

THE SACRIFICE;

OR
FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued).

Lora had gone to bed. Her mother had given up her own room to her. She would gladly have given her life for the poor child, if thereby she could have made this wretched marriage as though it had never been.

She sat beside the bed and held her daughter's hands, and asked again and again: "How do you feel now, Lora? Are you comfortable? You are not crying?"

"Oh, so well, mamma. It is so sweet to be at home," was the reply. "And when uncle comes you will let him come up here and tell me about it, won't you?"

"Yes, my child, and I hope he will bring good news."

"I hope so, mamma."

They both hoped it; but their idea of "good" differed widely.

At length he came. He sat down on the edge of the bed, and took the young wife's hands in his.

"Well, my dear little girl?"

It sounded as though the old soldier were trying to choke back a tear.

"Tell me, uncle," she entreated.

"H'm! Yes. Well, Lorch, for the present you will stay with your mother, or with me, if you will. You see I have taken a nice, sunny little apartment in Rome, near the Forum Trajanum, for the winter; you shall go there with me, and when we are tired of all the sights and sounds, you shall make a nice, pleasant home for your old uncle. It will be good for him to take his tea at home in the evening, and not have to float round among cafes and restaurants. And how delightful it will be for him to show the wonders of the Eternal City to a pair of younger eyes, and—"

"Uncle!" She sat up in bed. "I will know the truth—tell me, is she married to him?"

"Ah, the truth, Lora; you see the courts must decide that. But there will be a horrible scandal. It is of no consequence to you whether she is married to him or not; in any case he has betrayed the poor creature, and has sinned against her child. He is a scoundrel any way, and—I beg your pardon—I mean you will be separated from him, whatever happens."

She sank softly back on her pillows and folded her hands.

"But will he consent to it, uncle?" she asked, in a disappointed tone.

"Yes," replied the old general decidedly.

"He said he would never, never give up his claim upon me," she murmured anxiously.

The general turned away; his eyes were wet. He could not let her know that her marriage was null and void, that she had been the victim of a monstrous fraud; that in the eyes of the world she would be only a dupe with no claims to the rights of a wife, even of a divorced one, if the affair were settled according to law.

"Yes, he will give you up, Lora, if you wish it," he said. "If I am not mistaken, Lora, you do not love him. You could not love such a fellow as he is, eh, you mouse?—or am I a bad reader of character?"

"I, uncle? I could not have endured living with him. I would rather have—"

She stopped and looked down.

Did he understand her aright? He looked suddenly with actual terror, at her face, which, at these words, had taken on an expression of determination.

"Well, then, the separation will not be hard for you, Lora," he continued slowly, "and you can escape the gossip in this little place. Afterward we will get you back your maiden name."

"Can you, uncle?"

"Oh, yes; they will do it as an especial favor. But, first, we will go to Rome, eh? And, first of all, we will go to sleep—dixi. Good-night."

She lay back on her cushions with soft, wide-open eyes.

"Uncle, how good it is that you are here. It is like a miracle that you should have come to-day. Good-night, uncle; good-night. Where is mamma?"

"She has gone downstairs. I will send her up to you. I am very tired, and I will go straight back to the hotel."

Downstairs, in the dining-room, the general stood talking to his sister-in-law a few minutes.

"It is all true," he said, not very pleasantly. "The scoundrel is married to the little American. I was really sorry for the fantastic old goose over there, when she found the proofs of the fraud. She was as limp as a rag, and looked wretched enough. But now you must keep your own counsel, Marie. For Heaven's sake, no letting out the secret! Lora must be allowed to think that she was legally married and legally divorced. Do you understand?"

Frau von Tollen put both hands up to her head. "William!" she shrieked. "My God, William!"

"Yes, yes. You would better have let that spendthrift run away to America, than force the poor girl into such a marriage," he wanted to say; but he

kept it back, for the poor woman was too despairing in her grief.

