

FOR THE THIRD TIME.

CHAPTER X.

The January day had been hopelessly bad and wintry. All the morning the low-lying clouds and complaining winds whistling shrilly through the bare trees, had foretold the coming storm. At noon the storm burst. The wind rose to a wild, piercing gale, and the snow fell faster and faster, and in wild, whirling drifts, until all around Blackwood Grange lay buried in its midwinter winding sheet.

The old house was very still—the stillness of death surely, for death stood grim on their threshold. The willing servants bated their breath, and hushed their voices, and muffled their tread, for the master they had never liked lay sick unto death in one of the upper rooms. They had never liked him; but the dread majesty of the grave was around him now, and they forgot their old aversion.

In that spacious chamber, hung with satiric damask, carpeted in mossy green, adorned with exquisite pictures and statuettes, the mystery of Blackwood Grange was a mystery no longer. Lying in the low, French bed, whiter than the snowy pillows, lay Isabel Vance, Victor Latour, that mockery of man, was no more. Isabel Vance, in the white robes of her sex, lay tossing there, raving in delirium, or sleeping the heavy, unnatural sleep produced by drugs.

Amy knew all. The unutterable wonder with which she had first heard, her wild incredulity, her absolute inability to convince herself of the truth, are not to be described. It proved the truth of Dr. Sterling's assertion—what ever the secret she had sworn to keep that was not it. Slowly the truth forced itself upon her, day by day, until she could realize it at last. She clasped her hands in indescribable thanksgiving, her whole face alight with joy.

"Thank Heaven!" she cried. "Oh thank Heaven! thank Heaven! Better anything than be what I thought I was—a madman's wife!"

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Sterling.

But Amy, with a frightened cry, covered her face with her hands.

"I have broken my oath—I swore not to. Oh! don't ask me questions, Mrs. Sterling—I dare not tell you!"

Mrs. Sterling smiled. She could guess pretty nearly the truth now. They did not tell Amy that other horrible suspicion, that Isabel Vance was the murderess of George Wildair. Such ghastly horrors were not for innocent ears; they would spare her that if they could.

Mrs. Sterling, Amy, the housekeeper, and the doctor were all who were allowed to set foot inside that sick-room. The amazement of the housekeeper was something ludicrous in its intensity; but there was no help for it—they were forced to take her into their confidence. And by day and by night, for two long weeks, those three women watched by the bedside of that guilty woman who had wronged one of them so deeply.

This wild January afternoon Mrs. Sterling sat by the bedside, watching her patient with a very grave face. The crisis of the fever had arrived, there was little chance of the sick woman's recovery, and they did not even hope it. Better for them, better for her, that death should release her, than that she should live to end her days in a madhouse or a prison.

Amy sat by the window, gazing dreamily out at the fast-falling snow. An infinite calm had settled upon her—a deep content; a stronger, truer, more fervent love than any wild fantasy she had ever known, was slowly dawning in her heart. Her sorrows had been heavy, her disappointments bitter; but now hope blooms so soon in the heart of young persons of nineteen or twenty.

As the short winter day faded into early dusk the snow ceased; but the ground was heaped high, and the bitter wind shrieked felly. Amy arose to draw the curtains and light the lamp.

"I am afraid the roads are impassable," she said. "The snow is higher than the fences, and John will persist in coming the most tempestuous nights. How is she?"

She stopped short with a thrill of terror.

For two great, dark eyes looked up at her weirdly from the bed—two eyes in which the light of delirium shone no longer.

"Where am I?" said a low, faint voice. "What is it? What has happened?"

"You have been very ill," answered Mrs. Sterling—"ill of brain fever. Don't ask questions; drink this and go to sleep."

But Isabel Vance pushed away the cup with her delicate hand, and fixed her great dark eyes on the matron's face.

"What is it?" still in that faint whisper. "What has happened? What is it? Tell me—tell me!"

She looked at Amy—memory seemed struggling back in her dull brain; she looked at Mrs. Sterling; she looked around the strange room; at her own dress—and all burst upon her like a flash. She sprang up in bed with a cry those who heard it might never forget.

"Lost!" she shrieked. "lost! lost! lost!"

