

# STRONGER THAN DEATH OR A RANSOMED LIFE

## CHAPTER XIX.

Next morning Ardel broke impetuously into Trevor's room. "Have you heard the news, Harry? Wickham has gone off like a shot; left by the morning train. I never was more surprised in my life when my man brought me this note with my coffee: 'Called away in urgent haste.—E. Wickham.' Not much in that it's shorter than a wire. Haven't the least notion where he's off to. Thought perhaps you might know when he'd be back—"

"Never!" Then in the devil's name what has become of him?" "He's gone to America for good. Perhaps I should not say that—he has gone for life. Don't look so startled, Vivian. I'll tell you all about it at some time, but for the present I want you to take my word that Wickham was a thoroughly bad lot, and we are all well rid of him."

"Of course I'll take your word for anything, old man. Never cared particularly for Wickham myself. But he was so set upon Lucy that I thought it only fair to give him his chance. By Jove! though, I'm amazed he could make up his mind to leave her like that."

"He could not help himself. Lucy has had a narrow escape of the man, but she has escaped, thank God. Don't let us talk or think of him any more. He has passed out of our lives for ever."

Then after a pause, "There is something else I want to say to you, if you will hear me out patiently, but it is horribly hard to say."

"Then don't. I'll take it for granted." "I must." Trevor could hardly force the words out. "A horrible, guilty secret must be told, though I can hardly expect you will believe me. I cannot hope you will forgive me."

"Don't talk rot," said Ardel brusquely. "You must be drunk or mad to talk like that. You have been such a friend to me, Harry, as no man ever had before. If I got back something of my manhood after that awful seizure, I owe it to you—wholly to you. That time I took the poison you pulled me out of the jaws of death. But that's nothing you've been as patient with me as a mother with her baby. You've helped me in a thousand ways. You're a clever chap, and I'm a dull one. But I'm not dull enough to forget all I owe you while I've life to remember it. So don't go on raving any more like a decent fellow, or I'll send for the doctor."

"I'm not raving, I'm speaking the plain, sober truth. I've wronged you as no man ever wronged another in this world before."

Ardel tried to laugh one of his great good-humoured laughs, but he broke down in the middle of it, frightened in spite of himself by the earnestness of the other's face and voice.

"By Jove! you look as if you had a ghost story to tell."

"I have a ghost story to tell, a true ghost story, a strange ghost story; too strange I'm afraid to be believed in spite of its truth. Will you listen to it?"

"Fire away! only if it is anything bad about yourself, don't expect me to believe it."

without word or sign, except the whitening of his face, held silent by amazement. The morning wore on; the grey dawn blushed into vivid rose color in the east. But those two men, speaking and hearing strange things, took no account of time. The whole world was ablaze with sunshine which flooded the silent room when the narrative closed at last.

Ardel broke the silence. "Well," he said quietly, "is that all?" Then Trevor looked in his face for the first time since he began his story.

"Is it possible for you to forgive me?" "Right away. I don't see myself there is very much to forgive after all. I'm bewildered about the business yet. The whole thing seems like a fairy tale, and I'm not sure whether I'm myself or somebody else. No! you need not say a word more. I believe it right through. I cannot help believing it. You make yourself out as bad as you can in the story. But even on your own showing, the life you borrowed was a life you had just saved. I don't know I've had altogether the worst of the bargain. I've had a good time; life has been very pleasant to me, and you've worked hard to make it pleasant. It's a comfort, I must confess, to know that my mind never really broke down, and that I don't remember things because they never happened to me. Even yet I can hardly get my head clear. Don't look so ghastly about it, Harry; I'm a bit dazed, that's all. I'll get used to the notion after a little while, I daresay."

"You are not angry?" "Not a little bit. You gave me more than you took from me by a great deal."

"You are contented then; happy as you are?" "Quite."

Trevor's face fell. "Yet—" Ardel added slowly. "Yes!" broke in Trevor very eagerly.

"Oh! there is no use of talking or thinking of that; I'm perfectly content. Don't worry yourself any more about me. Let this be our secret. To the rest of the world things can go on as before."

But he sighed regretfully in spite of himself. The other was quick to notice it. "Speak out frankly to me what is in your mind," he cried earnestly. "Would you have your youth back again?"

Ardel started to his feet, eager, excited, at the very thought of it. "But could you do this thing, Harry?" "I believe I can. I'm almost sure I can. I tried last night with Wickham, and found the old power is as strong as ever in me. There may be a risk, of course—are you willing to face it?"

"I'd risk death a thousand times for the mere chance. Cannot you see youth means hope and love to me? It means the right to woo Jeannette and win her if I can. But," with sudden remorse, "it will be very rough on you. My gain is your loss."