"Come, don't give way like this," he said good-naturedly, "but thank God it is no worse. What if the girl, in her despair at having to live with such a fellow, had thrown herself into the water some day, eh?"

He was thinking of the look on Lora's face a few minutes before.

Frau von Tollen looked at him in horror.

He nodded gravely and then he said quickly, "Go up to Lora, now; and now good-night, Marie. All this has made me devilish tired."

When he reached the hotel, he sent for Mrs. Becher, to come down to the public parlor.

"Madam," he said, "if you will take my advice, you will go back at once. If the steamer does not go for a day or two, you can stay in Hamburg; but you must not stay here. The affair will arrange itself after that. You will have your husband back again; my niece makes no claim to him."

"Ah! I do not wish to live with him again," she said sadly. "I only want him to acknowledge the marriage, and have the child brought up as his son. I want nothing more from him. It is long, long since I ceased to care for him. Ah, the poor, beautiful girl whom he has so betrayed!"

"Moreover, I entreat you, madam, not to say a word about the matter, either here or there; if you do you will send your child's father to prison."

"Oh, I will not, Herr General."

The old general then went quickly away.

"Poor woman," he thought; "what a reception she will get from that scoundrel!" and in fancy he loaded a pistol and aimed it at the thick-headed, broad-backed fellow, whose picture he had seen to-day in Frau Eilfrieda's salon.

"Like a mad dog," he said, half aloud so that the little waiter who was lighting the lamp in his room, turned round with a start. "Like a mad dog," he repeated; "it would be a benevolent deed."

It was the month of March. Brilliant blue skies, golden sunshine, and the wonderfully soft, warm air, had awakened hopes of an early spring, of blossoms and green grass.

The brown buds were swelling on the lindens in the Tollens' garden, and the swallows had come back to their nests under the eaves, and were singing and chattering about their traveling experiences in the far south. Possibly that had brought the story which was circulating through all Westenberg, the story that Lora von Tollen was going to be divorced from her husband; that he, tired of her haughty airs, wished it. What didn't Westenbergers know about it? No one could blame him. Immediately after the wedding, she had refused to accompany him to America. She wouldn't go to that country of shop-keepers, she had declared. But good gracious, if he had his business there! It was, no doubt, much more aristocratic to spend the winter in Rome with her uncle, who was a general. There was nothing left for poor Frau Becher but to go to her son, so she might have a home at least. Oh, these Tollens!

And to-day placard had really been put upon the Becher villa, just beside the locked iron door, on which was printed: "This estate to be sold immediately."

And that was the result; the owner of this beautiful estate had lost all desire ever to live here again.

Frau von Tollen knew what the people were saying among themselves, and what was openly announced at all the coffee parties. She suffered from it frightfully for her child's sake, but it must blow over after awhile. And, thank God, Lora was far away and need know nothing about it.

And to-day with the golden sunshine a gleam of hope, for better times had also fallen into the little house and into her heart.

The postman had delivered a letter from Rudolph, and the anxious look on his mother's face, as she opened it, gave way to one of joyful surprise as she read the contents:

"Dear Mother:—"

"I became engaged to Lieschen Maikat yesterday; the tears of my betrothed finally conquered her father's energetic opposition."

"Through this marriage I am placed not only in a comfortable, but even in a brilliant position; and, besides, my future wife is very amiable and good-hearted. You see, your wild son has had more luck than he deserved."

"I shall very soon be in a position to cancel my obligations to Becher, as well as to Victor; Heinemann and Levy will give me credit on the strength of my engagement. It is a delightful feeling, to wake up in the morning with the pleasant consciousness of no longer being a beggar, and of not being obliged to ask your brother, or his eccleciacy, in Rome, for a little pocket-money."

