

For Her Sake; The Murder in Furness Wood.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Women," he was accustomed to say, "must be amused and flattered," and the only way in which he felt he could do so was by making love to them. He had hardly ventured thus far with Diana yet; but now finding that she was very kind and gracious to him, he began without loss of time, and soon entered upon his subject.

She was the loveliest girl he had ever seen. He knew, of course, that she must be quite tired of hearing that; but that did not deter him from telling her what he thought.

Diana smiled, and he was lured on to lay bare his love.

He had been half afraid when he ventured on such delicate ground; but that smile relieved him wonderfully, and he was enabled to take breath and go on again. He told her that he had thought about her ever since they first met; and Diana smiled again. Then he went on to tell her how the mothers and daughters in Mayfair tried to snare him, how they invited him here and there, how the mothers praised him and talked to him of their "dear girls."

If Diana had given way to her own natural impulse, she would have answered him with scathing contempt; but she had decided to marry him, and must therefore stifle her feelings. She had to listen and look amused, which was not an easy task for one of her sensitive and refined nature. Once or twice there came a sudden sense of shame, a longing to be her own better self again, to forego her revenge, to return to her lover and repent of her whims and caprices, her anger and pride; but her strong self-will soon drove away the better, noble thought.

Then Lord Clanronald began to speak of his family, of its antiquity, of the great men and women who had sprung from it; and he told her in his silliest manner that twice the Clanronalds had intermarried with royalty; and then, having expatiated upon the advantages he derived from a marriage with himself, he made her an offer.

That was the critical moment of Diana's life. Would she renounce her scheme, which would give her a transitory revenge, or would she persist in it, and cast her happiness to the winds. If she had no thought for herself, would she drag down in her recklessness the man she loved? Would she condemn him to lifelong misery, when she could make both his and her own life "sunshine and roses?"

"If you will do me the honor of becoming my wife, Miss Cameron, I will really—that is, I shall take the greatest pleasure—I mean, you know, that I will do my very best to make you happy."

And then Lord Clanronald, having worked himself into a perfect fever of confusion and embarrassment, stopped abruptly.

There was no answer. Good and Evil contended for the mastery over

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Diana, spirits of Good and Evil seemed to whisper persuasively in her ear. Her whole nature cried out for the man she loved; her whole heart rebelled against this mean and ignoble man whom she did not ever respect.

"Miss Cameron," said Lord Clanronald, "will you be my wife?"

She neither faltered nor hesitated when she answered:

"Yes."

And he, almost as much surprised as he was delighted at his unexpected good fortune, knew not how to thank her.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The die was cast. Diana Cameron, high-spirited, brave, and true as she was, had promised to marry Lord Clanronald. There could be no looking back, regret was useless; she would face the future boldly. To rivet her own chains firmly and quickly was her first thought. She must announce her engagement, so that there could not be any hope of release from it.

"I will not regret, I will not repent; I will never undo it!" mused Diana, trying to fortify herself by her own words.

Even in that moment, while listening to Lord Clanronald's proposal, she could hear a voice in her own heart crying, "It is not Sir Lisle's fault that he is a Scaredale—why punish him for it? You will punish him more than Lady Cameron." But Diana would not listen. Her revenge was as sweet to her as it would be bitter to her enemies, and on no consideration would she forego it.

"Miss Cameron," said Lord Clanronald, "will you permit me to lay my proposal as soon as possible before your father? Shall we say this afternoon? I should like to have matters settled without delay. If you marry me," he went on, "I venture to predict that Lady Clanronald will be a leader of fashion."

He smiled amiably to himself as he thought of the many girls who would be disappointed over this marriage of his—above all, Evadne Scarsdale, who

had given him so plainly to understand that she was not averse to him. He tried to be sentimental to his fiancée, but early succeeded in becoming ridiculous. Diane was inwardly ashamed of his ignominious nature and contemptible manner. It occurred to her that, if he were so heavy, so foolish, so tiresome to entertain for one hour, what would he be for life? But she would not let her mind dwell on that idea. She was going to marry him for revenge, and, when that revenge was accomplished, it would matter little how the remainder of her life ebbed out. Death would be more welcome to her than life.

It was arranged that Lord Clanronald should that very day seek an interview with Mr. Cameron and lay his proposal before him.

"I flatter myself," said the young lord, with a weak conceited smile, "that he will be more than pleased."

Diana's eyes flashed fire when she heard these words; then she turned away her head. Of what avail would anger or indignation be with him? He was but the instrument of her vengeance. With an unmoved face she listened complacently to all the silly and conceited things he said, thinking all the time of how Lady Cameron would feel, and of what she would say when she heard the news.

