
Literature.

A MONSTROUS WRONG.

CHAPTER XLVII.

They passed into the library, and the marchioness wrote a letter to Dolores, telling her that Lord Glenmorris knew all and that his house and heart were open to the first-born child of his wife.

"There is no longer need of your self-sacrifice, my darling," wrote the mother. "Henceforth, Gifford Melcombe can be nothing to you. Henceforth, you are to live with us and share our love with Baby Hugh. We shall leave England in a day or two. I send this letter by a special messenger. Come to me as soon as you receive it—come never to leave me again! Let Elsie follow with your luggage, and tell the faithful old woman that she shall not be separated from you. No one can know that you are my child other than by adoption, but we shall adopt you legally, Dolores, and once, come, then my darling, to your father and mother."

Happy tears fell upon these lines and the few that followed. The letter was sealed and despatched by a footman, and Lord and Lady Glenmorris resumed their conversation, by laying plans for their future.

A couple of hours later a cab drove up before the door of Glenmorris House, and Dolores slowly mounted the steps. She was promptly admitted and shown into the drawing-room, where the marchioness and marchioness awaited her.

Lady Glenmorris embraced her in a rapture of gladness, and then led her to the library.

Her grave eyes studied for a moment the exquisite young face, in all its splendid loveliness, and noted the noble soul that shone in the velvety black eyes, the purity and earnestness of her features, and perfect breeding that distinguished her from her first-born child. She looked up at him half apprehensively, in pleading that touched him, and he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Welcome home, my daughter!" he said tenderly. "You are to be my child, too, remember. I hope you will be very happy with us."

Explanations were gone over again for the benefit of Dolores. The contemplated journey abroad was discussed. No one would have guessed from Lord Glenmorris's manner what pain his projected exile from England caused him. He had desired to bring up his child at King'sholm, to embark in politics, to identify himself with his country, and his ambitions were to be blighted, his hopes defeated, yet he gave no outward sign of disappointment.

If he loved Dolores at sight, she returned his affection with equal warmth and tenderness. Before half an hour had elapsed, he had taught her to call him "papa," and the shyest with which she uttered the name completely charmed him.

Elsie arrived with the luggage, and Dolores was shown to her room—the best guest chamber—where she dressed for dinner. Elsie's curiosity as to the change of residence from Primrose Villa to Glenmorris House was satisfied by the explanation that Lord and Lady Glenmorris had adopted her young mistress as their own child, and that she was now a member of the family.

Lord and Lady Glenmorris and Dolores dined together. After dinner the ladies escorted the ladies to the drawing-room.

"I will visit Lord St. Maur this evening and assure him of Miss Wyn's safety," he observed. "He is very fond of you, Dolores, and you may expect to see him return with me. He has been so troubled about you, so anxious to find you, that I feel it my duty to hasten to him with the news that all is well with you."

"He need not know our secret, Dolores," said Lady Glenmorris. "His great affection for you seems to me an instinct of nature."

Lord Glenmorris hurried out into the street.

"What would not the earl give if this beautiful girl were his legitimate heiress," he thought. "Could Lord Oswald's marriage with Valeria have been legal? But no—she would not have dared to marry Lady Victoria Elmsmere. He was too cowardly to countenance her. No, Valeria must be right. She could not have been legally Lord Oswald's wife. Yet I shall submit the case to the strictest investigation! I shall not let the matter rest here!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE WRONG RIGHTED.

The Earl of St. Maur returned to his own home upon his arrival in London after his exciting visit to Redburn Farm. He was thrilling with excitement over his discoveries. The knowledge that he had a grandchild, and that grandchild was a girl who had grown to love with an exceeding great tenderness, seemed to give him a new lease of life.

He had parted from Mr. Paxon at the station, promising to see him on the morrow. He dressed for dinner, according to his life-long habit, and dined, as usual, in his great salon; but the butler shook his head as he marked his lordship's meagre appetite, and foreboded for the old earl a speedy illness.

After dinner the old lord retired to his library, and here, a little later, Sir Basil Nugent was shown into his presence.

