

# STRONGER THAN DEATH OR A RANDED LIFE

## CHAPTER XVII.

Next day it poured; a fine, soft, silencing, autumnal rain, that wrapped the woods in a fleece of grey cloud. Ardel, with an impatient, despairing glance at the inexorable sky, led the way after breakfast to the gymnasium.

The girls, delighted, as girls always are, to invade a male territory, ranged round the walls of the great room with curious eyes and fingers.

With great effort Jeannette lifted a few inches from the cocoanut matting one of the huge dumbbells which Ardel twirled so lightly, and let it drop again with a frightened little scream at its weight. Then she thrust her tiny fists into the recesses of a big pair of boxing gloves, and stood facing him saucily in a charmingly unscientific pose, with a dancing light in her dark eyes that made him long to catch her up and crumple her in his arms.

For Lucy, the slim, bright foils were the main attraction of the place. She took one up by the embossed hilt, and the air sang and the bright steel flickered as she switched it like a lady's riding whip.

"It's such a dainty toy," she said to Harry Trevor. "I love to see you men what you call 'play' with it. You could not kill a man with that little steel strip, of course!"

He showed her the button at the top of the slim blade.

"If that were off, Lucy," he said, "every touch were death. It's a small thing, isn't it, to stand between a man and eternity?"

She was dismayed at the very thought of it.

"I shall never love to look at the deadly things again," she said.

"Oh, don't let that frighten you! They are as harmless now as beanstalks. The foil cannot break nor the button come off. They have been tested to a hundred times the strain we put them to."

He bent the blade till he held the point with the hilt in his hands. Then he let it go, and it flew straight with a swish.

"You might as well try and snap whalebone," he said.

"Are you going to play with them now?"

"I think so, though it's very little use for any of us to stand against Ardel. I'm a bit quicker, perhaps. I'm a great deal younger, you know," with a mocking little smile, "but his strength is wonderful. He has got an eye like lightning and a wrist of steel, and—What a boaster I'm growing into!"

"But you have not been praising yourself," said Lucy surprised; "only Dr. Ardel."

"Oh! it's the same thing!" he answered, smiling again that mocking, little smile. "You know that we two are one."

"Come along, girls," cried Ardel's cheery voice, "get to your perch; the performance is about to begin."

They passed through a door masked in the upholstered wall, up a spiral stair of wrought iron to the alcove, furnished like a lady's boudoir. There, seated luxuriously at the low balustrade, they had a full view of the friendly gladiators in the arena below. They were trembling with excitement.

Why is it that men—and women even more than men—admire courage, physical strength and skill, beyond all other things in the world? Supreme courage and contempt of death are the commonest attributes

of the lower animals. If we want to flatter a hero, we say he has the courage of a lion—or of a bulldog. We might say of a gamecock, or a bantam, or a cockchafer, and it would still be flattery.

In strength and speed, in quickness of eye and grace of limb, there are brutes with whom man can bear no comparison. His intellect alone crowns him monarch of creation; it is his power, his glory—the one thing worthy to be admired. Of course, of course, all that is readily conceded. But to set admiration aflame with life, to make the blood tingle and the heart throb with fierce enthusiasm, there is needed some feat of strength and skill and courage, whether in killing or saving matters not at all.

Next to real fighting, the mimicry of battle is the most exhilarating of spectacles.

The boxing of Ardel and Trevor was a delightful parody of the brutal business of the ring. The hits were quick as light, the touches soft as thistle-down; yet the nervous force to fell an ox was held in check behind each blow.

Presently they flung aside the boxing-gloves and took to the foils. All three were past masters of this most graceful of manly exercises.

Wickham was esteemed the crack fencer of his regiment, and there was a vague rumor that he had in France hurt a man to death in a duel. He and Ardel were matched for a first bout, while Harry Trevor stood by as judge, closely watching the points. These two had never played together before this. On the soldier's face, as he glanced up to the eager watchers in the alcove, there was a look of quiet confidence, touched with disdain for the civilian.

