A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY MISS MULOCK

CHAPTER XIX.

HER STORY.

Rude as his behavior was, Francis bore with it. I was called out of the library, but half an hour afterward I learned that the letter was written—a letter of acceptance.

So I conclude his hesitation was all talk—or else his better self saw that a good and loving wife, in any nook of the world, outweighs a host of grand London acquaintances, miscalled "friends."

Dear old Mrs. Granton beamed with delight at the idea of another marriage at Rockmount.

"Only," said she, "what will become of your poor papa, when he has lost all his daughters?"

I reminded her that Francis did not intend marrying more than one of us, and the other was likely to be a fixture for many years.

"Not so sure of that, my dear; but it is very pretty of you to say so. We'll see; something will be thought of for your poor papa when the time comes."

What could she mean! But I was afterward convinced that only my imagination surpected her of meaning anything beyond her usual old-ladyish eagerness in getting young people "settled."

Sunday was another long day—they seem so long and still, spite of all the gayety with which these country cousins fill Treherne Court, which is often so oppressive to me, and affects me with such a strange sensation of nervous irritation, that when Colin and his mother, who take a special charge of me, have hunted me out of stray corners, their affectionate kindness has made me feel like to cry.

Now, I did not mean to write about myself—I have been trying desperately to fill my mind with other people's affairs—but it will out. I am not myself, I know. All Sunday, a formal and dreary day at Treherne Court, I do think a dozen gentle words would have made me cry like a baby. I did cry once, but it was when nobody saw me, in the firelight, by Mrs. Granton's arm-chair.

"What is ailing you, my dear?" she had been saying. "You are not near so lively as you were a week ago. Has anybody been vexing my Dora?"

Which, of course, Dora at once denied, and tried to be as blithe as a lark all the evening.

No, not vexed, that would be impossible—but just a little hurt. If I could only talk about some things that puzzle me—talk in a cursory way, or mention names carelessly, like other names, or ask a question or two that might throw a light on circumstances not clear then they would be easier to bear But I dare not trust my tongue, or my cheeks, so all goes inward—I keep pondering and wondering till my brain is bewildered, and my whole heart sore. People should not—cannot—that is good people cannot—say things they do not mean; it would not be kind or generous; it would not be *right* in short; and as good people usually act rightly, or what they believe to be right, that doubt falls to the ground.

Has there risen up somebody better than I? with fewer faults and nobler virtues? God knows I have small need to be proud. Yet I am myself this Theodora Johnston—as I was from the first, no better and no worse—honest and true if nothing else, and he knew it. Nobody ever knew me so thoroughly—faults and all.

We women must be constituted differently from men. A word said, a line written, and we are happy; omitted, our hearts ache—ache as if for a great misfortune. Man cannot feel it, or guess at it—if they did, the most careless of them would be slow to wound us so.

There's Penelope, now, waiting alone at Rockmount. Augustus wanted to go post haste and fetch her here, but Francis objected. He had to return to London immediately, he said; and yet here he is still. How can men make themselves so content abroad, while the women are wearing their hearts out at home?

I am bitter—naughty—I know I am. I was even cross to Colin to-day, when he wanted me to take a walk with him, and then persisted in staying beside me in doors. Colin likes me—Colin is kind to me—Colin would walk twenty miles for an hour of his old playmate's company—he told me so. And yet I was cross with him.

Oh, I am wicked, wicked! But my heart is so sore. One look into eyes I knew—one clasp of a steadfast, kindly hand, and I would be all right again. Merry, happy, brave—afraid of nothing and nobody, not even of myself; it cannot be so bad a self if it is worth being cared for. I can't see to write. There now, there now—as one would say to a child in a passion—cry your heart out; it will do you good, Theodora.

After that, I should have courage to tell the last thing which this evening put a climax to my ill-humors, and in some sense cleared them off, thunder-storm fashion. An incident so unexpected, a

had Francis been less to me than my expected brother-in-law, I declare I would have cut his acquaintance forever and ever, and never spoken to him again.