She fell back; there was a fierce con-

fusion that seemed rending soul and body apart, and Isabel Vance lay on the pillows like one dead.

The midnight hour had struck. Through the rain, wind, and high-piled snow, Dr. John had bravely made his way, and reached the Grange as the mystic hour had struck. Amy met him with a white, scared face.

"She is dying, John! Oh! if you could have but come sooner! Nothing can save her now."

"Nothing could have saved her at any time. My coming sooner would have been of little use. My mother is with her. Has she spoken yet?"

Still, with that white, frightened face, Amy told of that dreadful awakening. She trembled with nervous terror from head to foot as she recalled it.

"My poor little girl!" Dr. Sterling said; "these death-bed horrors are too much for your tender heart. Go to your own room, my Amy, and lie down; you look worn out. I don't want my precious little treasure—lost so long—to wear herself to a shadow. Go and try to sleep."

"But, John—" "Miss Earle, I insist upon being obeyed. If my patient expresses a wish to see you, you shall be called. Meantime, go to bed, and go to sleep. I am not accustomed to being disobeyed; and don't you begin, mademoiselle. Go!"

He turned her toward her own room, led her to the door, and left her there with a parting threat if she dared disobey. Amy smiled to herself as she went in. It was very sweet to be taken possession of in this way by Dr. John.

In the sick-room Isabel Vance lay fluttering between life and death. Nothing could save her now. She lay, whiter than snow, still as marble, but entirely conscious, entirely calm; the great black eyes looking blankly before her at the wall.

The dark eyes turned upon the young doctor as he entered, but the old light of hate was there no more.

"Shall we send for a clergyman, Miss Vance?" he said, bending over her; "your hours on earth are numbered."

She shook her head.

"No clergyman can help me—I am long past that."

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be come white as snow." The infinite mercy of God is beyond our poor comprehension, Isabel."

She shook her head again.

"You don't know! You don't know! I have committed a greater crime than deceiving and making wretched the life of an innocent girl. John Sterling, I am a murderess!"

She stared at him with wild, wide eyes.

"You shot your false lover, George Wildair, the night before he was to have married Amy Earle. You deceived her to possess yourself of the fortune Dorothy Hardenbrook should have left you. You see I know all."

"And yet you talk of forgiveness?"

"Because there is forgiveness for all who repent."

"But I don't repent. I would do it again, if it were to be done. George Wildair deserved his fate; and yet I was mad the night I shot him—mad with my wrongs. I don't think my brain has ever been right since. What I told Amy, the day I married her was truth, after all."

"What did you tell her?"

"Do you not know? But I suppose she kept her oath: I told her I was a monomaniac—possessed of a desire to murder her. I told her the intensity of my love had begot that mad desire—that I dare not remain an instant with her alone, lest I should plunge the fatal knife into her heart. She fainted, poor little girl; and that secret kept my other secret. A babe could impose on that insipid little nonentity."

"Poor Amy! You have been merciless to her, Isabel Vance!"

"Well, you can console her when I am gone. I am beyond your power and hers. You would like to have me tried for murder, I daresay. Death will save you that trouble."

Amy slept long and soundly until, when the sun was shining brilliantly on the snow, the housekeeper brought her the breakfast she had so used her to. Amy ate, refreshed by her deep sleep, and hurried to the sick-room.

It was very, very still. The shutters were still closed, the curtains still drawn. Mrs. Sterling moved softly about; Dr. John met her on the threshold.

"All is over," he said. "Isabel Vance died this morning, almost without a struggle."

He led her to the bed. Strangely quiet and white, in the solemn majesty of death lay Isabel Vance. More beautiful in death than she had been in life, the cold features looking like those of an exquisite statue carved in marble.

It was given out that Victor Latour was dead, and, on the third day, a stately procession left the gates at Blackwood. But in some way the story leaked out, got whispered abroad, crept into the newspapers, warped and distorted, until John Sterling, for Amy's sake, felt compelled to come out with the truth. Far and wide people talked of the wonderful tale, and doubted, and were amazed. It was the most unheard of occurrence that had ever transpired.

Amy Earle left Blackwood Grange and Mrs. Sterling with her. They took up their abode in London until spring, living very retired, and preparing for a marriage and a long tour abroad.