"I'm more eager for the change than you can be."

"But what tempts you?" "A brighter hope, a greater love than yours. Forgive me; every man thinks his own prize best, and mine is more than life to me."

"But when must I?" "Now, if you are ready." The answer was a smile, and a nod. "Then draw your chair closer, Vivian. It's the last time, I hope, I shall call you by that name; closer still; there in the full light. Now

look me full in the face, and give your will over to mine."

Again there was silence in the sunlit room, while thought and sensation ebbed slowly away from them, and sleep profound and unconscious as death, came upon both.

CHAPTER XX.

"Oh! how you startled me," cried Jeannette, looking up beamingly from the book in which she had been absorbed. "So it's you—is it?"

"Yes, it's me. Am I in the way?" She looked at him in quick surprise. She had never heard that tone in his voice before.

It was Harry Trevor undoubtedly. The boyish figure, the handsome young face, blue-eyed, and flaxen haired. But there was a youthful eagerness and exhilaration in the face that was quite new to it.

The bright black eyes of the girl opened wide as she gazed at him, and the red lips parted slightly showed a gleaming thread of white between.

"I thought it was Dr. Ardel," then with a mocking smile that made her eyes dance and her cheeks dimple. "She is not here, Harry. She has just gone out for a walk in the demesne."

"Who is she?" "Who is she?" "Lucy, of course. Do you think I'm quite blind?"

For answer he seated himself quietly beside her in the deep cosily-cushioned couch of the great drawing-room, which looked out through a wide arched window on the green world.

But the surprise in her eyes made him nervous. He picked up from her lap the book she had been reading.

"Oh! I'm glad you took my advice. Isn't it ripping poetry! It carries you along like a horse's gallop."

"Your advice, Harry! Why you never spoke to me about it, never! You wouldn't look the same side of the library as Scott."

"Wouldn't I, by Jove! I think there is no one to match him. Don't you remember only yesterday I was saying to you—"

He stopped and whistled, a long low whistle of perplexity.

Again she looked at him hard, in utter bewilderment.

"Why, silly boy, you never spoke to me once yesterday; you were better engaged."

Though they had grown up as children together it was the first time she ever spoke to him or thought of him as a "boy."

"You know you had eyes only for—"

"That's nonsense, Jen."

He turned to the title page of the book.

"Why, it's my copy of the 'Lady of the Lake'; the copy I gave you!"

"You gave me! Dr. Ardel gave it to me. There is his name."

"Well!—am not I—?" "Are not you Dr. Ardel?—is that what you were going to say!"

"Would you like me better if I were?" "I don't know. He's livelier than you are—generally."

"I'll be livelier too for the future, if that pleases you," he said, edging a little nearer to her on the couch.

"You are a little too lively now, sir. Let that cushion stay just where it is—between us." But there was surprise, rather than displeasure in her voice, and he was encouraged to bide his time.

Presently they fell into a pleasant talk, easy, lively, unconstrained, such talk as she had often had with Dr. Ardel, but with Harry Trevor, never before.

## A WOMAN'S FACE.

PLAINLY INDICATES THE CONDITION OF HER HEALTH.

How to Obtain Bright Eyes, Rosy Cheeks and the Elastic Step of Perfect Health.

"A woman's face," said a well known physician, "is a mirror which reflects unfailing the condition of her health. One can tell at a glance if she is well or not and usually one can tell what the trouble is. It so often happens that instead of bright eyes, rosy cheeks and an elastic step, there are dull eyes, pale, sallow or a greenish complexion, and a languidness of step that bespeaks disease, and perhaps an early death if the right treatment is not resorted to. The whole trouble lies with the blood, and until it is enriched and invigorated there will be no relief from suffering and disease. Unquestionably the greatest of all blood-renewers is Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Good blood means health, vigor, life and beauty, and the only way to make your blood good is to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Out of many cases which illustrate the truth of this may be cited that of Miss Amanda Damphousse, Ste Anne de la Perade, Que., who says "For more than six months I suffered greatly from weakness, bordering almost on nervous prostration. I suffered from headaches, palpitation of the heart, and pains in all my limbs. I had no energy, no appetite, no color, and my nights were frequently sleepless. At different times I consulted three doctors, but none of them seemed able to cure me. A friend strongly urged me to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and I finally followed her advice. With the use of the first box my health began to improve, and five boxes completely restored me. I now have a good appetite, headaches and pains have disappeared, and I never felt better in my life than I do now. If I am ever sick again you may be sure that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will be my only doctor."

If you have any disease like anaemia, indigestion, heart palpitation, neuralgia, rheumatism, or any of the other host of troubles caused by bad blood, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will surely cure you. Be careful to get the genuine, with the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," printed on the wrapper around the box. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by writing to the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

IT ANSWERED WELL.