I was sitting in a corner of the billiard-room, which, when the players are busy, is as quiet, unobserved a nook as any in the house. I had a book, but read little, being stopped by the eternal click-clack of the billiard-balls. There were only three in the room—Francis, Augustus, and Colin Granton, who came up and asked my leave to play just one game. My leave? How amusing! I told hm he might play on till midsummer, for all I cared.

They were soon absorbed in their game, and their talk between whiles went in and out of my head as vaguely as the book itself had done, till something caught my attention.

"I say, Charteris, you know Tom Turton? He was the cleverest fellow at a carom. It was refreshing only to watch him hold the cue so long as his hand was steady, and even after he got a little 'screwed.' He was a wild one, rather. What has became of him?

"I cannot say. Dr. Urquhart might, in whose company I last met him."

Augustus started.

"Well, that is a good joke. Dr. Urquhart with Tom Turton! I was nothing to boast of myself before I married; but Tom Turton!"

"They seemed intimate enough; dined, and went to the theatre together, and finished the evening—I really forget where. Your friend the doctor made himself uncommonly agreeable."

"Urquhart and Tom Turton," Augustus kept repeating, quite audibly to get over his surprise at such a juxtaposition, from which I conclude that Mr. Turton, whose name I never heard before was one of the not creditable associates of my brother-in-law in his bachelor days. When, some one calling, he went out Colin took up the theme, being also familiar with this notorious person, it appeared.

"Very odd, Dr. Urquhart's hunting in couples with Tom Turton. However, I hope he may do him good—there was room for it."

"In Tom, of course, your doctor being one of those China patterns of humanity, in which it is vain to find a flaw, and whose mission it is to go about as patent cemeters of all cracked and unworthy vessels."

"Eh?" said Colin, opening his good, stupid eyes.

"Query — whether your humdrum Scotch doctor is one whit better than his neighbors? (Score that as twenty, Granton.) I once heard he had a wife and six children living in the shade, near some cathedral town, Canterbury or Salisbury."

"What!" and Colin's eyes almost started out of his head with astonishment.

I laugh now—I could have laughed then, the minute after, to recollect what a stound it gave us both, Colin and me, this utterly improbable and ridiculous tale, with Francis so coolly promulgated.

"I don't believe it," said Colin, doggedly—bless his honest heart! "Beg your pardon, Charteris, but there must be some mistake. I don't believe it."

"As you will—it is a matter of very little consequence. Your game now."

"I won't believe it," persisted Colin, who once getting a thing into his head, keeps it there. "Dr. Urquhart isn't the sort of a man to do it. If he had married ever so low a woman, he would have made the best of her. He'd never take a wife and keep her in the back ground. Six young ones too—and he so fond of children."

Francis laughed.

And all this while I sat quiet in my chair.

"Chilkren are sometimes inconvenient—even to a gentleman of your friend's parental propensities. Perhaps — we know such things do occur, and can't be helped sometimes—perhaps the tale is all true, except that he omitted the marriage ceremony."

"Charteris, that girl's sitting there."

It was this hurried whisper of Colin's, and a certain tone of Francis's, which made me guess at the meaning which, when I clearly caught it—for I am not a child exactly, and Lydia Cartwright's story has lately made me sorrowfully wise—sent me burning hot all over, and then so cold.

"That girl." Yes, she was but a girl. Perhaps she ought to have crept blushing away, or pretended not to have heard a syllable of these men's talk. But, girl if she was, she scorned to be such a hypocrite—such a coward. What! sit still to hear a friend sneered at and his character impeached? While one—the only one hand to do it—durst not so much as say, "The tale is false—prove it." And why? Because she happened to be a woman! Out upon it! I should despise the womanhood that skulked behind such rags of miscalled modesty as these.