"As soon as I am married,—and I

hope my father-in-law will consent to have the wedding after the autumn manoeuvres,—I shall try to improve your circumstances, my dear mother. "Excuse so short a letter. A man has his hands full of business when, besides his daily duty, he must be an attentive lover. "My love to Katie, and much for yourself, from
"Your faithful son,
"RUDOLPH."

Frau von Tollen drew a long breath, as if freed from a terrible weight. She was not disturbed by the very commercial tone of the letter; she had long looked upon riches as the foundation of all happiness. She went to the door and called Katie. The young girl, who soon came into the room, which was full of the morning sun, looked pale. She was to pass her examination for a teacher in a few days, and had been working too hard for the past few weeks; she found this hard, for all her thoughts and all her interests were elsewhere. She dreaded the examination; she would be very glad if something should happen beforehand to make this torment unnecessary, that would give her hope of something else in life than being a governess.

"Thank Heaven," she said coolly and ironically, "he is provided for, and when I am a governess, you and Lora can live here quite comfortably, mamma."

As she spoke she threw down the letter on her mother's work-table.

"From Lora?" said her mother, taking it up quickly:

"My dear sister," she read. "I wrote to mamma the other day; so now it is your turn. Uncle has gone to sleep, tired with a visit to the collections of the Vatican, and I am sitting in my sunny room, listening to the plashing of the fountain in the little court, and looking at the crimson blossoms of the camellias, peeping through their dark green leaves. In the quiet hours, when I am alone, as today, I feel an irresistible longing for you both—for my cozy little Mansard room at home."

"Katie, I have a favor to ask of you—give me back my little room when I come home; it was my happiest resting-place on earth for many long years. Am I asking too much?"

"I will write to mamma soon with regard to the condition of my affairs. Soon, ah, very soon, I shall be free. I shall come home to you."

Frau von Tollen dropped the letter.

"Yes, Katie," she said gravely, "she must have her room again."

Katie was silent; her eyes were full of tears, but her mother did not see them.

"You shall have my bedroom," she continued, "for we shall go upstairs, if we let the room below. I will take papa's bedroom, and we will have his study for our sitting-room. You will do it, won't you, Katie? And who knows what may happen, after all? You may be going away yourself very soon."

"Yes, among strangers," replied the girl bitterly.

"Perhaps your uncle will take you on a journey with him some time."

"Me?" in a very contemptuous tone. There was a pause.

"Are you going to the Schonbergs again to-day?" asked her mother at length.

"Of course; what else is there to do?" was the reply, but her lips parted with a slight smile.

"Then do, Katie, come home earlier," pleaded her mother. "You don't know how lonely I feel when I sit here so long alone. You go there almost every evening now, and afterward you will try to make up for lost time by studying at night, and you will be sure to fall ill."

But the daughter made no reply except "I will send Aunt Melitta to keep you company, mamma." She went back to her books, but she sat at the table without opening them. Within her thoughts seemed whirling about in a strange confusion. Lora should occupy this room again? Never! On the play-ground across the way the third and fourth classes were laughing and shouting, while the first and second walked about in a dignified manner. The groups of teachers were standing in the bright sunshine, in front of the arched doorway, talking together. He towered over them all with his fine, slender figure. To Katie's gloomy eyes it seemed as if he were constantly looking up at her window. It might be so, he had been so friendly with her lately, so very kind and attentive.

Whenever she went to see his mother, he appeared almost immediately, and talked and read aloud to them, sometimes playing duets with Katie; she generally, with trembling fingers and numberless mistakes, which he patiently overlooked, as he also patiently permitted her attentions to himself.

Did he love her? Had he not been quite different with Lora?

She threw the pen away, the end of which she had been biting.

If his eyes would only light up at her approach, if he would only say once, "Katie, my Katie!" She knew well enough how he could say it, and now, Lora would come back free, quite free, with the same ardent love in her heart. She wouldn't bear it—it would simply drive her mad.

"This evening," she said suddenly, pushing back her hair behind her dainty ears. And as she gazed with wide-open eyes down upon the now quiet school-yard, she lost herself in the sweetest dreams of the future.

