

# DARE HE?

OR, A SAD LIFE STORY

CHAPTER XXXII.—(Continued).

They have by this time left the town behind them, and have turned through a stone-pillared gate down an ivy and ficus-sheltered drive, along which the indigene, whipping his horses to an avenue canter, lands them at the arched door of a snowy Moorish house, whose whitewash shows dazzling through the interstices of a Bougainvillea fire blazing all over its front.

Two minutes later Jim is standing by Sybilla's couch. She is holding both his hands in hers, and there is something in her face which tells him that she means that he shall kiss her.

"When I think—when I think of our last meeting!" she says hysterically.

"Yes," he says, gasping; "yes, of course. What a beautiful villa you have here!"

The observation is a true one, though, for the moment, he has not the least idea whether it is beautiful or not, as he turns his tormented eyes round upon the delicious little court, with its charming combination of slender twisted marble columns, of mellow-tinted tiles, of low flashing fountain. Originally it has been open, roofless to the eye and the breath and the rains of heaven; but its Northern purchaser has covered it in with glass, and set low divans and luxuriantly cushioned bamboo chairs about its soft-tumbling water.

Sybilla has let fall her hands, and the expression of the wish for a sisterly embrace has disappeared out of her face. For a few moments she remains absolutely silent. He looks round anxiously for Cecilia, but she has gone to take off her bonnet, and Mr. Wilson has not yet come in. Under pretence of examining the tiles, he walks towards the lovely little colonnade of horseshoe arches that form the court, and his uneasy look rests, scarcely seeing them, upon the vertical lines of lovely old faience that intersect the whitewash with softest blues and greens and yellows.

When will Cecilia return? Behind him he presently hears the invalid's voice, staid and coldened:

"It is very beautiful; and, of course, it is everything for weary eyes to have such pleasant objects to rest upon. I believe—with a little laugh—"that we sick people really take in most of our nourishment through the eyes. Was not it wonderful enterprising of us to come here? I suppose your first thought when you heard the news was, 'How mad of Sybilla to attempt it!'"

It is needless to say how innocent of the mental ejaculation attributed to him Jim has been, and the consciousness of it makes him inquire with guilty haste:

"But you were none the worse? you got over it all right?"

"I was really wonderful," replies she; "we sick people—with a little air of playfulness—"do give you well ones these surprises sometimes; but I must not take the credit to myself; it is really every bit due to Dr. Crump, my new doctor, who is a perfect marvel of intuition. I always tell him that he never needs ask; he divines how one is; he says he is a mere bundle of nerves himself; that is, I suppose, why one can talk to him upon subjects that are sealed books with one's nearest and dearest."

Her voice has a suspicious tremble in it which frightens Jim anew.

He looks again apprehensively for help towards the two tiers of curving column and rounding arch, which rise in cool grace above each other, and sees, with relief, the figure of Cecilia leaning over the balustrade that runs along the upper tier, and looking down upon him. At the same moment Mr. Wilson enters, and shortly afterwards they all go to luncheon. It is not a very pleasant repast, although the cool dining-room, with its beautiful old pierced stucco ceiling and its hanging brass lamps, contributes its part handsomely towards what should be their enjoyment. There is no overt family quarrel, but just enough of covert recrimination and subacid sparring to make an outsider feel thoroughly uncomfortable, and to prove how inharmonious a whole the esoured little family now forms.

"We quarrel more than we used to do, do not we?" says Cecilia, when Jim, a little later, takes leave, and she walks, under her red sunshade, up the ivy drive with him to the pillared gate; "and to-day we were better than usual, because you were by. Oh, I wish you were always by!"

He cannot echo the wish. He had thought that he had already held his dead Amelia at her true value; but never, until to-day, has he realized through what a long purgatory of obscure heroisms she had passed to her reward.

"I do hope you will not drop us altogether. Of course, now that the link that bound us to you is broken"—her voice quivers, but he feels neither the fear nor the rage that a like phenomenon in Sybilla has produced in him—"there is nothing to hold you any longer; but I do trust you will not quite throw us over."

"My dear old girl, why should I? I hope that you and I shall always be the best of friends, and that before long I shall see you settled in a home of your own."

