostan, especially as things is so bad with him. He's just going to rack and ruin, and it's Gospel truth, I do believe, that he's spent his last penny on giving his brother all he's wanted. They're going to bury him tomorrow. Lor', Miss Beth," said Mary, rising to take away the tray, which Beth turned from "life's a funny thing, isn't it? A wedding in one house one day and a burying in another the next. It makes one's heart ache a bit to think of that poor man all alone." Mary paused to say before leaving the room: "Old Jenny Walters, her as lives in the little cottage near the gate entrance of the Glen Farm, told some of our folk to-day that Mr. Barostan won't let anyone do a thing for his brother. No one must go into the room 'cept himself. She says he hasn't shed a single tear, but that he's got that in his face that's worse a long way than tears."

Elizabeth gave a cry when she was alone, and threw herself on her knees by her bed, but though she knelt for a long time, prayer gave her no solace. This last picture of David Barostan was so hurtful that it

set aside the horror he had inspired her with. She wondered how she would have felt if some one had ended Lil's life in those hours when Lil had been to her the star of her life. For such a sin as this punishment was inevitable, and she had taken that punishment upon herself. Gradually a duty was forced upon her. She had been wrong to let herself be so weak, wrong to listen to love, and to give love in return. She knew not what atonement David Barostan would demand of her, but whatever it was she must be free to meet it; her life must be hers alone. So, rising from her knees, she went to her writing table, and, without pausing to choose her words, she wrote to Ottershaw. She told him that she had been wrong, and that she retracted all that she had said. She put nothing into definite form; it was vague, yet she felt that he would understand that she was not writing capriciously or for love of effect. There was an earnestness, even a solemnity, in all she wrote.

When she had sealed and stamped the envelope, she rang for Mary.

"I want some one to take this letter into Warminster," she said; "there will be just time to catch the last post. It must go. Mary; it is important."

"I'll see that it goes, miss," said Mary, promptly. Then she spoke with tenderness. "Have you one of your bad headaches, Miss Beth? You are looking as white as a ghost. Do come to bed, and don't fret about Miss Lil. I'm sure you've no need to fret. I know a good man when I see one; and Sir Henry's a real good man."

Alone once more, Elizabeth resolutely set herself to seek some rest. "I shall go mad," she said, "if I go on thinking and thinking. But, oh! if I could only undo what has been done; if I could only give back life. Thank God—my father never lived to see such wrong done by one belonging to him! And to think that Lil does not understand—does not care!"

She opened her window and gazed for a while across the country to where the Glen Farm lay, where David Barostan lived.

She could picture him in her imagination by his brother's dead body, holding a lonely vigil with all that remained to him of what he had loved.

With a shuddering sigh Elizabeth left the window, and darkened the room.

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have its shadows. It was a new thing for him to feel the sudden fear contract his heart, or to pass through a moment of most unpleasant doubt.

His mother's property lay in a beautiful part of one of the northern counties, and Ottershaw recalled many boyish memories as he wandered through the quaint old house.

"I will bring Elizabeth here," he said to himself. "This is just the home for her; and it will be hallowed by the recollection of my mother's happiness."

The agent who had taken full charge of Lady Ottershaw's property had died suddenly; and the earl had felt it necessary that he should travel and look into things personally before appointing a successor.

His mother, too, had charged him with various small matters, and he was very busy, but not too busy to let his thoughts linger around Elizabeth.

Though the nearest post office was some miles away, he dispatched a groom with a message, and he waited for a few hours expecting an answer to his tender greeting.

When none had come he sent that second message, and again, when three or four hours had passed and nothing reached him, he sent the third.

He was in a sense an arrogant man; but circumstances had made him so.

From his earliest days he had been spoiled, and there were many women now in society who would have hated Elizabeth could they have known in what position she stood to this most handsome and desirable man.

When night came, and still no word from Elizabeth had reached him, Ottershaw very nearly left his task unfinished.

It was such a new thing for him to be thwarted.

Then he soothed himself. "What do I expect?" he mused, as he sat alone at dinner, gazing at one of the most magnificent views that northern England can boast of. "It is just because she is so different from every other woman that I have known that she holds my heart in her hands. Had it been her sister—"

But he laughed at the recollection of Lil.

"What contrary fate," he said to himself, "can have led poor Henry into the path of such a girl, and where were his eyes—where were his senses when he passed Elizabeth and choose the other? Perhaps she will write to-morrow. If she does not, I must learn to be patient. Her love is so new, so strange to her, it bewilders her."

Nevertheless, when the morning came and no letter reached him, Lord Ottershaw found that patience was not one of his virtues.

"I cannot stand this sort" of

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thing," he said to himself, and he realized at this moment how much in earnest he was, and how absolutely necessary Elizabeth was to him.

Because he had known her only a few hours that made no difference. At the moment that his eyes had rested on her something in his heart had spoken. He would never forget as long as he lived his first sight of her; the vision of Elizabeth as she had passed through the early golden sunshine in her dew-drenched skirts—a being symbolical of everything that was pure, and fresh, and beautiful, had been a revelation to him. He decided immediately to go south and join her, but a letter reached him from his mother and embarrassed him somewhat.

Lady Ottershaw desired, above all things, that her son should remain and attend the funeral of a man who had served her so faithfully for years, and it was one of Ottershaw's best qualities that he studied his mother in every possible way.

Hence it was not easy for him to leave for the south till the next day at the very earliest.

He sat down and wrote pages to Elizabeth. He poured out the wealth of his heart—the wealth that he had been ignorant that he possessed till now.

When he had closed this letter he left it lying on the table. It seemed to draw him a little nearer to this woman he loved.

Once again he told himself that he would not misunderstand her silence.

"Just because she is strong and honest enough to have confessed her love so soon," he said, "so she will shrink from putting this into words when we are so far apart."

It was delicious to sit weaving dreams for the future.

"Won't Ellen Griffin stare when she hears what has happened?" he said to himself, half boyishly. "She has girded at me so long, urging me to change my existence, to find something profitable in life, to cease being an idler, to rise and take my proper place, whatever that is. Well, she shall not grumble at me any more. I will show her what I can do when I have Elizabeth to help me. I almost wish I were a poor man, with a name to make. It would be worth a lifetime of struggling to win such a wife in the end."

(To be continued.)

Peace at Last.

Old Biddad, infesting the shanty next door, is quietly resting; the campaign is over. He greets me politely, he smiles and he sings; and daily and nightly sweet peace waves her wings.

All summer we quarreled and ranted our gowns, and threw double-barreled verbs, adjectives, nouns. He stood up for Woodrow, I hollered for Taft; we raised such a good row the whole village laughed. I called him a faker, a chump and a crank. He called me a donkey, I called him a hog; I kidnaped his monkey, he poisoned my dog. The campaign is ended, deserted the stump; the losers have wended their way to the dump; the men who were aiding the popular cause, have cut out the raiding; they're resting their jaws. The Facts they were piling are left high and dry; and together we mingle, we lean on the fence, and talk of Kris Kringle and topics of sense. The folly's forgotten that filled us with woe; no adjectives rotten are passed to and fro. And we would live ever in harmony thus, if there should be never political fuss.

Overleaf, will be George Matthews Adams

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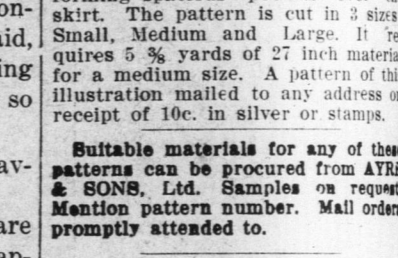
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