



THE HEIR OF Lancewood

CHAPTER XXXIII.
Gerald Dorman was still detained in London; he wrote from time to time, expressing his regret at what had happened, and asking her ladyship's indulgence because of his delay.

Then the lawyer, Mr. Greston, appeared again on the scene. Once more Vivien Nestle was heiress of Lancewood.

"Believe me," she said, with tears in her eyes, "I would far rather never had it than the boy's death should have given it to me."

"We cannot choose," observed Mr. Greston; "we must accept whatever Providence sends. I am sorry for the child—sorry, after a fashion, for the mother; but I am pleased that Lancewood is in good hands again. The whole estate and family too would have gone to ruin had the child lived. Now I suppose her ladyship, with her train of French visitors, will go?"

"I suppose so," said Vivien, very thoughtfully. "Yet I am so sorry for her that, if I thought she would care to do so, I should be almost tempted to ask her to remain."

"Permit me to advise you, Miss Nestle, to do nothing of the kind. I have never liked her ladyship; and, if I had dared to do so, I should have told Sir Arthur from the first that she was not a fit companion for you. I hope I am not wickered when I say that I really think the boy's death a providential affair."

Vivien looked gravely sad.

"I have sometimes," she said, "when I have been sorely tried, thought that his death might be the best thing for Lancewood, and I have often wished that he were out of the way; but now that it has happened, I deplore his death—I am heartily sorry for it."

After a short time Mr. Greston remarked:

"I understand Lady Nestle; and with your permission, Miss Nestle, I shall give her a hint that the Abbey is no longer her home. It seems to me that the whole place requires purifying. I have never met so motley a crowd of visitors; and Holmes tells me they stay for months at a time. I can manage it very nicely. I will ask her if I can be of any assistance to her in her removal."

There was a wonderful difference between Lady Valerie, the mother of the heir, mistress of the Abbey, and the crestfallen woman who looked at

the lawyer when he put his kindly-expressed question.

"I am to go, am I? Well, I could not expect anything else; I should do just as Vivien does. I shall not go to that dreary old Dower House though. I shall go to Paris and live there. Thank Heaven, though I lose Lancewood, I do not lose my money! Mr. Greston, tell Miss Nestle that I will go in a fortnight from now. Oh, if my boy had but lived, this would not have been!"

There was, as a matter of course, a great commotion over the death of the little heir. People who had most decidedly cut Lady Nestle in the days of her arrogant prosperity were sorry for her now, and called to express their sympathy. Yet every one said the accident seemed really providential—the whole estate would have been ruined if Miladi had remained there much longer.

The brilliant train of visitors had already disappeared. The Comte de Caloux, who had wooed the fair widow purely for the sake of living at Lancewood, was one of the first to go. He pretended to have received letters of great importance. He regretted to make such hurried adieus, but he must start without delay. Miladi looked into his face with a light laugh.

"I understand, Monsieur le Comte," she said, "I have lost Lancewood, and therefore I lose you. I regret the loss of Lancewood, I do not regret the loss of you. I shall do better—adieu."

Before three weeks were over the Abbey was cleared of its unwelcome occupants, and Vivien Nestle was once more installed as its mistress. Gerald Dorman had written to say that he was returning. He sent a little box by post. Miss Nestle opened it, and found within the gold ring with the one large pearl which she had given him.

She was puzzled to know what it meant, but he was coming that evening—then she should know. Mr. Greston was remaining at the Abbey—Vivien had begged him to do so. He found that he could spare the time and was happy to oblige her. It was settled that he should spend his summer vacation there.

Why had Gerald sent the ring? He knew the boy was dead. Was it that he guessed how she repented of those terrible words of hers? Did he know her well enough to understand that they had been spoken while suffering from the effects of despairing irritation? Now that the child was dead she saw how wicked they were.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
It was in the middle of a sultry afternoon that Gerald Dorman arrived. Miss Nestle did not see him, as he went at once to his rooms. She told Mr. Greston of his arrival.

