



CHAPTER XXVIII—Continued.

Mrs. Sinclair's telegram informing him of her husband's death, and enlisting him to go to Marchbrook, disturbed the placidity of her father's temper.

"Poor Sinclair!" he muttered, with more fretfulness than regret. "Pity he couldn't have died at a more convenient time. I hate crossing the channel in an equinoctial gale. And what good can I do at Marchbrook? However, I suppose I must go. Women are so helpless. She never cared much for him, poor child, and there's Davenant still unmarried and devoted to her. An excellent match, too, since he came into old Gryffin's money. Providence orders all things for the best. I hope I shall have a fine night for crossing."

He was with Constance early on the following day, having lost no time in obeying her summons; but he was unprepared for the accusations she brought against him.

"Upon my life, Constance, I was only a passive instrument in this whole affair, just like little Webb. It was put to me that this thing must be done to save your life, and I consented."

"You let a stranger take my destiny into his hands?" cried Constance, indignantly.

"He was not a stranger. He loved you dearly—as was as anxious for your welfare as even I, your father."

"The German physician, the white-haired old man who told me to hope? Why he had never seen me before in his life."

"The man who told you to hope, who persuaded me to agree to the introduction of a spurious child, was no German doctor. He was neither old nor white-haired, and he loved you devotedly for years. He heard you were dying of a broken heart, and came to you in disguise in order to see if love could de-solve some means of saving you. The German doctor was Cyprian Lavenant."

This was another blow for Constance. The man whom she had believed in as the soul of honor was the originator of the scheme she had denounced as wicked and cruel, and yet could find no words of blame for him. She remembered the gentle voice that had penetrated her ear and mind through the thick mists of madness, remem-bred the tones that had touched her with a wondering sense of something familiar and dear. He had come to her in her depths of despair, and from the moment of his coming, her life had brightened and grown happy. It was but a delusive happiness, a false peace; and now she must go back to the old agony of desolation and incurable regret.

"You can at least tell me who and what that child is, papa," she said after a long pause.

"Indeed, my love, I know nothing except that Davenant told me she belonged to decently born people, and would never be claimed by any one. And the poor little thing looked so thoroughly cleaned and respectable—of course at that age one can hardly tell the features are so undeveloped—that nose more like a morsel of putty than anything else—but I really did think that the child had the thoroughbred look; and I am sure when I saw her last Christmas she looked as complete a lady as ever came out of our Marchbrook nursery."

"She is a lovely child," said Constance, "and I have loved her passionately."

"Then, my dearest girl, why not go on loving her?" pleaded Lord Clancyarde. "Call her your adopted child, if you like, and keep her about you as your pet and companion till you are married again and have children of your own. You can then relegate her to her natural position and by and by get her respectfully married, or portion her off in some way."

"No," said Constance resolutely, "I will never see her again."

And all the while she was longing to take the afternoon train to Hastings, and raise her darling child.

After this there was nothing more for Constance Sinclair to do but to submit to fate and consider herself once more a childless mother. Sir Cyprian was away, no one knew where, and even had he been in England Constance felt that there would be little use in knowing more than she knew already. The knowledge of the strange child's parentage could be of the smallest importance to her, since she meant to banish the little one from her heart and home.

Lord Clancyarde and the lawyers did all that was necessary to secure Mrs. Sinclair's position as inheritor of her husband's estates. The Newmarket stables and stud were sold, and realized a considerable sum; and the training stable was supposed to be the most perfect establishment of its kind.

"I read the account of that dreadful business in the newspapers," she said. "I hope Mrs. Sinclair has quite recovered from the shock such an awful event must have caused her."

"Well, yes, I think she has recovered from that. Her husband's death following so quickly was, of course, a blow, and since then she has had another trouble to bear."

"Indeed! I am sorry," said Mrs. Walsingham, with a thoughtful look.

"Yes, we did all for the best. She was dangerously ill, you know, about a year and a half ago, and we—well, it was foolish, perhaps, though the plan succeeded for the moment—we made her believe that her little girl had been saved from drowning at Schoenethal, in the Black Forest. You may have heard of the circumstance."

"Yes, yes," she said. "It was quite wonderful. She received the strange child we introduced to her with delight—never doubted its identity with her own baby—and all went on well till poor Sinclair's death; but on his deathbed he wrote a letter telling her—"

"That the child was not her own!" exclaimed Mrs. Walsingham. "That must have hit her hard."

"It did, poor girl. She has never yet recovered the blow, and I fear never will. What I most dread is her sinking back into the state in which she was the winter before last."

"Where is Sir Cyprian Davenant?" asked Mrs. Walsingham, somewhat irrelevantly.

"At the other end of the world, I suppose."

