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LADY IRIS' MISTAKE;

— or the —

Hero of 'Surata'

CHAPTER XXIII.

What blissful days they were to Allan and Lady Iris, and how swiftly they flew! When Lord Caledon saw how happy his daughter was, and knew that her happiness all sprung from love, he resolved that nothing should be wanting on his part.

"You seem to enjoy our beautiful scenery, Captain Osburn, he said. "Pray do not limit your stay; we shall be only too pleased if you will extend your visit." And Allan was nothing loath.

With his love his fears increased. When he saw Lady Iris at rare intervals, and did not know of the grandeur of Chandos, he did not think so much of the difference in their social position; but, now that he was in her home, now that he saw the almost regal splendor that surrounded her, his heart sunk. He had not thought much of nobility, of high birth; but now he began to understand the pride of lineage, which had always been a dead letter to him. Almost every hour some of the ancestral glories of her ancient race were brought before him. He saw the old gray walls, clad in ivy now, which had once been battered by shot; he saw the banners which had been proudly carried on many a battlefield, and the armor in which crusaders had fought. Let him raise his eyes where he would, they were sure to rest upon the lion and the lily, and the words which never wearied him—"Held with honor." To him all the glory of her race, all its grandeur, culminated in her. He associated all that was grand and noble with her.

How could they call her proud? To him she was all that was most gentle. Hour after hour brought him nearer to her by love and removed him further from her by fear, until love made him desperate. Nothing could have been more fortunate for him than to be under the same roof with her. Unlike many men, he was seen to the greatest advantage within doors. He was a delightful companion to live with; he was so courteous, so ready always to sacrifice his own comfort for that of others; he was ever cheerful, with blithe words and bright smiles. Children adored him, and it was a pretty sight to see the tall handsome soldier playing with the little ones who visited Chandos. Every woman and child who looked upon his dark handsome face was attracted by it, and trusted him by instinct. He united strength and courage with kindness and tenderness of heart. No wonder Lady Iris loved him!

His love preyed upon him; and he said to himself that he must tell her of it. He was doubtful what her answer would be. There were times when the sweet face softened when he was by her side; and then he felt hopeful. She must care for him, he thought, or she would never be so kind. Again, when he saw her surrounded by admirers, and looking a veritable queen of beauty and grace, his heart sunk. What and who was he that he should hope to win this fair loveliness for himself?

The time was coming when he must tell her and know his fate. If she refused him—sent him away—his heart might be broken; but he would not end his life with a coward's cry. He would never hate her for what she did—never cease to love her; but he would go abroad, where his sword might be of some service.

But perhaps his fate might be quite different—she might care for him. However, he could not bear the suspense—he must know his fate. He wondered how he had borne the suspense so long. Every nerve thrilled with impatience, his hands trembled, and his face quivered!

"I must find her and hear her decision," he said. "I cannot wait any longer."

But she was not to be found. Lady Iris had caught a glimpse of the eyes of her lover, and had seen the love in them, and she shrunk from him like a frightened bird, trembling when the sound of his voice fell upon her ear. She had been wooed by some of the noblest in the land, and had listened with such supreme calmness that it had often been mistaken for pride; her eyes had never drooped before the gaze of any lover; why should she tremble now at the thought of meeting Allan's?

Only yesterday he had passed her a book, and in giving it to her their hands had met. From the mere touch of his hand a passionate thrill had gone to her heart; her hand had trembled, and the book had fallen. She had hastened away; she dared not remain, lest her face should reveal the secret that she was trying to hide. Then indeed had she marveled what had come over her.

Now in his face and in his eyes she had read that he was determined to woo her and win her. She knew his power over her; she felt that, struggle as she might, her fate was sealed. She loved him with a deep earnest love. She would not admit to herself that if she married him she would be marrying beneath her. He was a gentleman, and that was enough for her.

She was frightened at her own happiness. She knew that she would almost give her life for words of love and tenderness from him; and yet when the time had come that she should listen to them, she was frightened.

Allan found it impossible to see her alone. Whenever he sought her, some of the ladies of the party were with her. She who had been so animated and so witty, who had enjoyed talking to him and had amused him with her delicate satire and gay repartee, now never even looked at him when she spoke to him. She seemed to think that if their eyes once met it would be "all over with her." He bore it as patiently as he could for a few days, fretting and fuming, but utterly unable to help himself; he could find no opportunity to speak to her, and she would give him none.

One morning the whole party stood on the steps that led to the terrace. They were going out riding and driving. Lady Iris moved away from the others for a few moments, evidently off her guard, and Allan's heart gave a great bound of delight as he noticed it. He went straight up to her and took her hand.

"Lady Iris," he said, "why do you shun me? What have I done? Why will you not speak to me?"

"I do speak to you," she replied hastily.

"Why will you not look at me? How many days is it since I have seen even the color of your beautiful eyes?"

She tried to raise them to his; but her face flushed hotly, and she turned from him, fearing that if he saw it it would make matters worse.