"You mean that I shall marry? Well, to be sure—with a recurrence to that business-like tone which had always amused him formerly in her discussion of her affairs of the heart—"I ought to have a better chance now than ever, as I shall have a larger fortune; but"—with a lapse into depression—"this is not a good place for men—I mean Englishmen. There are troops of delightful-looking Frenchmen, Chasseurs d'Afrique, and Zouaves; but, then, we do not know any of them—not one. Well, perhaps,"—philosophically—"it is for the best; one always hears that Frenchmen make very bad husbands."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Notre Dame d'Afrique—Our Lady of Africa—is an ugly lady, homely and black; and the church that is dedicated to her is ugly too—new and mock-Moorish; but, like many another ugly lady, being very nobly placed. She has a great and solemn air. It is Our Lady of Africa who first gives us our greeting as we steam in from seawards; it is to Our Lady of Africa that the fisher people climb to vespers, and to the touching office that follows, when priests and acolytes pass out of the church to the little plateau outside, where, sheer against the sky, stands a small Latin cross, with a plain, and, as it seems, coffin-shaped stone beneath it, on which one reads the inscription:

"A le memoire de tout ceux, qui ont peri dans le mer, et one cle ensevelis dans ses flots."

"All those who have perished in the sea, and been buried in her waves!"

What a gigantic company to be covered with one little epitaph!

Notre Dame d'Afrique stands grandly on the cliff-tops, overlooking the sea, whose cruel deeds she is so agonizedly prayed to avert, whose cruelty she is sometimes powerful to assuage, witness the frequent votive tablets with which the church walls are covered:

"Merci, oh ma mere."  
"J'ai prie, et j'ai ete exauce."  
"Reconnaissance a Marie."  
"Reconnaissance a Notre Dame d'Afrique."

She does not look very lovable, this coal-black Marie, who stands in her stiff brocade, with her ebon hands stretched straight out above the high altar; but how tenderly these poor fishermen must have felt towards her when she brought them back their Pierre or their Jean, from the truculent deeps of the ocean!

Burgoyne has been told, both by the guide-book and by his table-d'note neighbor, that he ought to see Notre Dame d'Afrique; nor is he loth to pay further obsequance to that high lady who already yesterday beckoned to him across the blue floor of her waters. He does not tell Cecilia of his intention, as he knows that she would offer to accompany him; but on leaving her he takes his way through the gay French town, along its Arab-named streets, Baba Zoun and Bab-el-Cued, towards the village of St. Eugene, and breaths the winding road that, with many an elbow and bend, heading a deep gorge that runs up from the sea to the church-foot, leads him within her portals. The congregation is sparse—a few peasants, a blue and red Zouave, and several inevitable English. Now and again a woman, clad in humble black that tells of prayers in vain, goes up with her thin candle, and, lighting it, sticks it in its sconce among the others that burn before the altar. For awhile Burgoyne finds it pleasant after his climb to sit and watch her, and speculate pilyingly with what hope of still possible good to herself she is setting her slender taper alight—now that her treasure has all too obviously gone down beneath the waves, to sit and speculate, and smell the heady incense, and listen to the murmur of chanted supplication; but presently, growing weary of the uncomprehended service, he slips outside to the little plateau, with his view straight out—no importunate land-object intervening—towards the sea, across which a little steamer is casting her way; and on the horizon two tiny shining sails are lying.

Here, on this bold headland, it seems as if one were one's self in mid-ocean; and one has to lean far over the low wall in order to realize that there is some solid earth between us and it; that two full cities of the dead—a Jewish and a Christian—lie below. For read by the light of that plain inscription upon which his eyes are resting, what is even the azure Mediterranean but a grave? For the matter of that, what is all life but a grave?

"First our pleasures die, and then our hopes, and then our fears, and then we die."

These are dead, the debt is due: Dust claims dust, and we die too."

He turns away, and, muttering these words half absently between his lips, begins to make the circuit of the church; and in doing so comes suddenly upon three persons who are apparently similarly employed. The party consists of

a man and two ladies. Being a little ahead of him they are, for the first moment or two, not aware of his presence, an ignorance by which he, rather to his own discomfiture, profits to overhear a scrap of their conversation certainly not intended for his ears.