"Mr. Granton," I said, steadily and coolly as I could, "your caution comes too late. If you gentlemen wished to talk about anything I should not hear you ought to have gone into another room. I have heard every word you uttered."

"I'm sorry for it," said Colin, blunt-

Francis proposed carelessly "to drop the subject." What! take away a man's good name behind his back, and then merely "drop the subject." Suppose the listener had been other than I, and had believed; or Colin had been a less honest fellow than he is, and he had believed, and we had both gone and promulgated the story, with a few elegant improvements of our own, where would it have ended? These are the things that destroy character—foul tales, that grow up in darkness, and, before a man can seize them, root them up, and drag them to light, homes are poisoned, reputation gone.

Such thoughts came in a crowd upon me. I hardly knew till then how much I cared for him—I mean his honor, his honor, his stainless name, all that helps to make his life valuable and noble. And he absent, too, unable to defend himself. I was right to do as I did; I take shame myself even for this long preamble, lest it might look like an apology.

"Francis," I said, holding fast by the billiard table, and trying to smother down the heat of my face, and the heat at my heart, which nearly choked me, "if you please, you have no right to say such things and then drop the subject. You are quite mistaken, Dr. Urquhart was never married, he told papa so. Who told you that he had a wife and six children living at Salisbury?"

"My dear girl, I do not vouch for any such fact; I merely 'tell the tale' as it was told me."

"By whom? Remember the name if you can. Any one who repeated it, ought to be able to give full confirmation."

"Faith, I almost forgot what the story was."

"You said, he had a wife and six children, living near Salisbury. Or," and I looked Francie direct in the face, "a woman who was not his wife, but who ought to have been."

He must have been ashamed of himself, I think; for he turned away and began striking irritably at the balls.

"I must say, Dora, these are extraordinary questions to put. Young ladies ought to know nothing about such things; what possible concern is this of yours!"

I did not shrink; or I am sure he could not have seen me do so. "It is my concern, as much as it is Colin's there; or that of any honest stander-by. Francis, I think that to take away a man's character behind his back, as you have been doing, is as bad as murdering him."

"She's right," cried Colin; "and upon my soul she is. Dora—Miss Dora, if Charteris will only give me the scoundrel's name that told him this, I'll hunt him down and unearth him, wherever he is. Come, my dear fellow, try and remember. Who was he?"

"I think," observed Francis, after a pause, "his name was Augustus Treherne."

Colin started—but I only said, "Very well, I shall go and ask him."

And just then it chanced that papa and Augustus were seen passing the window. I was well-nigh doing great mischief by forgetting, for the moment, how that the name of the place was Salisbury. It would never have done to hurt papa even by the mention of Salisbury, so I let him go by. I then called in my brother-in-law and at once, without an instant's delay, put the question.

He utterly and instantly denied having said any such thing. But afterward, just in time to prevent a serious fracas between him and Francis, he suddenly burst out laughing violently.

"I have it, and if it isn't one of the best jokes going! Once, when I was chaffing Urquhart about marrying, I told him he 'looked as savage as if he had a wife aud six children hidder. somewhere on Salisbury Plain.' And I dare say, afterward, I told some fellow at the camp, who told somebody else, and so it got round."

"And that was all?"

"Upon my word in honor, Dora, that was all."

Mr. Charteris said he was exceedingly happy to hear it. They all seemed to consider it a capital joke, and in the midst of their mirth I slipped out.

But, the thing ended, my courage gave way; Oh the wickedness of this world and of the men in it! Oh! if there were any human being to speak to, to trust, to lean upon! I laid my head in my hands and cried; oh if he could know how bitterly I have cried.

New-Year's night.

Feeling wakeful, I will just put down the remaining occurrences of this New Year's Day.

When I was writing the last line, Lisa knocked at the door.

"Dora, Dr, Urquhart is in the library; make haste, if you care to see him; he says he can only stop half an hour!

So after a minute, I shut and locked my desk. Only half an hour!