Then steel rasped on steel, and each felt the other's purpose, and tested his skill along the quivering blades. The smile passed from Wickham's lips. Half a dozen quick passes with the clear tip-tap of tinkling steel, and Ardel's point eluded Wickham's guard and shot home.

"A hit! a palpable hit!" quoth Trevor, and the blades crossed again. Wickham's pride was roused. He put forth his utmost skill. It was of no avail; he was quite out-classed. Ardel's strength and quickness were prodigious. His blade-point spun round the opposing steel and went in like a flash of light. His passes were so close and strong that they wrenched his opponent's muscles like a blow. Another touch! the button struck full on Wickham's breast as if there had been no sword in the way to hinder.

Then he lost his coolness and forced the fighting. Quick as a serpent's tongue Ardel's point again and again darted past his guard. He lunged furiously in reply, with deadly purpose in his thrusts, as though his blade's point was naked and his dearest foe, and not his host and friend, was facing it. Closer and closer he pressed, thrusting madly, careless of defence. Then with a quick turn of Ardel's iron wrist the blade was wrenched from his hand, and sent flying against the padded wall of the gymnasium a dozen yards away.

For just one second Wickham's face was distorted by deadly passion, and he ground a fierce curse out between his teeth. The next he laughed good humoredly at his own defeat.

"No more at present for yours truly," he said, as Ardel offered the

hilt of his recovered foil. "I know my master when I meet him. Give Trevor a lesson. I'll join the ladies and look on."

"He's invulnerable," he whispered to Lucy, when he mounted to the alcove, not without a note of latent malice in his voice. "You see, he gives his whole life to this kind of thing. Trevor is going to have a try now. I'll bet a hundred to one on the big fencing master."

But, to Wickham's surprise, it presently appeared that these two opponents were far more closely matched. Coolness and judgment were with the younger man, though in physical strength and skill the elder was manifestly his master.

Again the steel blades clashed and glittered in quick motion, and the girls in the alcove watched the combat entranced. Their sympathy seemed to inspire the combatants. Both were at their best. Trevor, steadily on the defensive, twice parried a lightning lunge of Ardel's that had never failed before. Then it was Ardel's turn to grow excited. His foil darted and flashed hither and thither like the darting spark of an electric battery. The point shot suddenly past Trevor's guard, too swift to parry. But with a sudden swerve, that bent his body like a bow, he let the thrust go by in empty space. The reply took Ardel full in the breast.

"A hit!" cried Wickham delightedly to Lucy, who watched with eyes and heart. "By Jove! young Trevor is his master after all!"

He spoke too soon. The touch put Ardel on his mettle, and Trevor's last chance was gone. There was no more impatience, no more excitement. He stood like a rock—impregnable. Three times his point went home past Trevor's guard; twice he almost wrenched the foil's hilt from his grasp. Even to unskilled eyes the play was marvellous. The women, watching with staring eyes and lips half parted, scarcely dared to breathe; and Wickham, eyeing them keenly, saw that Lucy triumphed in Ardel's victory, while Jeannette was hurt by the defeat of Trevor. The last bout was fought steadily to a close. More than once the button on Trevor's foil was within a hair's breadth of the broad chest of his opponent; but the parry came in the nick of time. At the last sharp prod from Ardel in the left side, Trevor dropped his point at last and threw his mask away.

"Enough!" he cried panting, but smiling at his own defeat.

"Nonsense, man," Ardel retorted, "I'm hardly warm yet!" But Jeannette impatiently struck the silver gong on the tea table in the alcove, as the herald flings down his mace.

"I will give you just ten minutes to dress," she called down to them, "and no tea for any one that's half a second late."

In ten minutes the transformed gladiators were seated in the alcove, sipping afternoon tea from egg-shell china.