"I suppose that you were wool-gathering, as usual?" Mr. Le Marchant is saying, with an accent of cold severity to his daughter; "but should have thought that even you might have remembered to bring a wrap of some kind for your mother!"

Jim starts, partly at having happened so unexpectedly upon the people before him, partly in shocked astonishment at the harshness both of voice and words.

In the old days Elizabeth had been the apple of her father's eye, to oppose whose lightest fancy was a capital offence, for whom no words could be too sugared, no looks too dozing. Yet now she answers, with the sweetest good-humor, and without the slightest sign of surprise or irritation, or any indication that the occurrence is not a habitual one:

"I cannot think how I could have been so stupid; it was inexcusable of me."

"I quite agree with you," replies the father, entirely unmollified; "I am sure you have been told often enough how liable to chills insufficient clothing makes people in this beastly climate at sundown."

"But it is not near sundown," breaks in Mrs. Le Marchant, throwing herself anxiously, and with a dexterity which shows how frequently she is called upon to do so, between the two others; "look what a great piece of blue sky the sun has yet to travel."

"You shall have my jacket," cries Elizabeth impetuously, but still with the same perfect sweetness; "it will be absurdly short for you, but, at least, it will keep you warm." So saying, she, with the speed of lightning, whips off the garment alluded to, and proceeds to guide her mother's arms into its inconveniently tight sleeves, laughing the while with her odd childish light-heartedness, and crying, "You dear thing, you do look too ridiculous!"

The mother laughs too, and aids her daughter's efforts; nor does it seem to occur to any of the three that the fatal Southern chill may possibly strike the delicate little frame of Elizabeth, now exposed, so lightly clad in her tweed gown, to its insidious influence.

"I wish you had a looking-glass to see yourself in," cries she, rippling into fresh mirth; "does not she look funny, father?" appealing to him with as little resentment for his past surliness as would be shown by a good dog (I cannot put it more strongly), and yet, as it seems to Jim, with a certain nervous deprecation.

The next moment one of them—he does not know which—has caught sight of himself, and the moment after he is shaking hands with all three. It is clear that the fact of his presence in Algiers has been notified to Mr. Le Marchant, for there is no surprise in his coldly civil greeting. He makes it as short as possible, and almost at once turns to continue his circuit of the church, his wife at his side, and his daughter meekly following. Doubtless they do not wish for his (Jim's) company; but yet as he was originally, and without any reference to them, going in their direction, it would seem natural that he should walk along with them.

He is hesitating as to whether or no to adopt this course, when he is decided by a very slight movement of Elizabeth's head. She does not actually look over her shoulder at him, and yet it seems to him as if, were her gesture completed, it would amount to that; but it is arrested by some impulse before it is sufficient to sketch. Such as it is, it suffices to take him to her side; and it seems to him that there is a sort of satisfaction mingled with the undoubted apprehension in her face, as she realizes that it is so. Her eyes, as she turns them upon him, have a hungry question in them, which her lips seem afraid to put. Apparently she cannot get nearer to it, than this—very tremblingly and hurriedly uttered, with a timid glance at her father's back, as if she were delivering herself of some compromising secret instead of the mere platitude which she so indistinctly vents:

"A—a—great many things have happened since—since we last met!"

Her eye travels for a moment to his hat, from which, unlike Cecilia's rainbow raiment, the crape band has not yet been removed; and he understands that she is comprehending his trouble as well as her own in the phrase.

"A great many!" he answers baldly.

He has not the cruelty to wish to keep her on tenter-hooks, and he knows perfectly what is the question that is written in the wistful blue of her look, and whom it concerns; but it would be impertinence in him to take for granted that knowledge, and answer that curiosity which, however intense and apparent, has not yet become the current coin of speech. Probably she sees that he is unable or unwilling to help her, for she makes another tremulous effort.

"I hope that—that—all your friends are well?"

"All my friends!" repeats he, half sadly; "there are not such a numerous band; I have not many friends left still alive."

His thoughts have reverted to his own loss, for, at the moment, Amelia is very present to him; but the words are no sooner out of his mouth than he sees how false is the impression produced by his reply—sees it written in the sudden dead-whiteness of her cheek and the terror in her eye.

"Do you mean"—she stammers—"that anybody—any of your friends—is—is lately dead?"