Early in May, Dr. John Sterling left his patients in St. Jude's for a very prolonged holiday, and joined his mother in London. And a week after, there was a quiet wedding; and Amy, for the third time, wore the stately veil and orange wreath of a virgin bride, and became a blessed wife at last.

They went abroad. Three years they spent on the Continent; then, with a baby and a Swiss nurse, they returned

home, and Blackwood Grange became the happiest home in the land.

Dr. John is a model and a paragon of married perfection; and Amy Sterling is the happiest little wife, the blissest little mother, in Merry England.

(The end.)

RIDING OVER A COBRA.

An Incident of Bicycle Riding in India.

Bicycling in southern India is attended by peculiar dangers. A wheelman, whose way led him across the Annamally Hills, was spinning along when suddenly he saw, lying directly in front of him, a large cobra. The lively encounter is thus described by the cyclist in the Madras Mail:

It was impossible to avoid the loathsome reptile by swerving to either side; the slope was too steep, and I was going too fast. I back-pedalled with my whole weight, and put on the brake with all the force that my right hand could exert; but the momentum was too great, and the bicycle went on over the snake, which rose with a hiss to meet me and extended its hood.

Quick as lightning it struck at the front wheel, and as it struck I instinctively lifted both hands from the handle-bar, the thought flashing through my mind that shoes and hose gave my feet and legs a chance, but that my hands were naked.

The instant my hand was off the brake, the bicycle shot forward, for in my fright I had forgotten to continue to back-pedal. With unutterable horror I saw that the snake was half-through the front wheel, and that the wheel was drawing it through the fork with a horrid "swish."

Then there was a thud as the head of the snake was drawn through the fork, and a second later a flap of the tail end of the snake as it was drawn through and hit the road on the right.

The one idea that pressed me was to accelerate this process. How the bicycle did fly down that hill. The trees by the roadside passed me like a ribbon. The level ground at the foot of the slope I sped across at racing speed, and I rushed up the opposite slope as long as I had any breath left in me.

Then I ventured to get off. The snake's head was gone as far as the spectacles on the hood, pounded into a jelly by the hard road; on the right side of the wheel the snake tapered off into a few fleshless vertebrae.

Two herd boys in the fields came to see what had happened, and with sticks helped me to remove the carcass from my wheel. I think there can be nothing more frightful than to have a cobra in the front wheel of one's bicycle, while one is pedalling for dear life.

A STORY ABOUT NELSON.

How His Career in Life Was Very Nearly Changed.

A pretty little romance gives Nelson's memory a sentimental interest in Canada. During his service at Quebec, in 1782, when he was but twenty-four years of age, he became infatuated with a beautiful Canadian girl, Mary Simpson, daughter of a great Canadian merchant of the period. At the time of Nelson's visit she was but sixteen years old, marvellously beautiful and witty. On October 14, 1782, Lord Nelson's ship, the Albemarle, was ready to sail, and he had a very sad and tender parting with Mary Simpson, and went down the St. Lawrence to board the man-of-war. The next morning arrived and the Albemarle did not leave anchor, and Captain Nelson was seen coming back to Quebec in a boat.

A friend of Nelson's, a man prominent in Quebec at the time, espied him, and asked him what had happened. Nelson is quoted as having said: "I find it absolutely impossible to leave this place without again waiting upon her whose society has so much added to its charms, and laying myself and my fortune at her feet."

Nelson's friend protested against such a rash act, and told him that, "situated as you are at present, your utter ruin will inevitably follow." "Then let it follow," replied Nelson earnestly, "for I am resolved to do it." But despite his intentions, the stronger will of his friend prevailed, and he was fairly carried back to his ship, and forced to leave behind the girl he loved; and it was many years before he gave up the hope of possessing her, for Nelson never returned to Canada, and Mary Simpson died in spinsterhood.

FRIENDLY ATTENTION.

True friendship has a broadening influence, and takes small account of things which might serve to weaken the charms of mere acquaintance.

"Are you habitually lame, or is your limp caused by some temporary trouble?" inquired the lawyer in a case of assault and battery addressing a witness for the defendant. The man bore every indication on his face and person of having been in some recent catastrophe which the lawyer hoped to prove was the particular affray then before the court.

