



A Child of Sorrow.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"What are they up to now?" asked Gosford, wiping the sweat from his blackened face.

David Jones shook his head doubtfully. "They've hit upon some other dodge and they're going to work it," he said.

"We shall know presently—ah! that's it. Is it?" he added, a minute or two afterwards, as a broad glare of light penetrated the smoke below and lit up the face of Heroncourt, as he stood with upraised rifle at the head of the stairs.

"They're going to fire the house, sir," said Baxter. "I wonder they have not thought of it before."

"They were afraid of losing the money, getting it buried under the wreck; but they're desperate now, and they want their revenge as much as the money," said David Jones, quietly.

As he spoke, the unnatural silence below was broken by loud, exultant yells; the reeking darkness was flooded by the red light of pitch torches, a light which shone from behind them as well as from the room below; the house was already on fire. A voice yelled above the din:

"Come out with the swag, or stop there and burn and be damned to you!"

A roar of savage laughter rose after the words, and Heroncourt could see the forms of the men dancing, like very savages round the rising flame. He closed his eyes, smarting with the smoke and heat, and wondered whether this was the end, or whether another attitude, gazing blankly at the friendly faces round him; then one of the men seized his arm and shook it and took the axe from him.

"By George, that was a close call!" he cried. "Don't you know me, Heron—Tudor? Pull yourself together, old man. It's all right—Hi! some of you take his shooter from him or he'll drop you by mistake!"

Heroncourt pulled himself together and tried to force a smile. "If I'm not dreaming," he said, "it's Dartford."

"Dartford it is," replied Dartford, cheerily. "Here, some of you, give me a flask."

But ere he could offer it, Heroncourt had turned round in search of the two women. "We just came up in time," said Dartford, following him. "Brown, the dealer, and his boy—we met them on the Valley Station—told us that there was some trouble here; and we rode straight on end—"

But Heroncourt was not listening; his eyes were searching for Lucy. Through the red smoke he saw her, standing a little apart, her hands hanging by her side, her eyes fixed vacantly on the reddened sky. He went up to her and whispered her name.

"Lucy, Lucy!" She turned her wide eyes upon him vacantly, then an intelligence, consciousness, slowly dawned in them;

the stairs, followed by the others, rushed through the room and into the open air. Their appearance was so sudden that, though the fiends, dancing in the light of the flames, were actually watching for them, they were taken aback; and before they could fire, Heroncourt and Baxter, their forms looming giganticly in the smoke, were upon them, the axes gleaming like silver and dealing terrible blows on either side. They were fired at by rifles and revolvers; but so sudden, so overwhelming, was the dash, the rush, that their foes fell from them as corn falls before the sickle of the reaper. The din, the confusion, were indescribable; Heroncourt found himself shouting, heard Baxter shouting beside him. He knew that death was near, that their forlorn hope was indeed forlorn; and as he found himself clear of assailants having, indeed, forced his way clean through the opposing mass, he turned, revolver in hand, to keep his promise to Lucy; but at that moment a strange note sounded in the din—a note that rose upon the air at a short distance beyond the melee.

There were loud shouts mingled with the sound of horses' hoofs, the barking of dogs. Friend and foe alike heard it; and in amazement the ruffians stood still, with their heads turned in the direction of the new sounds. Suddenly one of them cried out warningly; the cry was caught up and echoed by others; there was a rush, a stampede, for the horses which they had in readiness under the trees—the horses which were prancing and pawing over the very spot where the iron box was buried!—and Heroncourt staring, with axe still suspended, saw those who had a minute ago been the victors flying in the light of the burning house. And even while he looked a dozen horsemen pulled up their horses on their haunches beside him and fired after the flying figures. Then they flung themselves from their saddles and surrounded the little band of men and women they had rescued—the little band which but a minute or two before had seemed doomed to certain death.

The transition, the dramatic change from despair to hope, from mortal peril to safety, was so sudden that Heroncourt still stood in a threatening attitude, gazing blankly at the friendly faces round him; then one of the men seized his arm and shook it and took the axe from him.

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her white face broke from its marble rigidity into a soft, slow smile, her lips quivered, and she swayed to and fro. With a hoarse cry, Heroncourt caught her, and her head fell upon his breast. She had fainted.

CHAPTER XXXII. To return to Maida—all unconscious that Heroncourt was within fifty miles of her!

When she and Carrie and Robert Broseley reached Milda Wolda after the "picnic" in the shepherd's hut, she went straight to her room. Robert had held her horse whilst she dismounted; and as she passed him, had said, in an undertone:

"Your promise: you won't forget it, will you?" She had assented with a slight inclination of her head; but, as she paced up and down her room, she knew, as she had known when she had given it, that she had been wrong to do so. She knew that she ought to leave Milda Wolda the next morning; but she had promised to remain, at any rate, for a little while. It seemed to her as if fate pursued her with malignant purpose. She had lost her fortune, she had lost her lover; it looked as if she were about to lose the friendship and protection of the woman who had befriended her.

If the way of the transgressor is hard, the path which the righteous tread is too often strewn with flints. If she had ignored the claim of Josiah Purley, and had consented to inherit her father's wealth, if she had stifled her conscience, in fact, behaved as do most of us, who grab at all the advantages which fortune throws in our way, she would have been married to Heroncourt, would have had her heart's desire, would have been a countess; Carrie would also have been rich and have married Ricky, the world would have been smooth for her, and she would have been—No, not happy; for Maida was one of those unfortunate persons who are thralls to conscience and who must do the right thing though the skies fall and crush them.