But Jeannette was still brimming over with enthusiasm, though her sympathies seemed to have suddenly shifted from Trevor to Ardel.

"Oh, it was glorious! glorious!" she exclaimed. "It sets one's pulses dancing to the glint and clash of the steel just like a real battle."

"Not quite," said Trevor and Wickham together. The same words, but there was a world of difference in the tone.

"It's but a poor business after all," Wickham continued sneeringly; "a game for boys to play and girls to look at. It has no touch of the glorious excitement of real war."

"The glorious excitement of the butcher's shop," Trevor retorted, startling them all as he spoke so earnestly; startling Wickham most of all.

"Are you a Quaker, Trevor?" he asked a little contemptuously.

"I am a man," the other answered hotly, "who has no patience with the folly and savagery of war. Here we are, poor helpless creatures that could not give life to a fly, and we think it glorious to slaughter men wholesale. Why, this same science of killing is the chief science of the world. Money and mind are lavished on it. If any man makes a great discovery, the first thought is how he best can use it to kill other men. Men want to fly mainly that they may do their killing more readily."

"I did not speak of butchery, as you call it," said Wickham a little sulkily, "but of civilized warfare."

"Civilized warfare! the grotesque etiquette of massacre! It's wrong to kill men with hot shot, but right to break them up with dynamite bombshells. It would be atrocious to poison a single soldier; but it's quite in order to mangle a whole regiment with machine guns. When every deadly device has been tried to kill and mutilate men wholesale, decorum requires that surgeons should be provided to patch them up in detail. Where is the difference, I'd like to know, between civilized warfare and uncivilized murder, except in the magnitude of the crime? The murderer kills one man, inflamed by some strong motive,—it may be some intolerable wrong; the conqueror kills half a million—or rather he gets fools to do his killing for him—for glory's sake, that he may be named in history as the most expert and successful murderer of his age."

"Don't call it murder," Ardel interposed; "it's fair play all round. The soldier risks his own life—"

"That's cold comfort to the man

## AT DEATH'S DOOR.

THE STORY OF THE RECOVERY OF MISS FALFORD OF ST. ELIE.

She Says 'I am Confident That Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Saved My Life'—Hope for all Weak, Sickly Girls.

To be well, to be strong, to possess a clear complexion, bright eyes and an elastic step, the blood must be pure and filled with life-giving energy. When you see pale, sallow, sickly girls, easy tired, subject to headaches, backaches, and violent palpitation of the heart, it is the blood that is at fault, and unless the trouble is speedily corrected the patient passes into that condition known as "decline" and death follows. The one sure, positive way to obtain rich, red health-giving blood is to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. This medicine has saved thousands of young girls from a premature grave. Strong proof of this is offered in the cure of Miss Zenaide Falford, of St. Elie, Quebec. Miss Falford tells the story of her sickness and recovery as follows: "Like many other Canadian girls, I went to the United States and found employment in a factory at Woonsocket. The close, indoor work proved too much for me and nearly ended in my death. At first I was taken with headaches, would tire very easily, had no appetite, and no energy. I tried to continue the work, but grew worse and worse, and finally was compelled to return to my home. I was so much changed and so emaciated that my friends hardly knew me. Two weeks after my return home I was forced to take my bed. I had a bad cough, was distressed by terrible dreams, and sometimes passed whole nights without sleep. Two doctors treated me, but without avail, as I was steadily growing weaker; in fact I could not hold my hand above my head for more than three or four seconds, and had to be turned in bed. No one expected I would get better, and I thought myself I was about to die. At this time my brother came from Montreal to see me, and strongly urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. A supply of pills was procured, and I now bless the day I began taking them. It is enough to say that before three boxes were used I began to feel better, and from that on I grew stronger every day. By the time I had taken nine or ten boxes I was once more enjoying the blessing of perfect health. No symptoms of the old trouble remain, and I am confident Dr. Williams' Pink Pills saved my life."