I have the credit of "flying into a passion," as Francis says, about things that vex and annoy me. Things that wound, that stab to the heart, affect me quite differently. Then, I merely say "yes," or "no," "of course," and go about quietly, as if nothing were amiss

blow, I should be like one of those poor soldiers one hears of, who, being shot, will stand up as if unhurt, or even fight on for a minute or so, then suddenly drop down—dead.

I fastened my neck-ribbon, smoothed my hair, and descended. I know I should have entered the library all proper, and put out my hand. Ah! he should not—he ought not, that night—this very same right hand.

I mean to say, I should have met Dr. Urquhart exactly as usual, had I not, just in the corridor, entering from the garden, come upon him and Colin Granton in close talk.

"How do you do?" and "It is a very cold morning." Then they passed on. I have since thought that their haste was Colin's doing. He looked confused, as if it were a confidential conversation I had interrupted, which very probably it was. I hope, not the incident of the morning, for that would vex Dr. Urquhart so; and blunt as Colin is, his kind heart teaches him tact oftentimes.

Dr. Urquhart staid out his half-hour punctually, and over the luncheon-table there was plenty of general conversation He also took an opportunity to put to me, in my character of nurse, various questions about papa's health, and desired me, still in the same general half-medical tone, to be careful of my own, as Treherne Court was a much colder place than Rockmount, and we were likely to have a severe winter. I said it would not much signify, as we did not purpose remaining more than a week longer; to which he merely answered, "Oh, indeed!"

We had no more conversation. except that, on taking leave, having resisted all the Treherne's entreaties to remain, he wished me "a happy New Year."

"I may not see you again for some time to come; if not, good-by; good-by!"

Twice over good-by; and that was all.

A happy New Year. So now the Christmas time is over and gone, and to-morrow, January 2d, 1857, will be like all other days in all other years. If I ever thought or expected otherwise, I was mistaken.

One thing made me feel deeply and solemnly glad of Dr. Urquhart's visit to-day. It was, that if ever Francis or any one else, was inclined to give a moment's credence to that atrocious lie, his whole appearance and demeanor were its instantaneous contradiction. Whether Colin had told anything I could not discover; he looked grave, and somewhat anxious, but his manner was composed and at ease—the air of a man whose life, if not above sorrow, was wholly above suspicion; whose heart was steadfast, and whose conscience free.

"A thoroughly good man, if ever there was one," said papa, emphatically, when he had gone away.

"Yes," Augustus answered, looking at Francis and then at me. "As honest and up right a man as God ever made."

Therefore, no matter—even though I was mistaken.

CHAPTER XX.

HIS STORY.

I continue these letters, having hitherto been made aware of no reason why they should cease. If that reason comes, they shall cease at once and forever; and these now existing be burnt immediately, by my own hand, as I did those of my sick friend in the Crimea. Be satisfied of that.

You will learn to-morrow morning what, had an opportunity offered, I meant to have told you on New Year's Day—my appointment as surgeon to the jail, where I shall shortly enter upon my duties. The other portion of them, my private practice in the neighborhood, I mean to commence as soon as ever I can afterward.

Thus, you see, my "Ismaelitish wanderings," as you once called them are ended. I have a fixed position in one place. I begin to look on this broad river with an eye of interest, and am teaching myself to grow familiar with its miles of docks, forests of shipping, and its two busy, ever-growing towns along either shore as one becomes accustomed to the natural features of the place, wherever it be, that we call "home."

If not home, this is at least a probable sphere of labor for many years to come; I shall try to take root here, and make the best of everything.

The information that will reach you to-morrow comes necessarily through Treherne. He will get it at the breakfast-table, pass it on to his wife, who will make her lively comments on it, and then it will be almost sure to go on to you. You will, in degree, understand, what they will not, why I should give up my position as regimental surgeon to establish myself here. For all else, it is of little moment what my friends think, as I am settled in my own mind—strengthened by certain good words of yours; that soft, still, autumn day, with the haze over tue moorland, and the sun setting in the ripples of the pool.