CHAPTER XXIX.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

A common specific for a broken heart when the patient happens to be a person of handsome fortune—for your pauper, hard work is your only cure—is foreign travel. Lord Clancyarde, who hated Marchbrook, now suggested this remedy to his daughter. He felt that it was his duty to afford her the benefit of his protection and society during the first period of her widowhood, and it struck him that it would be more agreeable to both of them to lead a nomadic life than to sit opposite each

other on the family hearth and brood upon the sorrows of this life or read the family Bible.

"It would be quite the right season for Rome, love, if we were to start at once," said Lord Clancyarde, soothingly.

Constance yielded to her father's suggestion with a graceful submission that charmed him. She cared very little whether she went. The little girl was still at Hastings with honest Martha. She cried sometimes for mamma, but was happy, upon the whole, Martha wrote: wondering very much why she and her charge remained so long away. Martha knew nothing of the change that had taken place in her darling's position.

"Very well, dear," said Lord Clancyarde. "You have only to get your bags packed and, by the way, you had better write to your banker for circulation. Five hundred will do to start with."

Father and daughter went to Italy, and Constance tried to find comfort in those classic scenes that are peopled with august shadows; but her heart was tortured by separation from the child, and it was only a resolute pride that withheld her from owning the truth that the little one she had believed her own was as dear to her as the baby she had lost.

Lord Clancyarde and his daughter were driving on the Corso one sunny afternoon in the Easter week, and the gentleman's attention was attracted by a lady who drove a phaeton with a pair of cobs caparisoned in a fantastical fashion, with silver bells on their harness. The lady was past her first youth, but still was remarkably handsome, and was dressed with an artistic sense of color and a daring disregard of fashion of the day—dressed, in a word, to look like an old picture, and not like a modern fashion plate.

"Who can she be?" exclaimed Lord Clancyarde. Her face seems familiar to me, I have the faintest idea where I've seen her."

A few yards further on he encountered an acquaintance of the London clubs, and pulled up his horses on purpose to interrogate him about the unknown in the Spanish hat.

"Don't you know her?" asked Captain Flitter, with a surprised air. "Yes, she's handsome, but passes; sure le retour."

"Who is she?" repeated Lord Clancyarde.

Captain Flitter looked curiously at Mrs. Sinclair before he answered.

"Her name is Walsingham—widow of a Colonel Walsingham—colonel in the Spanish contingent—rather a bad egg, of course I mean the gentleman."

A light dawned on Lord Clancyarde's memory. Yes, this was the Mrs. Walsingham whom people talked about years ago, before Sinclair's marriage, and it was Sinclair's money she was spending now, in all probability, on that fantastical turn-out with its jingling bells. Lord Clancyarde felt himself personally aggrieved by the lady, and thought he would like to see more of her.

"Does she stay long in Rome?" he asked the club loungers.

"She never stays long anywhere, I believe; very erratic; likes artists and musical people, and that sort of thing; has reception every Saturday evening. Always go. One meets people one doesn't see elsewhere; not the regular treadmill, you know."

Lord Clancyarde asked no more. He would be sure to meet Flitter at one of the artists' rooms, and could a him as many questions about Mrs. Walsingham as he liked.

The two men met that very evening, and the result of their conversation was Lord Clancyarde's presentation to Mrs. Walsingham at her Saturday reception.

She was very gracious to him, and made room for him on the ottoman where she was seated, the center of a circle of enthusiastic Americans who thought her the nicest Englishwoman they had ever met.

"Who was that lady in deep mourning you were driving with yesterday?" Mrs. Walsingham asked Lord Clancyarde, presently.

"My youngest daughter, Mrs. Sinclair. You knew her husband some years ago. I think he is lately dead."

"Yes. I saw his death in the Times, in that dismal column where we shall all appear in due course of time, I suppose."

"Yes, he died in South America. You heard the story, I suppose. A most unfortunate business—he confidential solicitor shot in Sinclair's own little French girl he had been foolish enough to get entangled with. The jealous little viper contrived to give the poor slip, and Sinclair saw himself in danger of the law and fled alternately every thirty years. M. Philipps has made a special study of the whole question. Inquiring into the causes of these changes of level, he finds a variety of influences at work, such as the wind driving the water towards certain coasts, temperature of the air causing in summer evaporation and consequent fall in level. Rivers, rain and earthquakes are also among the active agencies causing fluctuations from month to month and from day to day."

To Be Continued.

A Changing Sea.

The Caspian Sea lies eighty-five feet below the level of the Black Sea, and is the greatest body of water in the world lying below the sea level. It is remarkable not only for this fact but for the changes that have occurred in its level during the first century of our era, there is no doubt that the level of the sea stood forty-five feet above its present horizon, and it is now spread over a vastly more extensive area than at present. The Russian Geological Society has printed a treatise, written by N. M. Philipps, on these remarkable changes of level. Since the early part of the Christian era, a general and gradual decline of the level of the sea has taken place. In the eighteenth century, however, there appear to have been a few periods when the level rose. From the beginning of the present century there has been a fall, but since 1865, judging from recent observations, the level has been higher.