"Of course," stammered Lord Clanronald, "I—I need hardly have feared a refusal, an alliance with the house of Clanronald being a great honor; but, do you know, I thought—I was absolutely foolish enough to think that if you were inclined to like one more than another of your many admirers, it was Sir Lisle."

Diana's face grew white with anger. Then she laughed; and, though the false, shuddering laugh sounded horrible to her, it did not attract the insipid young lord's notice.

"I did indeed," he said. "A capital joke, is it not? And it is actually I whom you have cared for all this time! I might have known or guessed that I was more to your taste than a grave, solemn man like Sir Lisle. I consider him stupid."

It was well for the noble Lord, who was just then intoxicated with delight and self-conceit, that he did not see Diana's face, the glaring, angry eyes, the white, set lips; it was well for him that she controlled herself with an iron hand; since the man he was speaking of was the one she loved, yet hated because he was a Scarsdale.

"We need not discuss Sir Lisle," she said, coldly.

"Oh, no, certainly not—not unless you wish it—certainly not!" Lord Clanronald hastened to say; and then, finding the silence that followed awkward, they retraced their steps to the house.

His lordship lost no time in seeking an interview with the master of Furness. He found him in the library, and, after a short preamble, broached the subject nearest his heart.

"The fact is, I—I want to marry your daughter," he said, abruptly; "she is quite willing, and we want your consent."

"My daughter!" cried Mr. Cameron. "Yes; she is quite willing," was the assuring answer.

It so happened that Mr. Cameron knew of his wife's plans and desires. She had said little to him about Diana; but she had spoken a great deal about Evadne. He knew that her one great wish was to see the girl Lord Clanronald's wife, and he not unnaturally came to the conclusion that it must be Evadne whom the young lord meant. As for Diana, his thoughts never wandered to her, for, great men as Lord Clanronald was, Mr. Cameron would never have thought him half good enough for her; but for Evadne he considered it would be a good marriage. And, as he smiled at the silly, conceited young man before him, the millionaire asked himself what dowry would he give her.

"I love her, you know; I am really devoted to her, and all that kind of thing," said Lord Clanronald a little uneasily. Vain and conceited as he was, in his mind there was a vague faint suspicion that Diana was vastly superior to himself.

"She is a very nice girl," said Mr. Cameron—"very pretty, quick, and intelligent, I am very fond of her. So far as I am concerned, I consent with all my heart. I am sure Lady Cameron will be very pleased to give her sanction."

"I think there is some mistake," rejoined Lord Clanronald, slowly. "I am speaking of your daughter, Diana."

"Diana," cried Mr. Cameron—"Diana? That is quite another matter."



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You cannot really mean that she—that Diana has consented to marry you—is 'willing,' as you express it, to marry you?"

"Why not?" asked his lordship curtly, as his face darkened.

"I should not have thought," was the blunt reply, "that you were the kind of man she would select."

"You are mistaken. She not only likes me better than any one else, but she has promised to marry me."

Mr. Cameron was silent from sheer surprise. That his beautiful brilliant daughter, with her noble heart, her high spirit, her pride and fastidious refinement, should love a man like Lord Clanronald, whose character he read very distinctly, seemed an impossibility to him. He could not comprehend that she, an accomplished lady, could find anything to attract her in this mediocre man. He had often thought of Diana's marriage, and he had always been puzzled as to who would be good enough for her; Diana's husband had always been an ideal man in his eyes. Sir Lisle was the nearest approach to his ideal that he had ever seen.

"You can have no possible objection to me," said Lord Clanronald, somewhat annoyed at his brusque reception. "My family," he went on, "is one of the oldest and, I may add, most honorable in England; I am rich; my rank, my position in society, would satisfy any one."

Peter Cameron might have replied that he did not admire his character, that he thought him vain, obstinate, heartless; but he answered, gravely:

"If my daughter is content, I have no objection to make." After a pause he added, "Lord Clanronald, are you sure there is no mistake? Is it Dian?"

"It is hardly possible I should mistake Diana for any one else," he replied.

(To be continued.)

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A declaration by Sir Auckland Geddes that the Profiteering Act is working well is received skeptically. He asserted that the Act is merely teaching trades caution and dishonesty. Several newspapers are confident that nothing but imprisonment will eradicate the evil. The Food Controller reiterates that there is absolutely no prospect of a fall in prices for a long time.

THE REUTER SERVICE.

LONDON, Nov. 1.
In the House of Commons yesterday the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies informed Percy Hurd that payment to Reuters in respect to Imperial news service would not continue after October thirty first, but the question of continuing the Imperial service on similar lines was under consideration with the Canadian Government. The Under Secretary added that payment to enable Reuters to meet actual expenditure in sending amplified cable service to other parts

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