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CAMERON'S "SHADOW LOVE

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CHAPTER X.

(Continued.) 'But Lord Rylestone,' she said, quietly, might not like such a marriage for you.'

'My dear Margarita, you wish me to fight shadows. Lord Rylestone can have nothing to say in the matter of my marriage. I alone am responsible to myself for myself. Do believe me, sweet. Fling your scruples and fears to the winds—lay your hand in mine, and say, 'I promise to be your wife, Allan.'

'If I do say it, I shall mean it thoroughly,

That is right. You cannot be too deeply arnest for me.'

She was silent for a few minutes-perhaps ife held no more solemn interval for her—and then her face grew pale even to the lips, and she laid her hands in his.

gently, 'and to love you while I live.'

How he thanked her! How he blessed her He was like a man whose senses were wrapped in some great ecstacy. And then he bent over

'I may kiss the face of my promised wife, he said; and she raised his face to his. saw that on it there was a light pure and radiant as though it shone clear from heaven.

'This is our betrothal, Margarita,' he said, softly. 'Now for all time you are mine.' They stood silent for some minutes, and

then he said-'When shall I speak to Lady Davenant?"

'Not yet,' she replied. 'Allan, I would so much rather that she did not know while I am here. I perceive all the incongruities of our marriage myself, but I could not bear to be told of them by another. Lady Davenant is she calls her "order," and she would be so severe, so hard, that she would make me

'Then I will say nothing to her until you have left, Margarita; but you must go at once, dear. I cannot have my promised wife working in this fashion.'

I will go whenever you like,' she re-

Allan took from his finger a ring with one diamond-a beautiful, flashing gem.

'Margarita,' he said, 'this must be our betrothal ring. I will bring you another later on, but now you will take this.' He placed the ring on her finger, and then he kissed her. Now you belong to me,' he added; 'and nothing but death can part us.'

And then they heard the voice of little Maud crying, and Miss Avenel hurried away. The child looked up at her with wonder-

Where have you been, Miss Avenel?' she inquired. 'How bright your face is! And your eyes shine like stars! What have you been doing?"

'I have been very happy, dear,' was Margarita's quiet reply, as she knelt by the child's

'What is that shining on your hand?' she

Margarita smiled. 'That is a pledge of future happiness to

me,' she answered; and the little one raised her eyes wonderingly to the beautiful face.

'I do not understand,' she said, quietly; and those were the last intelligible words that Maud spoke for many long days. A violent attack of fever seized her, and placed her life in deadly danger.

CHAPTER XI.

ALL Allan's plans were disarranged by the sudden illness of little Maud. He had wished Margarita to leave at once. He would have found her a home with a distant realative of his-Mrs. Ferguson-and have married her from there, but this was rendered impossible now, for the child clung to her so that she could not leave her. The only rest she ever had came to her in Margarita's arms. The burning head seemed to find cool repose on Margarita's breast. The little hot hands would cling to her—the burning eyes follow her from one part of the room to the other. How could she think of herself, of her own happy love, of leaving, of the bright future awaiting her? How could she think of it all when the little one who loved her lay between life and death?

All the visitors departed from the Priory when the nature of the child's illness became known-all except Alian Es court; he declared that the child's ailment did not release him, that he would stay and keep Sir Charles from growing quite lonely. He did remain until the pale snow-drops began to appear, and then he was compelled to return to London.

But he did not take his departure until Miss Avenel and her little charge had gone, by Lady Davenant's desire, to Torquay. There was one gleam of comfort: he could write to Margarita there as often as he liked-there would be no one to remark upon the number of his letters. He did not go down to see her, because she asked him not to do so until the child had quite recovered. So during the months of March and April Margarita remained at the sea-side, happy beyond words, beyond measure, in Allan's love-so happy that as she passed along the streets and roads people looked at the lovely, radiant face, and wondered at the light shining on it.

It was nearly the end of May before the doctor thought it safe for little Maud to return to her own home, and even then Margarita decided upon waiting some time longer-if only week or two-for she knew the child could not endure to be parted from her. But Allan 'I promise to be your wife, Allan,' she said | grew impatient; it was at Christmas that she had promised to be his wife, and now it was June. He wrote to her on the tenth of June, and told her he should give her but one week longer, and then she must really tell Lady Davenant that she was going to leave her. He revealed all his plans to her-how she was to go to Mrs. Ferguson's, and how from there they would be married.

Before he received an answer Lord Rylestone's illness, death, and funeral happened. And then came his great and bitter disappointment. Instead of being able to take his beautiful Margarita to Walton Court, and lavish on her every luxury that money could purchase, he was a poor man, unable to live at the Court at all. Nay, he knew further that his means did not justify him in marryingthat he ought not to marry; for, live as carefully as he might, he would have as much as very proud. She believes so entirely in what he could possibly do to pay off his debts in a couple of years.

> He read and re-read Margarita's letter-he knew the faithful heart so well then that no dawn of fear arose in his heart. She would love him poor just as well as rich-perhaps

But what was he to do about marrying her? It would be the height of folly to take her to Mrs. Ferguson's, and to be at the expense of a brilliant wedding such as he had intended. But Margarita was leaving Laston Priory; it was not to be expected that Lady Davenant would again disarrange her plans by asking her to stay, and, if she took another situation, why, he might not be able to see her at all.

After long consideration he decided upon asking her to meet him; he could tell her then what had happened far better than he could write. If he could pass one hour with her, he could say more in that time than he could set down in a hundred letters. So he wrote to her, and said that he had something very important to communicate to her. He did not care to go to Laston Priory, as she was not willing for Lady Davenant to be confided in; but he would go to the town of Laston, and, if she would walk through the Laston woods early on the morning of the thirtieth of June, he would meet her there and tell her all he

It was a fair, bright morning, and the clock had not struck six when he started for Laston woods; the sun shone, the birds were singing, seeming to outvie each other in the beauty and length of their songs; the wild-roses were blooming on the hedges, the wild thyme reared its head amid the grass, the newly-mown hay lay in the meadows, the chestnut-trees were all in bloom, the dew lay shining under foot. He saw her waiting for him by the little stile that led to the woods, the sun shining on her beautiful face, touching with gold the thick coils of dusky hair, and his heart seemed to

'My darling!' he said, as he met the clasp of her tender hands, 'Why Margarita, you have grown lovelier!'

She made him no answer; her love like her happiness was too great for words. She let her hands lie still in his warm, firm grasp, while he whispered sweetest words of welcom to her. Presently he looked around.

'Margarita,' he said, smilingly, 'do you know that this is the first time we have met in the sunlight, among dews and flowers and shining blossoms? We have always met before in the cold and snow.' I I remember,' she replied.

To be continued.

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