That Robert Broseley should have fallen in love with her was a terrible thing. She had never suspected it; his declaration had fallen upon her like a bolt from the blue. She shuddered as she thought of it and recalled the fierce torrent of his words, his flashing eyes, his writhing lips. She could almost have wished that she was plain, unattractive. She did not desire the admiration and love of men; having lost Heroncourt she wanted only peace, craved only forgetfulness. All men were alike to her; she was adamant to all—excepting Heroncourt.

Some women can find it possible to love, forget, and love again; but not so Maida. There was not an hour of the day that she did not think of Heroncourt, did not long for him with that aching of the heart which is an absolute physical pain: every lover

knows it, and those who have never loved can never understand it. As she paced up and down the room which Mrs. Broseley, in her affection, had made so dainty, she tried to decide upon a course of action. She and Carrie must leave Milda Wolda as soon as possible. They were poor; Maida had only twelve or thirteen pounds in her little purse. She would have to earn their living. Fortunately she had no fear, no misgiving. The talent which had enabled her to hold the London drawing-rooms spell-bound would serve her in the large cities of Australia; they could go to Melbourne, where she could give recitals and earn enough to keep Carrie and herself.

"She got out her books, and, there and then went over the pieces which had been successful in London. Mrs. Broseley had had a piano carried up to Maida's room, and Maida, for the first time for a long while, rehearsed and tried over her most effective recitations. There is no panacea in all the world like the work which we can do well; and the work brought comfort and consolation; so that she came down to dinner much more at ease with herself and things in general, than she could have hoped; but she could scarcely raise her eyes to Robert Broseley who sat at the head of the table.

But he appeared perfectly at his ease and seemed scarcely to look at her. Carrie was in one of her brightest moods—she knew nothing of the scene between Maida and Robert at the hut—and she and he kept the shuttlecock of conversation going between them briskly, while Mrs. Broseley looked on and smiled approvingly. But when the ladies had withdrawn to the verandah, to enjoy the cool of the evening, Robert Broseley leant back in his chair and gazed at the cigar between his thick lips, and the heavy brows beneath his low forehead came down in a lowering frown. Maida's refusal of him rankled in his breast. It had, indeed, increased his passion for her. It is the way with men of his kind; they love the woman just as long as she resists them. If she had yielded to him, if she had accepted him, he would have been in the seventh heaven of happiness and satisfaction—for a week, a month; but she had resisted him, and her resistance had increased his desire. The blood ran through his veins like molten metal; he closed his eyes and pictured her—his, his, his! His very own! But he knew that he would have to walk cautiously. She was a bird that would take flight if a hasty hand were stretched out to seize her. Of gaining her love, he had no hope; her face, her voice, when he had made his declaration, had convinced him of that. It was only by cunning that he could hope to win her.

(To be Continued.) MINARD'S LINIMENT CURES DIPHTHERIA. MINARD'S LINIMENT CURES GART IN COWS.

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Profits Tax Bill in Legislative Council.

Second Reading Carried on President's Casting Vote. Houses May Consult on Measure. As predicted, there was a considerable amount of debate on the Business Profits Tax Bill in the local House of Lords yesterday, the session lasting from four o'clock in the afternoon until close on last midnight. The Bill received its Second Reading on a casting vote of the President.

Hon. Mr. Squires moved the Second Reading of the Bill. Hon. Sir E. R. Bowring said it was only right that Newfoundland should do its share in the war to maintain its Battalion at the front by increased taxation, as he felt sure that all had the great cause at heart, but he wished to point out that all should be taxed alike and no one section of the community should be taxed more than another. He disapproved the Business Profits Tax Bill in its present form because it seemed to hit at the business class. The business people of Newfoundland, he thought, were doing their bit patriotically and under this Act were being discriminated against. The Newfoundland Government, he said, requires a large amount of money to continue the war, but it was unfair to ask business men to pay all the money needed. Even if the Bill passes in its present form, he continued, business would survive and carry on but more carefully and assume less risks than heretofore. In their calculations they would have to bear in mind that in the good year 20 per cent would be taken from their profits whilst in the bad year nothing was forthcoming from the Government. This would mean a large curtailment in supply. In all fishing countries such as this supplies have to be given, though the risks are great, meaning that if it can be successfully carried on large profits can be made in certain years and large losses in other years, so that the business man in order to continue must conserve his interests by piling up a large reserve in good times to offset bad ones, but the reserve would be taken if this Bill becomes law. As far as he knew the Bill was without precedent either in the Mother Country or sister Colonies. In England there was a tax on profits, known as excess profit duty, over and above profits made in pre-war times. He really believed that was what the Government were after to collect here. In the Bill before us now, said Sir Edgar, all profits above \$3,000 are to be taxed. In Canada they levy a War Tax, and allow free of tax 7 per cent on the paid up capital of an Incorporated Company and 10 per cent on private business houses. That was a material difference from the Act asked to be passed here. The capital in a company registered and paid up here is not permitted to have an interest charge free of taxation, although a man may be running a business with money borrowed from the Banks and he could charge up according to his business the interest he paid into the Bank. Why, Sir Edgar asked, should borrowed capital be treated differently to money borrowed from shareholders. Money, he said, is entitled to the same consideration in any business. He questioned whether the Bill before the House called for the best method of raising the money needed by the Government. He believed it would take a small army of accountants to adjust the complicated accounts of business concerns and was of the opinion that the expenditure to provide machinery for collecting the tax would be in excess of the income

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