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Lady Wyverne's Daughter.

CHAPTER X.

Before Philip had time to reply, Inez was seated at the piano, her rich voice filling the room with the melody of the old Venetian song. When that was finished, she began another—a love-song this time—taking every note a sigh, low, soft, and taking with it the fire of her genius, and the love of her heart. She sang on until Philip rose from his seat and began to pace the room. He could not withstand the charm of this strain; she seemed to sing his heart away from him; his whole being thrilled with the sweet fancies that came to him with the music.

"He is half won," she murmured to herself, as she watched the changes that passed over his face in the evening gloaming; "a little more patience, a little more skill, and he will be mine." This skill she displayed still more adroitly by seeming to avoid him during the last two days of his stay. He had professed himself charmed with her society; she knew that she amused and fascinated him. Now he should learn what it was to be without her. During those two last days she only saw him at rare intervals; and when he was leaving Lynneville he bade her adieu with real regret, for she had been a most delightful companion.

"Send me a message, sometimes," he said, "when my mother writes;—remember, I shall be a lonely bachelor on the Scottish moors;—send me a little news." During the first week she sent merely a little piquant message through Mrs. Lynne; then she enclosed a sketch of his favorite hunter. Lord Lynne wrote to her, and in less than two weeks he began to look for her letters more eagerly even than for his day's sport. Not that he loved her. Love and Inez Lynne never entered his mind together; but these letters were infinitely charming. A woman's genius shows itself in her letters, and those of Inez were matchless. They were witty, sparkling and amusing; yet a veil of melancholy



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hung over them. Sweet, simple Agatha could never have written such letters; she would not perhaps have understood them even; the graceful imagery, the daring wit, the poetical fancy, that revealed themselves in every line, were all unknown to her. So for nearly three months they corresponded, while Agatha regained her lost roses, and strove hard to find peace and tranquillity. Then Christmas came round, and Lord Lynne replied to spend it at Lynneville. They wrote and asked Agatha to come home—Allan Leigh was at the Chase, and Mr. Bohun was again at the Court—but she declined to leave Evelyn, who clung to her society, and seemed to love her better than any one else upon earth.

Christmas was to be very gay. There was to be a grand ball at Lynneville, and another at Bohun Court. Lord Lynne determined that this year at least he would be gay; no one should know that he was a rejected lover—rejected by a fair-haired, gentle girl, too, who seldom said, "No." He did not know where he should be next year—abroad, most likely. Time was passing quickly; and all hope of his uncle's legacy died with his rejection. He was a Lynne and a gentleman. It did not enter his imagination to marry Inez without loving her, and so secure his fortune. He loved Agatha. He would have married her, even if in going so he had lost instead of gained his inheritance; but she had refused him. Love and money had failed him, and Philip began to make up his mind to the loss. He was too honorable, too noble to think of marrying without love. Not even to win a crown would he have done it; and Inez Lynne, who read him rightly, knew that if she won him it would be apart from all mercenary motives.

He was pleased to see her again. He met her frankly, and kindly thanked her for her charming letters, which had cheered and amused his solitude. That very frankness and kindness were like a death-blow to her. If his face had flushed, his voice had trembled, or his hand had clasped hers more warmly as it lay in his grasp, she would have known that he loved her. That frank, open kindness, the clear eyes that looked into her own, the calm, steady voice that thanked her, all told the same story—she interested, amused, charmed him, but he did not love her.

"I will not lose heart," she said—"not even yet. I will succeed or I will die." Lord Lynne showed that he remembered her words. During all the Christmas festivities he thought of her constantly. He was resolved that she should never feel lonely or neglected again. So they resumed their old familiar intercourse. She sang to him, rode with him, and poured out the treasure of her genius at his feet. She grew to love him. Oh Heaven! save us from such love—so wild, so Molotovian, so blind!

The grand ball at Lynneville was a great success. Inez was the belle. She had never looked more lovely. She wore a dress of rose-colored silk, shaded and softened by costly, cloud-like lace. She wore no jewels; a wreath of white starry jasmine crowned her queenly head.

There were many at Lynneville that evening, who, in long years afterward, spoke of her as she looked then. Bertie Bohun was there, but he said no more of love to her. The bright sun did not seem further from him than this beautiful girl. She was undoubtedly the belle of the ball; and those who saw her that evening never forgot her. When the guests all departed, she went with Mrs. Lynne into her boudoir. It was a charming little room, but one that was seldom used. On this evening Mrs. Lynne had ordered fire and lights there; she liked, when a ball or party was ended, to talk it over with her son.

"Let us rest a few minutes," she said, drawing an easy-chair to the fire for Inez. "I always require half an hour's quiet talk to make me forget the glitter of lights and the sound of music. Have you enjoyed the ball, Inez?"

"Yes," she replied. "Inez always enjoys where she reigns," interrupted Lord Lynne, with a merry laugh. "What are you going to do with Bertie, Inez?" he continued. "I never saw a more severe case in my life. Your beaux you have done mischief there."

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"I am not accountable for it," she replied, coldly. "How could you be?" he rejoined. "No amount of homage moves you. Have you no heart, Inez?" She raised her eyes to his face. Was he blind that he could not read what they told? Was he blind that he did not see how the beautiful face, cold and haughty to others, softened and brightened for him? When Mrs. Lynne went away, they were speaking of the coming spring. "I do not say anything to my mother," said Lord Lynne to Inez, "but I have serious thoughts of going abroad in the spring." "Abroad!" she said; "for how long?" "I do not know," he replied; "for years, in all probability, Inez. I want something to fill up my life." There was a profound silence for some minutes, and when Inez spoke again, Lord Lynne did not know her voice. "It is late," she said. "Thinking she wished to be alone, he rose and held out his hand to say good-night. He saw her face perfectly white, with a startled look in her large, dark eyes. "You are tired, Inez," he said gently. "Good-night! pleasant dreams!" He did not notice that the little jeweled hand he touched was cold as death; he did not see the quiver of the white lips; he took the wax taper placed ready for him, and went away. Inez sat still and motionless for some minutes. Then she rose, intending to go to her room, but her strength failed her. She threw up her arms, and fell upon the ground upon her face.

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HAZARDOUS. Our lives these days are full of danger, we know not when the end may come; at any hour some sinful stranger may shoot us, from his native slum. We know not when the airship over us may drop a bomb, or a crowbar or a we shall join the shining chorus beyond the rippling Jordan stream. At any hour some creaking rigger may climb our tree and saw our frames, and we shall share, across the river, the airship victims' endless games. At every step death yields its cleaver, and epidemics dog our trail; the flu may get us if the fever should haply leave us well and hale. So when men say, "You're getting fatter, you ought to take more exercise," I make reply, "What does it matter? What boots it how a voter dies? I might go into ardent training, and tramp the hillsides to and fro, and wade in water when it's raining, and drill through forty leagues of snow. By eating fodder from a silo, and dictating as does prescribe, I might become a modern Milo, the marvel of the village tribe. And then some heavily truck or lorry would run me down, upon a day, and, saying, 'I'd be sick and sorry for all that labor thrown away,' my fat shrouds in folds and creases, my contour isn't strictly nice; but, as I say to aunts and nieces, a shapely form's not worth the price."

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