Wife (with solicitude of tone)—"I must be very lonesome sitting all by yourself at night, balancing your books?"

Husband (tenderly)—"It is, my darling."

Wife—"I have been thinking about for some time, and now I have got a pleasant surprise for you."

Husband—"A pleasant surprise?"

Wife—"Yes, dearest. I sent for mother yesterday, and I expect he this evening. I mean to have her stay with us a long time. She will take care of the house at night and look to the children, and I can go down and sit in the office with you while you work."

Husband—"The dickens—that is to say, I couldn't think of you going to town."

Wife—"It's my duty, dearest. I ought to have thought of it before but it never came to my mind till yesterday. Oh, John, forgive me for not thinking of your comfort sooner. But I will go and sit with you to-night."

Husband—"To-night! Why, I—the fact is I got through with my books last night."

Wife—"You did? How delightful! And so you can now stay at home every evening. I'm so glad!"

## EXERCISES WHEN HE SLEEPS

Curious Habits of the Leader of the Irish Bar.

Stephen Roman, K.C., who may be regarded as the leader of the Chancery bar in Ireland, who was one of the counsel for The Times in the Parnell Commission, together with the present Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Atkinson, is one of the most interesting of men. Among his friends his peculiar methods of work have earned for him a certain notoriety. His day is divided as follows:

On leaving the courts, which close at 4 in Ireland, he hies home and gets into an old hat and a suit of old clothes, time-honored but comfortable. A huge, black, weather-beaten pipe completes his equipment, and after some light refreshment he buries himself in briefs and legal tomes till 6, when he takes a short walk. From 6.30 till 7.30 work is continued, the evil-looking briar still very much in evidence, and then dinner brings about a temporary diversion from both.

After dinner (generally a careful meal owing to refractory digestive organs) the pipe once more, and a possible caller; and then bed and sleep till midnight. Awakening punctually at the witching hour, he dons an ancient waterproof, and a rakish-looking soft hat, and starts perambulating round the square in which he lives, smoking the trusty briar till 3 a. m.

He then returns home and reads till 6, at which hour he makes it a rigorous rule to be in bed. He sleeps till 10, makes a hasty toilet, gulps down his breakfast, and hires a cab—he has not been known to walk to the courts for years. Then he is ready for work at 11, when the judge sits. Surely an extraordinary day! His vacation is generally devoted to yachting, of which he is an ardent devotee.


OKLAHOMA HOTEL RULES.

Gents goin' to bed with their boots on will be charged extra.

Three wraps at the door means there is murder in the house and you must get up.

Please write your name on the wall-paper so we know you've been here.

The other leg of the chair is in the closet if you need it.



**DR. A. W. CHASE'S**  
**CATARRH CURE ... 25c.**

is sent direct to the diseased parts by the Improved Blower. Heals the nose, clears the air passages, stops droppings in the throat and permanently cures Catarrh and Hay Fever. Blower free. All dealers, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Buffalo.

## Kidneys and Liver Affected by Colds

Backache and Pains in the Legs the Common Symptoms—Cure Comes with the Use of

### Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills

Exposure to damp, cold weather is a frequent cause of kidney disease. Biting in a draught so as to chill the feet and legs is frequently enough to bring on congestion of the liver.

Colds settle on the liver and kidneys as well as the lungs. The results are diseases of the most dreadfully painful and fatal sort.

As yet there has never been discovered a preparation equal to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills as a prompt and thorough cure for derangements of these great filtering organs.

Pains in the back, headache, urinary disorders, biliousness, liver complaint, dyspepsia and constipation soon disappear when Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are used.

Mr. Arthur Walden, Ferryville, Carleton County, N.B., writes: "My wife was a great sufferer from kidney diseases for several years. She was

troubled with pains in the small of the back and in the side, was gradually losing flesh and growing weaker. She got into a very bad state, suffered dreadful pains and her ankles would swell up so that we were afraid of dropsy. We had a book of Dr. Chase's in the house, and, reading about Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, decided to try them. Relief soon came with this treatment. My wife has been entirely cured, and says she would not be without Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills for ten times the price."

"I am using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food myself, and it is building me up wonderfully."

Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, one pill a dose, 25c 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.

The blue eyes caught the black in one of those stealthy glances. She blushed and her voice faltered. His young blood took fire with love's longing. But he could find no words to say what he wanted to say.

"I wish I could tell you what I think about you, Jen."

"Try it, if it amuses you."

"I'll get Scott to help me."

Again he picked up the prettily bound volume of the "Lady of the Lake," and turned the pages and read.

"And seldom was a smooch amid such wild luxuriant ringlets hid, Whose glossy black to shame might bring