You will have discovered by this time a fact of which, so far as I could judge, you were a week sinae entirely ignorant—that you have a suitor for your hand. He himself informed me of his intentions with regard to you—asking my advice and good wishes. What could I do?

in the smallest degree a nature, so candid and true as yours could suppose me guilty of double-dealing. I said, "that I believed you would make the best of wives to any man you loved, and that I hoped when you did marry it would be under those circumstances. Whether he himself were that man, it rested with your suitor alone to discover and decide." He confessed that on this point he was as ignorant as myself, but declared that he should "do his best." Which implies that while I have been occupied in this jail business he has had daily, hourly access to your sweet company, with every opportunity in his favor—money, youth, consent of friends—he said you have been his mother's choice for years—with, best of all, an honest heart, which vows that, except a passing "smite" or two, it has been yours since you were children together. That such an honest heart should not have its fair chance with you, God forbid.

Though I will tell you the truth; I did not believe he had any chance. Nothing in you has ever given me the slightest indication of it. Your sudden blush when you met him surprised me; also your exclamation—I was not aware you were in the habit of calling him by his Christian name. But that you love this young man I do not believe.

Some women you can persuade into love, but you are not of that sort, so far as I can judge. Time will show. You are entirely and absolutely free.

Pardon me—but, after the first surprise of this communication, I rejoiced that you were thus free. Even were I other than I am—young, handsome, with a large income and everything favorable, you should still, at this crisis be left exactly as you are, free to elect your own fate, as every woman ought to do. I may be proud, but, were I seeking a wife, the only love that ever would satisfy me, would be that which was given spontaneously and unsought; dependent on nothing I gave, but on what I was. If you choose this suitor, my faith in you will convince me that your feeling was such for him, and I shall be able to say, "Be happy, and God bless you."

Thus far, I trust, I have written with the steadiness of one who, in either case, has no right to be even surprised—who has nothing whatever to claim, and who accordingly claims nothing.

Treherne will of course answer—and I shall find his letter at Camp when I return, which will be the day after to-morrow. It may bring me—as, indeed, I have expected day by day—being so much the friend of both parties—definite tiding.

Let me stop writing here. My ghosts of old have been haunting me every day this week; is it because my good angel is vanishing—vanishing—far away? Let me recall your words, which nothing ever can obliterate from my memory—and which, in any case, I shall bless you for as long as I live.

"I believe that every sin, however great, being repented of and forsaken, is by God, and ought to be by men, altogether forgiven, blotted out, and done away."

A truth which I hope never to forget, but to set forth continually—I shall have plenty of opportunity as a jail-surgeon. Ay, I shall probably live and die as a poor jail-surgeon.

And you?

"The children of Alice call Bartrum father."

This line of Elia's has been running in my head all day—a very quiet, patient, pathetically sentimental line. But Charles Lamb was only a gentle dreamer—or he wrote it when he was old.

"Understand, I do not believe you love this young man. If you do—marry him! But if, not loving him, you marry him—I had rather you died. Oh, child, child, with eyes so like my mother and Dallas — I had rather, ten thousand times, that yon died.

CHAPTER XXI.

HER STORY.

Penelope has brought me my desk to pass away the long day during her absence in London—whither she has gone up with Mrs. Granton to buy the first installment of her wedding-clothes. She looked very sorry that I could not accompany her. She is exceedingly kind—more so than ever in her life before, though I have given her a deal of trouble, and seem to be giving more every day.

I have had "fever-and- agur," as the poor folk hereabouts call it—caught, probably, in those long walks over the moorlands, which I indulged in after our return from the north—supposing they would do me good. But the illness has done me more; so it comes to the same thing in the end.