"I have been very busy to-day, my lord," said the young baronet, wearily, when salutations had been spoken, "and still I have found no trace of Miss Wyn. I began to think that Melcombe may know something about her. He pretends to love her, yet he does not wear an anxious look. I met him to-day, and he wrote me a note that he would report only as one of triumph. I believe that he knows where she is!"

The earl started. A sudden suspicion came to him. Could Melcombe have penetrated the mystery of Miss Wyn's identity? Was Melcombe playing a deep game, instead of being the noble man he had grown to believe him? Melcombe's earlier history, his former dissoluteness, returned to him. Melcombe was the son of his son's confidential friend and adviser; perhaps Melcombe had never lost sight of his son's young wife; perhaps Melcombe had known all this while that Miss Wyn was actually and truly the Lady Dolores Lennox!

To the thought succeeded conviction. His lordship seemed stupefied.

"He must know," he exclaimed. "He must have known who she really is!"

"It was Sir Basil's turn to start."

"Do you know, my lord?" he questioned. "Have you discovered?"

The earl turned upon him like a flash. "Then you have known also?" he exclaimed, in amazement. "What does all this mean? Why was I left in the dark? You knew that Dolores—"

"My lord," interposed the young baronet, "Dolores begged me to keep her secret from you. She feared you would despise her when you knew her origin. She is so sensitive, and she had been forbidden by her uncle to bear the name of Redburn. I cannot understand how you should have discovered her real name and history."

"We seem to be at cross purposes. What is her real name, Nugent?"

"Dolores Redburn. I did not meet her first in this house, my lord, I made her acquaintance last summer in Kent, when I was visiting in the neighborhood of Redburn Farm. I have often been tempted to tell you this, but I had promised Dolores to keep her history secret. We were betrothed last year. Dolores loves me as I love her, and I hope to make her my wife."

"In spite of any and everything. Dolores is peerless in her goodness and sweetness, as is in her beauty. She is a noble lady, and her parentage shall not shadow our lives. I have never for one moment faltered in my devotion to her. I will not give her up!"

There was a dash of defiance in the young baronet's tones that seemed greatly to amuse the old lord.

"I see that when I find her I shall have to introduce you young people over again," he said, smiling. "I have been down to Redburn Farm to-day, and have made a most astounding and welcome discovery."

"A discovery?"

My son informed me, before his death, said Lord St. Maur, that when he married the Lady Victoria Elmsmere he had a great fortune, position, rank—

He paused as the door swung open. "Mr. Melcombe," announced the footman.

And Gifford Melcombe, smiling and jubilant, came in, expecting to meet Dolores and Lady Glenmorris, and no one else. He had been told at Primrose Villa that Miss Wyn had gone to Grosvenor Square to remain.

His small, pale eyes swept the room, noting each figure of the group, and darkened ominously.

There was the marchioness, her form encircled by her husband's arm, her lovely face radiant. There was Lord St. Maur, the picture of joy and rapture. There was Dolores, seated upon Sir Basil's arm, who did not even loosen his clasp upon her at Melcombe's entrance. And there stood Mrs. Redburn, looking on with her hands clasped in prayer, and her face a face from which all the hardness and grimness had been driven away.

"What does all this mean?" he asked, slowly.

"I mean, Gifford Melcombe," declared the old Earl of St. Maur, "that I have found my daughter-in-law and granddaughter. It means that my son's marriage with Miss Redburn is to be declared null and void. It means that I now acknowledge the Lady Dolores Lennox, known hitherto as Miss Wyn, as my lawful granddaughter and heiress!"

The old lord seemed to like to repeat those words. He had longed for a grandchild, but he could not yet understand his great fortune in finding one.

"If I knew it, Mrs. Redburn, I would gladly do so," answered the young baronet.

The door opened. The footman announced Lord Glenmorris.

The earl stepped forward to greet this new visitor, the intention of which was drawing with him to another room; but the marchioness forestalled his purpose.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said, in her quick, well-bred tones, that were oddly tremulous and broken, "for my ill-timed interruption, Sir Basil Nugent, but we have just come up to London, my son and I, to look for my lost daughter—and to find my grandchild. We did not dream of finding her here, or that you knew the station to your chambers, finding your daughter-in-law, and your granddaughter, and the fact that you were here. You loved Dolores. You must know where she is. Will you give me the address, Sir Basil?"

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