"Shall I ask him to dine with you?" she said. "You will like a chat with him over your wine."

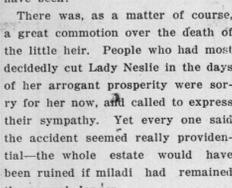
"That I shall," replied the lawyer. "I have been rather struck with his intelligence, and his zeal for the family."

Vivien saw Gerald for a few minutes before dinner, but the lawyer being present, she could not ask him any questions. He looked at her black dress, and then into her eyes; and in some vague way that look made her very uneasy.

During dinner Mr. Greston referred more than once to the circumstances of the child's death. He told them of a similar incident that had

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occurred in a noble family whose affairs were in his hands. And each time that little Oswald was mentioned Vivien saw Gerald's eyes seeking her own.

"You must have been very much astonished," said Mr. Greston to Gerald.

"Very," he replied with quiet brevity; and Vivien wondered that he said no more.

When dinner was over she left the gentlemen at their wine and Mr. Greston became quite communicative.

"I do not consider that I am irreverent," he said, "when I declare that the heir's death seemed to me providential. If the boy had lived, it would have been all over with the Nestles of Lancewood. Her ladyship would have ruined the family. All ready there is the greatest difference in the house; there is order, regularity, method. It is now the house of a gentleman governed by a lady—before it was something that baffled description. I am heartily glad that Miss Nestle has her own again. She is a noble woman."

So they talked until it was time to join the mistress of the house in the drawing-room; then Mr. Greston, with many apologies for his want of sociability, said that he had his daily paper yet to read—with Miss Nestle's permission, he would read it there.

"It is a very pleasant evening," he said. "Pray, Miss Nestle, do not remain in-doors on my account."

He sat down by the open window and Vivien stepped out on to the terrace. The evening was warm, dewy and odoriferous. The thought of a walk through the grounds was pleasant; but she had some vague, indefinable dread of being alone with Gerald Dorman. She kept within sight of the window; strange to say, however, he seemed in no hurry to join her.

She walked across the terrace to the broad stone balustrade, and leaned lightly over it. Gorgeous passion-flowers twined themselves round it, thick green ivy almost clothed it. She little dreamed how fair a picture she made, her black dress sweeping the ground, her lovely face bent over the passion-flowers, her arms resting on the green leaves.

Gerald watched her until he could watch no longer; then he went out to her. The golden rays of the setting sun lit up her head and face as with a kind of glory. Gerald laid his hand on hers.

"Miss Nestle," he said, "I have come for my reward."

She raised her face to his, and he saw that the expression on it was one of wonder and surprise. He saw that it was perfectly genuine, and he felt back from her with a cry of bitter pain.

"I do not understand," she replied; "and, Gerald, tell me why did you return this ring?"

She saw his face grow pale and his eyes grow dim in the waning light.

"Do you ask me that? Great Heaven, do you not understand?"

"No. Tell me, why did you return it?"

"Surely," he said, "I was not mistaken; surely I did not dream that you uttered certain words."

"I am not very patient," said Vivien; "and you are keeping me in suspense."

He came one step nearer to her. "Do you mean, Miss Nestle, that you do not know where I have been—what I have been doing?"

Her heart seemed to sink within her, a sudden horrible fear came over her. What did he mean? She tried to ask him, but her lips grew stiff and would not part.

Then her courage returned; there could be nothing for her to fear.

"No," she replied, slowly, "I do not know what you have been doing, Gerald."

"Do you remember the evening I found you sitting by the sun-dial? Lady Nestle and the Comte de Caloux were walking on this terrace. Do you remember what you said—that you would give your life even to the man who should rid Lancewood of his heir?"

"Great Heaven!" she cried, rather to herself than to him. Her strength seemed to fail her. She clutched at the ivy leaves as though she would fain save herself from falling.