"Oh no! no!" he cries, reassuringly; "you are making a mistake; nobody is dead—nobody, that is,"—with a sigh—that you do not already know of. All our friends—all our common friends—are—well as I know—"

"Elizabeth!" breaks in Mr. Le Marchant's voice, in severe appellation; he has only just become aware that his daughter is not unaccompanied, and the discovery apparently does not please him.

Without a second's delay, despite her twenty-seven years, she has sprung forward to obey the summons; and Jim has the sense to make no further effort to rejoin her. By the time that their circuit is finished, and they have again reached the front of the church, vespers are ended, and there is a movement outwards among the worshippers. They stream—not very numerous—out on the little terrace. The priests follow, tonsured, but—which looks strange—with beards and whiskers. The acolytes, in their red chasubles, carry a black and white pall, and lay it over the memorial stone below the cross. On either hand stand a band of decently clad youths—sons of drowned seamen—playing on brass instruments. It is a poor little music, doubtful in tune; but surely no rolling organ, no papal choir, could touch the heart so much as this simple ceremonial. The little Latin cross standing sheer out against the sea; the black pall thrown over the stone that commemorates the sea's innumerable dead; the red-clad acolytes, standing with eyes cast down, holding aloft their high tapers, whose flickering flame the seawind soon puffs out; and the sons of the drowned sailors, making their homely music to the accompaniment of the salt breeze. The little service is brief, and those who have taken part in it are soon dispersing. As they do so, Jim once more finds himself for a moment close to Elizabeth.

(To be continued).

## ON THE FARM.

SHEEP NOTES.

A cross of Southdown rams on Cotswold ewes produces a good type of mutton sheep. They are well woolled and have comparatively close fleeces.

The Cotswold is a heavy wool-producer and will improve the wool-producing facilities of the Merinos when crossed on them.

Good grade mutton lambs go to market at seventy to 100 pounds when from five to six months old and bring top prices.

Grade Southdown lambs are valuable for this purpose.

Kentucky blue grass seed sown on bare places in the pasture before a rain, should take root and keep the pasture good. It should be cured.

An acre or two of rape will be found valuable for pasture during the summer when a small flock is kept.

Grain should be given the ewes in pasture if an extra growth is wanted on the lambs.

Have you a lamb creep? Better fix one so that you can feed the lambs some grain and not have the old sheep steal it all away from them. It pays.

Do not let the lambs before the flies get numerous. About the best time is when they are a couple of weeks old.

Go round the fences and see that there are no holes for the sheep and lambs to crawl through. Once the habit is formed it will stick like a burdock burr.

Drinking surface water and feeding too long on one pasture are two causes of stomach worms. Isn't the way clear then to a cure? Give the sheep good pure water and change their pasture often.

A good way to get into sheep cheaply is to take a small flock on share, of a neighbor who has more than he can well pasture. They will soon double up and bring you a good flock, without paying out much, if any money.

POOR RESULTS.

When manure stands in piles over the field the soil directly beneath the piles will be excessively rich—it will cause corn to run to stalks and grain to straw. In other words, the soil will be over-fed. Surrounding soil, however, will be under-fed. The plant food which goes into the soil directly beneath the pile goes away down, so deep in fact, that a large part of it never becomes available for plant growth.

When a crop is grown on a field which has been fertilized in this manner, the growth is uneven. Where the piles have been standing all winter the crop will be thick and heavy, between the piles it will be thin and scattered.

This practice at best is a poor one. No doubt it is better for a farmer to apply the manure in this manner than not to apply it at all, but it is worth applying in the right way.

The correct way is to haul the fresh manure to the field and scatter it in a finely pulverized condition over the entire surface. This can be done at any time of the year. The first rain will wash every particle of plant food into the soil. Then, when plowing time comes, if this manure on the surface is turned under, the final step has been taken to return to the soil every dollar's worth of plant food which the manure contains.

WHY EVERY FARMER SHOULD

HAVE A SPREADER.

It is the easiest way to spread manure. It is the fastest way of spreading manure.

It increases the value of manure 100 per cent.

It makes the most disagreeable job on the farm pleasant.

It returns plant food to the soil. It improves the texture of the soil, allowing it to hold moisture, and thus forces a heavy growth of crops.