It was nearly six o'clock when she went to say good-bye to her mother. Frau von Tollen was in the garden, walking up and down in the mild air. Rudolph's engagement had been like talm to her soul; she had a feeling of repose, for the first time since her husband's death.

She looked up with a glance of pleased surprise as her daughter came up. Katie looked strangely beautiful in the rosy twilight of the spring evening; she had a little bunch of snowdrops in her bosom; her simple hat with the long crape veil gave something fantastic to her appearance—or was it in the deep, glowing expression of her black eyes?

"Good-bye, mamma," she said.

"Good-bye, child; give my love to the Frau Pastorin."

Katie found the Schonbergs, mother and son, in the open air. They were walking together through the box-bordered paths of the long garden, breathing the warm air of the summer-like March evening.

"Here comes Katie," remarked the Frau Pastorin, and she stooped to pick off a blossom that seemed drooping.

"Good-evening, child," she called out; "what do you say to this weather? It is exactly like May."

"Yes," said Katie, looking at the doctor.

"The air is almost intoxicating," remarked the latter, after he had greeted the young girl. "How your father used to sing the 'Spring Song,' and do you remember how the spring storms used to sweep over the meadow behind our house, and you used to bring me the first anemones?"

"Yes, to be sure," he replied, and was about to say something more, but his mother suddenly started off toward the house. She had seen the maid digging in the vegetable bed.

"Stop, stop," she screamed; "what are you doing? I have sowed spinach in that bed!"

(To be Continued.)

STUDYING THE DIVINING ROD.

French Scientist Says Changes in Density in the Earth Cause Its Action.

Louis Probst, a French scientist stationed at Oboyon Ste. Marie, in the Pyrenees, thinks there is something in the divining rod. His theory is that it does not point to water or a precious metal, but that its action is controlled by any change in the density of the earth's crust over which the rod is carried.

Thus he believes it would make the usual response if it were carried across the line of a subterranean watercourse which had run dry just the same as if water were flowing in it and it would respond to deposits of oil or natural gas just as readily as to water, ore or precious metal or coal. He thinks that an important change in the earth's density such as is caused by a subterranean river may be detected in passing over it in a carriage or even a railway train. If a subterranean watercourse crosses the line of a superficial one he thinks the line of the hidden one may be traced with the rod by a person operating it in a boat on the surface stream.

The fact that divining rod experts can operate successfully when the ground is covered with snow effectually disposes of the theory that they are guided by surface indications. It would be possible for them, he thinks, to find a package of bank bills buried in a ploughed field just as easily as if their value in gold were there. For in reality it would be neither the paper bills nor the gold that would attract the rod but the place where they were hidden, the place where the homogeneity of the soil was disturbed. He further holds that it is not during the time when it is over a spring or a vein of ore that the rod is disturbed, but at the moment when it passes from ordinary ground to the site of the hidden pocket or from that site back to ordinary ground.

He considers that the phenomenon is one of magnetism. The earth attracts the rod differently according to the hidden features of its structure. If the operator wears rubber soles or if he grasps the rod with rubber or silk or other nonconducting gloves nothing will happen. A magnetized rod, on the other hand, will give far more positive results than a plain rod. He has, he says, authenticated this by giving the two alternately to a blindfolded operator. Though he never knew which rod he had, the magnetized one always showed far greater activity.

Really, however, it is indifferent what materials is used. Operators usually prefer a hazel twig, but M. Probst thinks whalebone or malacca better; but best of all is a thin rod of steel about an eighth of an inch in thickness with the ends wrapped in fine copper wire.

AGRICULTURE IN DENMARK.

Denmark there are 224,000 rural land-owners. More than half have not more than one acre, 96,000 have less than four acres, and only 2,000 have more. The small land-owners occupy themselves with the egg and fowl industry.