"Oh, O'll be all right in a day or two, said the witness, cheerfully. It was just a friend of mine kicked me the other evening, and O'im, a bit stiff in the jints that's all!"

OF HONEST PARENTS.

My opponent shouted the orator, has seen fit to refer to the fact that my mother took in washing. She did; and what is more to the point, she always sent it all back!

After that there was nothing to do but cast a majority vote for the man whose parent showed such evidence of perfect honesty and attention to duty.

YOUNG FOLKS.

TURNING A NEW LEAF.

"Now what is that noise?" said the glad New Year.
"Now what is that singular sound I hear?"
As if all the paper in all the world were rattled and shaken and twisted and twirled!"
"Oh, that," said the jolly old Earth, "is the noise
Of all my children, both girls and boys,
A-turning over their leaves so new,
And all to do honor, New Year, to you."

A WHOOPING-COUGH PARTY.

What a funny party, I hear you say! And who ever thought of having such a thing?

This had it come about.
Lydia had the whooping-cough so of course she had to stay home from kindergarten, and as every child who goes to kindergarten knows, this is hardly to be borne. But when in addition to staying away from school, you can't even play with the little girl on the next block, nor go near any baby for fear of giving "it" to her, why then it is too much.

So you can imagine how pleased Lydia was when she heard that Ilse and Corinne and Kathryn had whooping-cough too.

Not that she was glad that they had whooping-cough, which, as you know, is not a comfortable thing to have, but if they had to have it, she was glad they all had it at the same time, because here was some one to play with.

So the lady who lived near Lydia invited all the four children to tea, and this is how they came to have a whooping-cough party.

Lydia, who only lived up-stairs in the same house, came first, so she was there to receive the other three, and as she had never seen them before, nor they her, there was great excitement. First, the three little girls had to take off their brown hats and coats and their white leggings and gloves, and all the warm wraps they had on to keep from catching cold, and all that time Lydia never said a word.

But when they went into the parlor, I assure you they all chattered away like magpies, and I never saw four little girls get on so well. They played all sorts of games; blind man's buff and oats-peas-beans and tag; and then they picked up potatoes in a spoon, and if you think this is an easy thing to do, just you try it, that's all with large potatoes, and a small spoon, on a slippery wooden floor.

At last they were asked to walk out to tea and there was the table all beautifully set, just as if it were for grown-up people, with pretty silver and china and pink candle-shades, and cakes and chocolate and milk and brown bread.

The little girls all made a fine tea, and no one sat at that table but just their four selves, and the grown people just stood up and waited upon them.

After tea they went back to the parlor, and the three little girls who had been in Germany, began to recite some pretty little verses about the stork and about a little pony and a fox. When lo and behold! Lydia had never been in Germany, but she understood German and she even had a German book with some of these very verses in it, so she not only understood what the little girls recited, but she could say some of the verses herself.

And then the very thing happened that Lydia had thought of; they all began to cough at once! Nothing funnier was ever heard than these four little girls, three in white dresses and the fourth in green plaid trimmed with red, all doubled over and red in the face with coughing! It was so funny that they could not help laughing themselves, and of course that made them cough more, till they were quite helpless.

However, that was all over at last, and then they had a little more play before the carriage came, and then the three little girls who were the visitors bade good-bye to the one little girl who lived up-stairs, and they parted in the best of good temper, and much pleased with each other.

And if they had not all had the whooping-cough at the same time this very funny party could never have taken place.

A TRUE STORY.

Some years ago a little Welsh boy, stole out of the poor-house of his native village and ran across the country.

He was a pauper, that is, he was fed, clothed, and educated by the district, the people being taxed to pay for it all.

There is no disgrace in honest poverty, but in that country to be brought up in a poor-house is almost as bad as being reared in a jail.

The boy was ambitious, he had a soul above his surroundings. He wanted to be something more than a farm hand, working like a slave for twenty-five cents a week and his board, and yet that was his destiny unless he ran away.

He slept under a hedge, and the next morning sawed some wood in payment for his breakfast.

Day after day he did the same kind of thing, earning each meal by the performance of some work.