He could say no more, for at that moment the groom came up with her horse; but he was only the more resolved to know his fate. What did it mean, that sudden vivid flash, that coy closing of the white eyelids over the expressive eyes?

He tried to speak to her while they were out riding, but without success. He tried again when they returned to Chandos, during the interval that they found the most pleasant in the day—five o'clock tea. He stood behind her chair, and helped her to hand round the dainty cups. He rendered her many little services, and she was grateful for them. She replied to all his remarks, and chatted with him; but she kept Laura Seymour by her side the whole time, and never once did her eyes meet his.

After tea, he went out and procured an iris.

"She will remember what she told me about the iris," he said. "She will remember its meaning, 'I have a message for you,' and she will come when I send it."

But she did not. She took it, knowing what it meant, that he had a message for her, one that she was longing to hear, but she was afraid to join him because of her great love.

(To be continued.)

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ARE YOUNG MEN.

DUBLIN.—The provision under the Free State constitution that ministers directing important departments shall not be members of parliament has afforded opportunity of appointing to such posts men of ability irrespective of their political popularity. Notable among the members of the Provisional Government to-day are Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Home Affairs, who was rather a storm center in the late Dail. To-day he is conciliatory in temper, and very lucid and persuasive in explanation. He is a young man well under thirty, a grandson of T. D. Sullivan, a veteran in the old Parnell movement, and a nephew of T. M. Healy, one of the foremost Irish members in the Westminister Parliamont. Mr. O'Higgins was trained for the law. He was a solicitor's apprentice, serving his time in the office of Maurice Healy, former member of Parliament of Cork, but his intervention in the Sinn Fein movement and consequent arrest by the police prevented his actual entrance into the legal profession. He is now at the head of all the law, judges and police in Ireland, and his competence for his job is fully recognized.

A Capable Debater.

Next in importance is Ernest Blythe now Minister for local government and in charge of all the public administrative bodies in Ireland, both municipal and rural. He also was in jail, and during the Sinn Fein regime was Minister of Trade. He is very young; comes from the six county area, and speaks English with a strong Ulster accent. He is a capable debater, and frequently deputed to state the views of the government to the House. Patrick O'Hogan, a young solicitor whose father was a chief offical of the Irish Land Commission and whose uncle, Monsignor Hogan, was President of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, administers the Agricultural Department. These three young men are Mr. Cosgrave's chief assistants. They all share fully the common sense attitude which has marked his conduct since he became Prime Minister. That attitude is firmer and less yielding than the Parliament was accustomed to from either Mr. Griffith of Mr. Collins. His purpose is fixed and declared. He avoids being led into speculative debate, and resists all suggestions to "make it unanimous," unless unanimity means frank acceptance of the position he is maintaining. The humorous speeches Mr. Cosgrave used to make in the last Dail are now rare with him, but when he is getting his own way he still occasionally indugles the House with a laugh. On the question of the necessity of putting down all armed opposition to the Civil Government he is uncompromising, and the exploits of the Irregulars in raids and ambushes strengthen his determination.

Austria in Desperate Need of Money.

VIENNA.—In its desperate effort to raise revenue, the government is laying heavy hands on public utility tariffs. Within the past month postage has been increased three fold, external telepraph rates 250 per cent, and railway passenger rates 18 fold. To-day an increase in telephone charges is announced which, in addition to a recent increase, makes a 12 fold advance over August. At the present rate of exchange 12 calls a day, the Austrian minimum, costs $12 a month; 20 calls $26; 38 calls $52, and special tariffs above that. Austria has no unlimited service. In this connection Neue Freie Presse asserts that an American group more than three months ago, approached the government with a view to taking over the telephone service, but has received no reply to its proposal. There is a general demand that the post, telephone and telegraph administrations be again consolidated under one department. The Social Democratic government, when in power, separated the post from the other two and created a new department with a great increase in personnel. This proposed consolidation, however, involves the formidable problem of decreasing the number of employes, something at which every ministry has balked.

Fashions and Fads.

A cape effect of very wide lace in square filet mesh bordered with gold tinse) thread, hangs from the shoulders of a dinner gown of black crepe.

Jet is often combined with mother of pearl or crystal in girdle motifs. Jet is also used for large belt buckles in cut out work, or for large Spanish combs.

An exquisite evening gown which has attracted much attention is made of silver cloth shaded with orchid, and is finished by a double puffed girdle.

A child's coat of electric blue is trimmed with matching soutache and steel buttons. A snug fur collar and wide sleeves touched with the soutache are other features.

The Herring Fishery.

There was a sign of herring at the outer part of Bay of Islands the middle of last week.

At Cox Cove, Bay of Islands, there were 20 tubs herring to the fleet yesterday. This is the first fishing to any account this season.

At Port aux Choix herring continues plentiful. Jas. Barry's steamer Carmela, Capt. N. Hackett, had 66 tubs on Saturday, and up to that time had 400 tubs on board.—Western Star.

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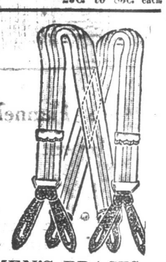

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