Pure blood is the secret of health and it is because every dose of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills make new, rich blood, that they cure such desperate cases as that above related. These pills cure all the troubles that arise from poor blood—and that means most of the ailments that afflict mankind. Give these pills a fair trial and they will not disappoint you. Sold by medicine dealers everywhere, or sent by mail, post paid, at 50c. per box or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville Ont.

## SIR HARRY'S ADDER.

Sir Harry Johnston, the great African explorer, commissioner, diplomat, tells a funny story. During one of his tours through Africa many years ago he was lying in bed one night in his tent in the tangled jungle, worried by mosquitoes, and thinking of the snakes, against which he had been warned, when he became aware of the presence alongside of him of a cold, treacherous snake, probably a death-adder, as it was only about three feet long. Death from the bite of this playful adder is rapid and painless, and Sir Harry recorded afterwards his reflection that it was better perhaps to die that way than by gout or rheumatism. After an hour of agony, however, he slipped out of bed, struck a light, and went about the tent searching for the walking-stick he had carried especially for defence against reptiles. After a weary and nervous hunt, he found it at last among the disordered bedclothes. It was his adder!

## WIND COLIC.

"In my opinion," writes Mrs. Philip Collins, of Martindale, Que., "there is no medicine can equal Baby's Own Tablets. Before I began the use of the Tablets my baby cried all the time with wind colic and got little or no sleep, and I was nearly worn out myself. Soon after giving my baby the Tablets the trouble disappeared, and sound natural sleep returned. I have also proved the Tablets a cure for hives, and a great relief when baby is teething. I would not feel that my children were safe if I did not have a box of the Tablets in the house."

All mothers who have used Baby's Own Tablets speak just as highly of them as does Mrs. Collins. The Tablets cure all the little ills from which infants and young children suffer, and the mother has a solemn assurance that this medicine contains neither opiate nor any harmful drug. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent by mail at 25c. a box by writing The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

# Is There Poison in Your Blood?

Then the Liver and Kidneys Have Failed to Perform  
Their Mission and You Need  
**Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills**

If you are not well there must be a reason for it. Most of the common ills of life arise from poison in the system. If you would be well you must remove this cause of disease.

The work of the blood is two-fold. It supplies nourishment to the body and collects the impure and poisonous waste matter. This poisonous material is removed from the blood by the action of the liver and kidneys. When these organs fail the poison is carried back through the system in the circulation of the blood and causes disease.

Where is your weak spot? Just there you may first expect to feel the effects of poison in the system. It may be stomach trouble or lung trouble, kidney disease or heart disease, but the beginning is with the inaction of the great filtering organs—the liver and kidneys.

Nine-tenths of the ills of everyday

life may be cured by Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, because they set the liver, kidneys and bowels right and so cleanse and invigorate the system.

Have you come to realize the importance of keeping the bowels regular and the liver and kidneys active? You will appreciate Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, not only on account of their wonderfully promptness, but also for their lasting effect on the system. They get at the very foundation of ill-health, and by removing the cause bring cure.

Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, the comfort of old age, one pill a dose, 25 cents, a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto. To protect you against imitations, the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous receipt book author, are on every box.

## Piles

To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain and absolute cure for each and every form of itching, bleeding and protruding piles, the manufacturers have guaranteed it. See testimonials in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured. 60c. a box, at all dealers or EDMANSON, BATES & Co., Toronto.

## Dr. Chase's Ointment

Columbus said the world was round, and most of us declare that since his time we've often found it anything but square.

"But why do you go tramping through the country like this?" asked the philanthropic lady. "Well, mum, the truth is," replied the tramp, "I've heard that these 'ere Pullman-cars is rather stuffy."

An Irishman who had jumped into the water to save a man from drowning, on receiving ten cents from the rescued man, looked first at the ten cents and then at the man, saying, "Be jabbers, I am over-paid for that job."