I could be quite happy now, I believe were those about me happy too; and, above all, were Penelope less anxious on my account, so as to have no cloud on her own prospects. She is to be married in April, and they will sail in May; I must contrive to get well long before then, if possible. Francis has been very little down here; being fully occupied in official arrangements; but Penelope only laughs, and says he is better out of the way during this busy time, She is so

which is good for the dear old lady too.

Poor Mrs. Granton! it cut me to the heart at first to see how puzzled she was at the strange freak which took Colin off to the Mediterranean—only puzzled, never cross—how could she be cross at anything "my Colin" does? he is always right, of course. He was really right this time, though it made her unhappy for a while; but she would have been more so, had she known all. Now, she only wonders a little; looks at me with a sort of half-pitying curiosity; is specially kind to me; brings me every letter of her son's to read—thank heaven, they are already very cheerful letters—and treats me altogether as if she thought I were breaking my heart for her Colin, and that Colin had not yet discovered what was good for himself concerning me but would in time. It is of little consequence—so she is content and discovers nothing.

Poor Colin! I can only reward him by loving his old mother for his sake.

After a long pause, writing being somewhat fatiguing, I have thought it best to take this opportunity of setting down a circumstance which befell me since I last wrote in my journal. It was at first not my intention to mention it here at all, but on second thoughts I do so, lest, should anything happen to prevent my destroying this journal during my lifetime, there might be no opportunity, through the omission of it, for any misconstructions as to Colin's conduct or mine. I am weak enough to feel that, not even after I was dead, would I like it to be supposed I had given any encouragement to Colin Granton, or cared for him in any other way than as I shall always care for him, and as he well deserves.

It is a most painful thing to confess, and one for which I still take some blame to myself, for not having seen and prevented it, but the day before we left Treherne Court, Colin Granton made me an offer of marriage.

When I state that this was unforseen, I do not mean up to the actual moment of its befalling me. They say women instinctively find out when a man is in love with them, so long as they themselves are indifferent to him; but I did not, probably because my mind was so full of other things. Until the last week of our visit, such a possibility never entered my mind. I mention this to explain my not having prevented—what every girl ought to prevent if she can—the final declaration, which it must be such a cruel mortification to any man to make, and be denied.

This was how it happened. After the new year came in, our gayeties and late hours, following the cares of papa's illness, were too much for me, or else this fever was coming on. I felt—not ill exactly—but not myself, and Mrs. Granton saw it. She petted me like a mother, and was always telling me to regard her as such, which I innocently promised; when she would look at me earnestly, and say, often with tears in her eyes, that "she was sure I would never be unkind to the old lady," and that "she should get the best of daughters."

Yet still I had not the least suspicion. No, nor when Colin was continallly about me, watching me, waiting upon me, sometimes almost irritating me, and then again touching me inexpressibly with his unfailing kindness, did I suspect anything for long. At last I did.

There is no need to relate what trifles first opened my eyes, nor the wretchedness of the two intermediate days between my dreading and being sure of it.

I suppose it must always be a very terrible thing to any woman, the discovery that some one whom she likes heartily, and only likes, loves her. Of course, in every possible way that it could be done, without wounding or betraying him to other people, I avoided Colin; but it was dreadful notwithstanding. The sight of his honest, happy face was sadder to me than the saddest face in the world; yet when it clouded over, my heart ached. And then his mother, with her caresses and praises made me feel the most conscience-stricken wretch that ever breathed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ZOPESA.—I have secured the agency for this new compound for Dyspepsia and Liver Troubles. It comes to me under most favourable auspices, being very highly endorsed and recommended. Its wonderful affinity to the Digestive Organs and the Liver, increasing the dissolving juices, correcting the acids and carrying off impurities of the Stomach and regulating the Liver, can be tested by securing a sample bottle which sell at 10 cents, or large Eight ounce bottle 75 cents. F. Jordan. 1763

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"THEY ALL DO IT."—To beautify the teeth and give fragrance to the breath