Lieutenant Sokoloff, a naval officer, while working in the Caspian region from 1841 to 1845, collected much information. He found that in the present century it had risen causing great apprehension among the inhabitants of an inundation, and giving rise to the belief in periodical variation every thirteen years. Lerch, while in Baku, in 1734 and 1747, found submerged buildings which had stood on dry land thirty years before, and he mentioned a saying of the Persians that the sea rose and fell alternately every thirty years. M. Philipps has made a special study of the whole question. Inquiring into the causes of these changes of level, he finds a variety of influences at work, such as the wind driving the water towards certain coasts, temperature of the air causing in summer evaporation and consequent fall in level. Rivers, rain and earthquakes are also among the active agencies causing fluctuations from month to month and from day to day.

Tim's Kit.

It surprised the shiners and newsboys around the postoffice the other day to see "Limp Tim" come among them in a quiet way, and to hear him say:

"Boys, I want to sell my kit. Here's two brushes, a hull box of blacking, a good stout box, and the outfit for two shillings."

"Goin' away, Tim?" queried one.

"Not 'zactly, boys; but I want a quarter the awfulest kind just now."

"Goin' on a 'scursion'?" asked another.

"Not to-day; but I must have a shilling," he answered.

One of the lads passed over the change and took the kit, and Tim walked straight to the counting-room of the daily paper, put down the money, and said:

"I'll give you a kid, write, if you'll give me a pencil."

With slow-moving fingers he wrote a death notice. It went into the paper almost as he wrote it, but you may not have seen it. He wrote:

"Died—Lil Ted, of scarlet fever, aged three years. Funeral to-morrow, gone up to Heaven; left one brother."

"Was it your brother?" asked the cashier.

Tim tried to brace up, but he couldn't.

The big tears came up, his chin quivered, and he pointed to the notice on the counter, and gasped:

"I—had to sell my kit to do it, but he had his arms around my neck when he died."

He hurried away home; but the news went to the boys, and they gathered in group and talked. Tim had not been home an hour before a barefoot boy left the kit on the doorstep, and in the box was a bouquet of flowers which had been purchased in the market by pennies contributed by the crowd of ragged but big-hearted urchins.

England Leads.

Norway ranks second to England in the number of her sailing vessels of fifty tons and over, the United States third.

Our Savior Walked.

An elevator up Mount Calvary is in construction for the benefit of pilgrims.

Very Comfortable Income.

The King of Bavaria has a salary of \$1,420,000 a year.

At the other end of the world, I suppose."

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other on the family hearth and brood upon the sorrows of this life or read the family Bible.

"Was there not some kind of early attachment between him and Mrs. Sinclair? Pardon me for asking such a question."

"Yes, I believe Davenant would have proposed for Constance if his circumstances had permitted him to hope for my consent."

"Poor fellow! And he carried his broken heart to Africa, and came back to find a fortune waiting for him, and your daughter married. Do you not think, if he were to return now, Mrs. Sinclair might be consoled for the loss of her child by reunion with the lover of her girlhood?"

"I doubt if anything would reconcile her to the loss of the little girl. Her affection for that child was an infatuation."

"A pair of picturesque Italians began a duel at Verdi, and the conversation between them and Lord Clancyarde went no farther. He did not make any offer of bringing Constance to the lad's reception for the memory of that old alliance between Mrs. Walsingham and Gilbert Sinclair hung like a cloud over her reputation. No one had any specific charge to bring against her, but it was remembered that Sinclair had been her devoted slave for a long time, and had ended his slavery by marrying some one else.

"The weeks went round Constance showed no improvement in health or spirits. Pride was making a sorry struggle in that broken heart. She would not go back to England and the spurious Christabel, though her heart yearned for that guiltless impostor. She would not suffer another woman's child to hold the place of her lost darling; no, not even though that strange child made it dearer to her life. Mrs. Sinclair's doctor informed Lord Clancyarde that Rose was getting well, water for his patient, whereupon that anxious parent was fain to tear him self away from the pleasures of the seven-hilled city and those delightful evenings at Mrs. Walsingham's.

"Our medical man threatens me with typhoid fever and all manner of horrors if I keep my daughter here any longer," he said, "so we start for Engadine almost immediately. You will not stay much longer in Rome, I suppose?"

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Walsingham, carelessly; "the place suits me better than any other. I am tired of London and Paris. There is some pleasure in life here; and I should like to be buried in the cemetery where Keats lies."

"Yes, it's a nice place to be buried in, if we must be buried at all, but that's rather a gloomy consideration. I should very much advise you to be buried in the cemetery where Keats lies."

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