Each day he got farther away from the hated poor-house, and nearer the coast.
At last he reached a seaport and tried to get a position on board a vessel, sailing, he cared not where. But he was so thin, and pale, and looked so delicate, that no one would employ him.
Then he risked all. He crawled aboard a freight steamer bound for New Orleans, hid himself in a coal bunk and for three days laid there nearly dead with starvation, sea sickness and dust.

He was discovered and dragged on deck. A whipping with a rope end and a hard work for the remainder of the passage, were his punishments.

When the ship reached New Orleans he feared he might be sent to prison, so he sought safety in flight.

For weeks he picked up a precarious living, and at last had enough money to enable him to buy a shoemaker's outfit.

Thirty years later, a great crowd assembled to welcome a man to England, a man who had become the friend of kings, a man everyone believed worthy of the highest honor.

A prince was the first to shake him by the hand and bid him welcome.

This man had discovered and explored lands where white man had not trod before.

He had added to a world's knowledge and had achieved the greatest renown.

The queen invited him to dine with her, dignitaries of the church sounded his praises, and ladies of high degree sought his company.

Success followed success, and he became the husband of a beautiful lady, rich, honored and respected.

He entered Parliament and was listened to by the greatest statesmen of the great empire of Great Britain.

And this man, with honors heaped upon him, was the same who in his boyhood's days had been the poor-house pauper, the stowaway, the shoemaker of New Orleans, and now the honored friend of kings and princes.

He had discarded his own name, and taken that of the benefactor whose shoes he blacked in New Orleans, and who had taken a fancy to the lad.

His name, as it appears on the page of history, will immortalize that benefactor, for Henry M. Stanley, the explorer, owes everything to him.

His strangely eventful life proves that nothing is impossible to those who are ready to seize on opportunities, and dare to ascend, no matter what obstacles may be on the hill of life.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

There is many a match between a refusal and a kiss.

The time to say no is not before one is asked to say yes.

Love-matches very frequently turn out lucifer-matches.

No woman is, ever has been, or can be strictly a misanthrope.

The most charming lovers often make the very worst husbands.

It is a great pity that it is so much easier to win a woman than it is to live with her.

Many men are naturally as averse from marriage as women are naturally adapted to it.

If everything is possible to God, anything—if she intensely desires it—seems certain to Woman.

Many a woman who expects in marriage the blessing of love, finds instead the curse of hate.

A man who proposes more than once to a woman often asking favor of Fortune, smites her in the face.

No woman who really cares for a man wants him at her feet when he is capable of rising to her heart.

Love may laugh at locksmiths but never at wedlock—too serious, under all circumstances to provoke a smile.

No amount of love from one man can repress in a woman's breast her intense desire for admiration from men.

Nearly every man meets his ideal some time or other, but he is not always able to secure an introduction.

The quality that in a man is admired as firmness, in woman is spoken of as continuity, and in children is punished as obstinacy.

However, unfortunate a woman's love affairs may have been, she never despairs of meeting an ideal lover, even though she live in a desert.

The marriage service ought to be altered to read "Love, honor or obey," for sometimes 'tis easy to obey a man whom one could neither love nor honor.

It is not sufficient that a woman is convinced her husband loves her devotedly unless he assures her of the fact at least a dozen times a day. She can hardly believe anything, however delightful, unless it be incessantly repeated.

NEW USE FOR SAWDUST.

It is said that the present generation may witness the extraordinary spectacle of dredges being employed to reclaim the enormous deposits of sawdust at the bottom of the Ottawa River.

By a new process, sawdust, bark and all refuse from saw mills can be rapidly converted into carbon. This carbon is powdered and mixed in equal quantity with limestone, and the mixture is subjected for ten hours to an intense electrical current, strong enough to convert iron into a boiling mass, and lead into an explosive gas.

The result is calcium carbide. Calcium carbide is already familiar to the public as the substance from which acetylene gas is made. The process of the manufacture of the gas is being so cheapened that even now, it is said, a twenty-five candle-power acetylene light costs only 1-2c. an hour. If the public can only be reassured as to the safety of this gas for domestic use, there should be a great future for it, and Ottawa, with its unlimited water power and supply of raw material, would possess unrivaled advantages for its manufacture.

HAS LOTS OF ROCKS.

Did you say her father had lots of rocks?
Yes, he owns and operates two or three big stone quarries.