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Canadian Cereal and Flour Mills Limited, Toronto, Canada  
Makers of Tilsen's Oats—Rainbow Flour—Star Flour

## Beautiful Cynthia;

### Victory After Many Defeats.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

##### A LOVE-INSPIRED HOPE.

Dunton turned his head. "He did," he said huskily. "And he is killed? You saw him—dead?" "No," he replied, "he is—missing. But—he did not go on, but strove faintly for words that should conceal the horror of the story—but we searched for him; we did not find him. The Afridis are brutes after a fight—the women—"

Northam stopped him by a gesture. "You understand, Cynthia?" he said gravely.

She went to the window and looked out, seeing nothing; then she opened her hand and looked at the ring as if she were striving to gain some information from it—something more convincing than Dunton's words; and at last as the two men were beginning to feel that the strain of the situation was intolerable, she said, as if she were speaking to herself: "He is not dead!" "Not dead!" echoed Dunton, start-

led; for there was absolute conviction in her tone, in the eyes, which wore the expression of a seer. "No," she said, "not dead. Do you think I should not know?" She smiled on them and struck fresh terror to their hearts, for they feared that the shock had overturned her mind. "Do you think that I could hold this?" she held out her hand with the ring in it—and not feel, if—if he were dead?" Northam took the other hand—she drew back the one which held the ring, as if she feared he was going to take it from her. "Try and—think so until—Ah, no, Cynthia, I can't pretend; I can't let you deceive yourself; it would only be the harder to bear when you realized the truth. Poor Frayne is—"

"No! no! no!" she broke in. "He is not dead. If he were, I should know it—he sure of it. And I am not, I am not. If he had been killed I should have felt it the moment he died. You don't believe; you think I

do not know what I am saying?" She smiled; then her eyes flashed from face to face. "You searched for him, you—"

"Did everything that mortal men could do, Miss Frayne, I beg you to believe!" broke in Dunton, with sad eagerness. "We left no place unsearched; we went out parties; we wired in every direction. A big reward was offered, is still on offer; it has been increased—he turned toward Northam—"It is a sum large enough to tempt even an Afridi."

She drew her hand across her forehead, and stood for a moment looking before her; then she said, with all the old sweetness: "Will you sit down—I beg your pardon—oh, pray sit down! You—were wounded?"

Dunton waved the question aside as he took a chair. Northam still stood beside her, for he feared that she might break down, fall suddenly. "I am sorry! Now, will you tell me everything, please, Captain Dunton—it is 'Dunton,' is it not?—do not keep anything back; do not be afraid; I am quite strong—and calm. I want to know—ah! can you not guess how badly I want to know? Wait, I will tell you," she went on, with a simple pathos which brought the tears to Dunton's eyes and made Northam bite his lip. "Mr. Frayne and I were engaged to be married. We—we loved each other when we were quite little—we used to play on the hillside together—you can see the place from

where you sit. There is a bridge over the stream—"

"You are trying yourself too severely," muttered Northam.

"No; let me go on. We were to be married, but the day before—yes, actually the day before—I was told that he was ruined, and that I should only make his ruin more complete, mar his future, drag him down, if I married him."

Northam did not start, but his brows came together, and he looked at her keenly, as if a suspicion as to who had been her informant was dawning on him.

"I wrote to tell him that I could not marry him—I did not give the real reason; I knew he would not accept it. I—I let him think—oh, that I had ceased to care for him. Ceased to care for him!" she repeated, with a smile. "And so I—I sent him—no, not to his death, but to risk his life, to get wounded." She shuddered, and her hand went to her throat as if she were choking. "Now you know that I have the right to hear everything. I have, have I not?—It is part of the punishment which I have borne. Please, Captain Dunton!" she implored, as she sank into a chair beside him.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

##### A BRAVE RESOLUTION.

Northam signed to him, and Dunton told his story.

He could not tell her everything—could not speak of the conduct of the Afridi women after the fight—but he dwelt on his affection and admiration for Darrel, and Darrel's splendid courage and the qualities which had endeared him to his men and his brother officers.

"He didn't know what fear was," "He never did, he never will!" she breathed.

"It was his extraordinary pluck that led him into danger; he was in the thick of the scrimmage and fighting. Oh, but you know!"

"I know," her eyes responded mutely.

"He would have been first at the fort, but the colonel gave him the order to charge the hill on the flank; the Afridis were strong there, and—and—Frayne went too far. Some of his men saw him fall—and would have gone to him, but they were surrounded. The rush carried them away, Miss Drayle. I've wished many and many a time since that I could have changed places with him, and—and I wish it now more than ever."

She stretched out her hand and laid it on his wasted one; for the first time her eyes were wet.

"You—you said that very well, and I—I—know you spoke the truth," she said, in a whisper. "Everybody loved him."

"Not one of his men but would have died for him," he broke in hoarsely. "I—I think I'll go now, Miss Drayle."

Her hand closed on his. "Not yet, I am cruel. I am making you suffer. You will forgive me? He gave you this ring the night before?" He inclined his head; he could not speak. "And you have brought it to me. Not as a death token; no! no! It is a token of hope. Yes, of hope. I—I shall keep it until he comes to claim it—and I shall give myself with it."

Her gaze was fixed above his head, her voice was like that of a prophetess of old, who sees into the future. There was silence for a moment; then she seemed to awake.

"But I am forgetting! What will you think of me? You have come all this way to bring me his token—and I have offered you nothing. I am ashamed! You shall have some tea—what time of the day is it?—yes, tea!"

She rose and went toward the bell, and, before they could beg her to let them refuse, she had rung it. Parsons came in, pale with anxiety and apprehension.

"Some tea, Parsons, please!" she said; then her hand went up to her head, her eyes closed and she staggered. Northam caught her in his arms and carried her to her room.

For days after she had recovered from the fainting fit, she lay in a state of collapse, a marvellous state, in which the overstrained brain was incapable of connected thought, the overturned heart almost as incapable of suffering.

Northam, who remained at the inn,

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is, and must be, good health. Sallow skin and face blemishes are usually caused by the presence of impurities in the blood—impurities which also cause headache, backache, languor, nervousness and depression of spirits. If, at times, when there is need you will use

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was afraid that she would die; but the doctor did not share his dread.

"A sudden shock, even of the worst kind, does not kill the young and strong, Lord Northam," he said. "But Nature has its limits, and Miss Drayle has overstepped one of them. She will pull round in time for one reason, if for no other. She has no wish to die; she wants to live. A person who takes enough interest in life to ask for the back numbers of the Times, will—"

"She must not have them!" said Northam anxiously.

"Indeed, but she must," said the doctor quietly. "To refuse would bring about a condition much more to be dreaded than her present one. Will you please get them?"

Northam got the papers, and Cynthia read the account of the expedition and the battle; and the doctor's judgment was justified. For when she had gone through the special correspondent's letters, the graphic description of the engagement, she took a turn for the better. And, one morning she told Parsons she intended getting up.

"I want to get well quickly," she said, in response to Parsons' remonstrances and entreaties. "I have a long journey before me—I am going out to India, to the frontier, Parsons. Will you come with me?"

(To be Continued.)

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