The Farm

WINTER EGG PRODUCTION.

Poultry keepers are everywhere complaining that their fowls this season are very late in commencing to lay. The cause of this may, in part, perhaps, be attributable to the cold backward spring, but in most cases it arises from keeping too many old hens, lateness in the moult, pullets too young, and not feeding for egg production. Take the last cause first. How seldom it is that the ordinary poultry keeper will take the trouble to change the food or his manner of feeding it. The birds' requirements will change with the seasons, but the owner and his methods, never. Yet common sense should teach men to feed their birds according to the circumstances under which they are compelled to live.

Fowls in the winter require a heat-producing diet such as sound good grain and some animal food; the latter in moderation. The meat is necessary to replace insects which they were able to obtain during the summer months. If the pullets are sufficiently well developed and stimulating diet of this character is supplied them, they will usually lay early and continue to do so through the winter months.

Pullets to lay early in winter should be specially bred for that purpose. As a rule a pullet does not sufficiently mature to lay until she is at least six months old, but some forward strains will do better, and it is no uncommon thing to have Plymouth Rock pullets hatched early in May laying early in November.

When suitable conveniences are at hand, it may be well to produce a few broods of chickens in April to ensure early winter layers, though in our climate these early chicks require more attention than the average farmer is disposed to give them.

It is useless to expect any old hen to start laying early in the winter, she will do so in her own good time, but it depends entirely upon when she gets over her moult. If she is kept laying steadily all through the summer and is not permitted to sit, she will moult late, and not lay again until spring, when eggs are plentiful and cheap. If she is of value as a stock bird, this is all very well, but as a mere egg producer there is no profit in her.

Generally speaking, it will be found that pullets and hens in their second year will be the best winter egg producers, provided they have been brought into winter quarters in good condition.

A very good method of feeding for winter is to give a mixture of table refuse, meat scraps, bran and shorts in the morning. At noon throw a quantity of barley tailings amongst the litter provided for a scratching place, and at night give a liberal feed of whole corn, this with a plentiful supply of sharp grit and crushed oyster or fresh water mussel shells will keep the birds in good laying condition. Of course, attention must be paid to cleanliness in the houses, and dusting places must be provided so that the fowls can keep themselves free from vermin.

As a substitute for the green food of summer, mangolds, clover hay, or pea straw may be supplied, and if at any time cabbage leaves are available, these should be given, as they are greatly relished.

Birds treated in this way will give the maximum of profit at the minimum of cost and trouble, and this winter the farmer who has a flock of good laying hens has the prospect of making money out of the eggs they produce.

BARLEY AND RYE FOR FOWLS.

Barley and rye are both excellent foods and will prove a satisfactory addition to a ration where the fowls will eat the grains readily. Some flocks seem prejudiced against barley and do not eat it readily, while others will refuse rye unless starved to it. Rye is eaten much more readily when fed in the bundle. When the fowls can scratch it out of the fresh straw themselves they seem to enjoy it.

PITH, POINT AND PATHOS.

Too much cordiality gives birth to the suspicion that the salesman has a gold brick.

Thrift is the golden mean between prodigal wasting and a narrow stinginess.

You can judge of a man by comparing the brand of cigars he smokes with the brand he gives his friends.

It apparently worries some people a lot puzzling over how the world will get on when they are gone.

Experience is the cost to a boy of becoming a fully developed man.

The more valuable the lesson learned the harder it is to get over the effects of the learning of it.

A gentleman is a man born with the necessity of thinking of others before he does of himself.

It isn't half as distressing to worry about keeping riches as about how to get them.

When a man gets angry he shows his enemy just where his weakest spots are. Because a woman is in tears is no sign that she is really very unhappy.

RECIPROCAL.

"It takes a man to sit on a jury," said Smith to his wife.

"Yes," she responded, with a glitter in her eye, "and it takes a woman to sit on a man."

Smith collapsed.