"Do you mean it or not?" he asked.

"I meant it then; but now the child is dead," she gasped.

"Miss Nestle," he asked, in a low voice, "I did not write to you—I dared not—lest the letter should fall into other hands, but I thought you understood."

"Understood what?" she cried, in a passion of despair. "You are killing me with suspense."

"Miss Nestle," he asked, in a low voice, "do you believe the child to be really dead?"

"Certainly I do," she replied.

"He is not dead," said Gerald, slowly. "I thought you meant what you said. I thought you wished to be rid of him, and I took him away."

"But he was drowned in the Ring," she returned, raising her colorless face to his.

"No, he was not. I thought you meant it. You said the man who took him away would be a benefactor to the whole race of Nestles. You said that you would reward such a man with—your life."

"I did, but I was mad, Gerald. I was mad with sorrow and shame. I did not really mean it. I swear that did not."

The agitation of his face was terrible to see.

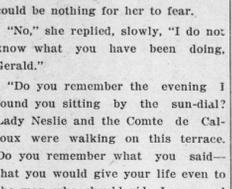
"Then I have toiled, and planned, and worked, and sinned in vain," he said, in a low, despairing voice—so despairing that all the generous part of her nature was aroused. She laid her hand on his.

"You did it for me," she said; "but I did not understand. I thought the boy was really drowned, and I was sorry for his death."

(To be Continued.)

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IMPORTANT WARNING!

The Rifle Range on the South Side Hill will be in constant use from daylight till dark for Musketry Practice until further notice. All unauthorized persons are therefore prohibited from approaching the Range within two hundred yards from either side or within 1,000 yards of the targets to the Eastward. Any unauthorized person so doing will be liable to arrest, besides incurring serious danger from rifle bullets. This prohibition does not extend to any part of the hills west of the 1,000 yard firing point.

(Signed),
JOHN SULLIVAN,
Inspector General Constabulary.

W. H. RENNIE,
Captain (in charge of Musketry Instruction).



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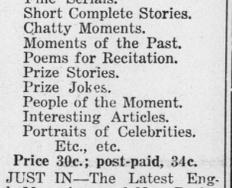
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OFFICIAL.
LONDON, Aug. 23.

The Governor, Newfoundland:
The French Government report small German attacks checked at various points.

The Russian Government report that the German fleet has left the Gulf of Riga, having lost in three days, a dreadnought, probably the Moltke, sunk by a British submarine, three cruisers, with seven torpedo boats sunk or damaged. Four barges filled with soldiers, attempted a landing at Pernau. The barges were captured and the soldiers taken prisoners. No important change on land fronts. Italy has declared war on Turkey.

The E-13 was fired on and wrecked by a German destroyer whilst grounded on a Danish island.

BONAR LAW.
BERLIN, Aug. 23.
(Wireless to Sayville).—The Overseas News Agency to-day gave out official reports from Sofia and Constantinople that Turkey and Bulgaria have signed a new treaty. Turkey granting to Bulgaria her desired road connection with the sea, and Bulgaria agreeing to observe a benevolent neutrality.

SERBIA'S PREMIER INTERVIEWED.
MILAN, Aug. 23.
One of the main difficulties in the way of a solution of the Balkan problem favorable to the Entente Allies has been settled, according to an interview with Premier Pachitch, of Serbia, in the Corriere Della Sera.

The Premier is quoted as saying that Serbia has given way to Italy regarding Albania. Premier Pachitch, according to the newspaper, went over several phases of the present situation, as well as declaring that Austria had tried several times since the beginning of the war to conclude a separate peace with Serbia, but always with refusal from Serbia's Government. The inaction of the Serbian Army, the Premier said, was due to sanitary conditions and the necessity for reorganization, and the accumulation of war supplies. When the moment comes, he declared, the Serbian army will fight steadfastly and in accord with the armies of Serbia's allies.

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