It stops the expense of commercial fertilizers.

It can be used every day of the year—something which cannot be said of many other farm machines.

It spreads so evenly that the manure does not interfere when working the ground with other machines.

It permits spreading after seeding or planting, or it can be used to top dress the meadow or pasture without choking down the grass or grain.

It is capable of spreading so thin, that the manure will not interfere with the pasturing of stock.

It never throws out large chunks, because the teeth are so arranged on the beater bats that all matter which passes over them is torn apart.

It can be operated by a boy just as well as a man.

It saves and makes money.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

A colt overworked at three years old will be unsound by the time he is six or seven. If he is sound at eight or nine he will remain so.

A lazy hen is worthless. The hens that work are the ones that are a profit to their owner. Give them something to do and a place to work in. Then if they persist in idleness, shorten their rations and make them work.

A slow milker is never tolerated in the dairy districts. The sooner a cow is milked, and all the organs connected with feeding, digestion and secretion are left in their natural condition, the better it is for the cow.

A farmer says when not working his horses very much he can keep them in excellent condition on well-cured peabuck. This man does a lot of work with his stock and claims to feed but a small amount of grain, yet his stock is always in good condition. Others, who feed a large amount of grain, do not do so much work with them, yet have a lot of trouble with debilitated horses.

It is claimed that separated skim-milk is no better than water for calves. The facts are that the separator removes no part from the milk, aside from fat and filth. The remaining casein weighs nearly as much in all cases and is much more nourishing, while the sugar, ash, albumen and other ingredients make an excellent food for growth, and, when combined with green grass or mill feeds, for fattening. Experiments prove separator milk to be worth for feeding twenty to forty-nine cents per hundredweight.

UGANDA OF TO-DAY.

Changes That Have Taken Place Since the Building of the Railway.

The progress of civilization in the Uganda Protectorate was the subject of a paper read before the London Society of Arts recently by Mr. George Wilson, C.B., the Deputy Commissioner of the Protectorate.

The lecturer dwelt on the value of the Uganda Railway, contrasting the trip to-day with the former weary and hazardous caravan journey of two months. Mombassa, he said, is now a place of modern hotels. Trains run twice a week to the lake, so that you can pass through 584 miles of the most beautiful scenery in forty-eight hours. At the lake you meet the weekly steamers, and in another eighteen hours you are in Uganda. Formerly the carriage of goods cost from \$1,500 to \$2,000 a ton, and took about three months! now it is done under four days at rates ranging from \$15 to \$75 a ton.

The natural products of Uganda are bananas, timber, rubber, coffee, and cotton. The field for the production of this last, said Mr. Wilson, seems to be almost unlimited, and although the industry on commercial lines is altogether new to the country, it will reach several thousands of tons next year. He pointed out the expert opinion that botanically speaking no country was known to be so free from insect pests.

British enterprise, so backward hitherto, was at last moving to this field, and large business undertakings are in progress.

In conclusion Mr. Wilson said that the country was not ripe for absolute self-government. "Natives under a wise restraint can be like good and clever children; in their wild impulses, and with passions aflame, they can be very devils incarnate. Only a few years ago the chiefs would slit off a nose, cut off lips, lop off a limb merely for the accidental spilling of beer, or the appearance of hair in their food." He added that under British control since 1899, excepting in the case of dispersing a band of murderers, only one punitive expedition has taken active measures, and that was to demand retribution for wanton murder by an outlying tribe.

Sir Frederick Lugard, who presided, gave a brief account of the perilous days of 1899, before they succeeded in getting a treaty, of the disappointment when the Chartered Company ordered him to evacuate the country as their funds no longer permitted them to hold it. "I didn't know what to do," he said, adding, with a twinkle in his eye, "I didn't carry out my order, but I came to England and started the campaign for Uganda."

"The railway to-day is not only paying a dividend, but is paying the interest on the capital."

HELPING HANDS.

He—Then it is settled that we are to elope at midnight?

She—Yes.

He—And you are sure you can get your trunk packed in time?

She—Oh! yes. Papa and mamma have both promised to help me.

"He offered me his hand and fortune," "Did you accept?" "No; the one was too big and the other too small."