

dear face. He gazed at each one until he was afraid he would attract attention.

"Will you come and see me at eleven o'clock to-morrow?" said Lady Iredale in a low voice. "I cannot talk to you now."

"I will certainly come. I have a great favour to ask you. May I take this album home with me to-night? I will bring it back to-morrow, and treat it with the utmost care. I have a reason for my request. The book shall not go out of my hands, I promise you, Lady Iredale."

"You shall take it if you wish." She had sufficient penetration to see that he was more than commonly interested, and she ardently desired that he might be able to tell her where her daughter was to be found.

"Her father had all these likenesses taken," she continued. "He was so proud of her, and thought she could not be photographed too often."

Ronald shut the book and placed it in a position where he could find it easily on leaving. Then he took note of the surroundings. The rooms were large, lofty, and expensively furnished. Everything was solid, rich, and massive. There were no showy gim-cracks, no effort to pander to fleeting fashions. To his mind everything said:

"I belong to Sir Thomas Iredale. I shall last when your Oetzmanns and Maple's and Liberty's things come to an end." He wondered if this furniture would ever come to an end.

"Had enough of it?" said Mr. Alton, coming up after a while.

"Yes," replied Ronald, who was anxious to go home and think matters out. "Come along, then, and say good-bye."

LADY IREDALE looked at him expressively, as he shook hands, and he involuntarily answered,

"Yes." He took up the album, and thought of Mary as he went down the splendid marble staircase, with its statues and flowering plants, and tall footmen in gorgeous attire at each landing. She was living in a dilapidated farm house, starving herself as to food and fire, undergoing every hardship, and all without a murmur.

His friend parted with him at the door; he was going on to another party. Ronald was glad. He felt he must be alone. Then he thought of Mary's lover, the slouching, unpunctual workman, and the whole mystery was solved. She had helped him to escape from prison, and had palmed him off on him as an honest man.

For a moment he was very angry. He to receive a convict who at any moment might be captured! It was atrocious; it was disgraceful. And then he realized how she had acted as she had done under the mighty pressure of Love.

"Would I not do as much for her?" he thought. "More I could not do, but I would go to prison or to death in her place." He remembered her marvelous journey across the moor, her heavy parcel, her providing work for the man Jackson, her agony of apprehension and fear on the foggy night, her absolute refusal—no doubt for their own sakes—to visit with his family, her entreaty that Jackson should not be put in a position of trust until he had been proved. It was nearly all accounted for—her seclusion, her reticence. Having determined not to forsake her lover, there was no other course open to her. She had acted nobly.

But what still puzzled him was how such a girl could love an unprincipled scoundrel, she who was rectitude itself. Alton had said he was handsome. He thought him positively repulsive looking. It is true the dress of a gentleman might make some difference, but would this prevent his ugly red hair, his coarse moustache, his untrimmed beard. It was desecration for such a man to marry her.

Some points were still unexplained. He hoped that Lady Iredale would be open with him, and tell him why Sir Thomas had turned his daughter out. He remembered her telling him she had in vain entreated her father with tears; he was not now surprised to know that appeal was in vain. She

might as well appeal to one of the statues on the staircase.

As soon as he returned to the hotel he opened the album and looked long at every page. And then the infatuated young man went down on his knees and said: "My darling; you told me I should be your friend. I will be your friend if I can. I will shield you in every way possible and help you." He kissed the album, and felt that he had taken a solemn oath.

"She to work as a mill hand!" he thought, as he tried to sleep in vain. "To mix with low men and women; to be under Simpson's orders and afterwards under mine!"

He remembered the morning when he had told her to re-copy the letter. "Just as she was in an agony of fear, and unfit to work. Brute that I was!" And he dashed his hand against the wall, finding considerable satisfaction in the fact that he bruised his knuckles and endured, temporarily, no small amount of pain. He wondered what Lady Iredale would say to him, but he was quite resolved that he would not betray Mary.

CHAPTER XIV.

An Important Interview.

LADY IREDALE was waiting for him the next morning. He was shown into her boudoir at once.

"We shall be quite undisturbed now," she said. "I asked you to come, Mr. Westlake, because I think you have met my daughter. Tell me, I entreat you what you think of her, and where she is."

"Lady Iredale," said Ronald gravely, "it has been hinted to me that there is some mystery connected with your daughter not living at home. I do not know the details, for she herself has said nothing. If you will tell me all you can, I, on my part, will tell you everything I feel at liberty to do."

"I am aware," Lady Iredale replied bitterly, "that every one has talked about us. No doubt much has been said that is untrue. But first answer me a question before I say more. Are you sufficiently interested in my daughter to respect my confidence if I give it you?"

"I am very much interested in her. I will respect your confidence entirely."

"I am sure of it. I don't know who you are or anything about you, but I do know that you are a good man and a gentleman. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that perhaps—perhaps your interest in her is a warm one."

"It is," he replied boldly. "I love her, and I would have married her if I could. I did not know then that she was above me in station. I am a manufacturer."

"A great many people wished to marry her; she was greatly loved. You must pardon me for having said this, but I know now that I may tell you almost everything without reserve. Would that she had married you. A manufacturer such as you are is better a thousand times than a dishonourable member of the nobility."

"Sir Thomas would never have consented to receive me as a son-in-law."

"Her father has had worse things to hear. She was engaged, with his full consent, to the Honourable Horace Cornwallis, Lord Brandon's son, and at first we were quite satisfied. He had very little money, scarcely any, but he had excellent future prospects, and he was a most fascinating as well as handsome young man."

"Handsome!" thought Ronald. "How convict life must have changed him!"

"But he was very extravagant. His father had paid his debts so often that at last he refused to do so any longer. And then—then he came to utter grief. Of course we thought Enid would break off the engagement, but—"

"Enid, did you say?" interrupted Ronald.

(To be continued.)

Smith's Good Luck.—She—"Dancing is fine for people, don't you think?"

He—"Yes; it exhausted Smith's wife so that she's gone into a sanitarium for a year."—Life.



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