

## ONLY A MONTH;

OR, A CURIOUS MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

It is of course a truism that we never fully appreciate what we have, until some trouble or some other loss shows us all that has grown familiar in a fresh light. Fond as he had been of his home before, Frithiof had never until now quite realized what it meant to him. But as each evening he returned from work, and from the severe trial of an atmosphere of suspicion and dislike, he felt much as the sailor feels when, after tossing about all day in stormy seas, he anchors at night in some harbor of refuge. Sigrid knew that he felt this, and she was determined that he should not even guess her trouble. It was with her certainly as she went about her household work, with her as she and Swanhild walked through the hot and crowded streets, and with her as she played at Mme. Lechertier's Academy. But there was something in the work that prevented the trouble from really preying on her mind; she was sad indeed, yet not in despair.

Nevertheless, Mme. Lechertier's quick eyes noted at once the change in her favorite.

"You are not well, cherie," she said, "your face looks worn. Why, my dear, I can actually see lines in your forehead. At your age that is inexcusable."

Sigrid laughed. "I have a bad habit of wrinkling it up when I am worried about anything," she said. "To-day, perhaps, I am a little tired. It is so hot and sultry, and besides I am anxious about Frithiof, it is a trying time for him."

"Yes, this heat is trying to the strongest," said Mme. Lechertier. "Swanhild, my angel, there are some new bonbons in that box; help yourself."

The child was never happier than when hard at work at the academy; even on this hot summer day she never complained; and in truth the afternoons just brought the right amount of variety into what would otherwise have been a very monotonous life.

"Sigrid," said the little girl, as they walked home together, "is it true what you said to Madame Lechertier about Frithiof feeling the heat? Is it really that which has made him so grave the last few days?"

"It is partly that," replied Sigrid. "But he has a good deal to trouble him that you are too young to understand, things that will not bear talking about. You must try to make it bright and cheerful at home."

Next morning (Sunday) was so bright that Sigrid persuaded him to take a walk, and fully intending to return in an hour's time to his translating, he paced along the Embankment. He crossed Blackfriars Bridge and walked further and further, and on to the further bank of the Tower—solid and grim, as befitted the guardian of so many secrets of the past. Even here there was a quiet Sunday feeling, while something familiar in the sight of the water and the shipping carried him back in imagination to Norway, and there came over him an intense longing for his own country. It was a feeling that often took possession of him, nor could he any more account for its sudden seizures than the Swiss can account for that sick longing for his native mountains to which he is often liable.

"It's no use," he thought to himself. "It will take me the best part of my life to pay the debts, and till they are paid I can't go."

### CHAPTER XXX.

Perhaps it was almost a relief both to Frithiof and to Sigrid that, just at this time, all intercourse with Rowan Tree House should become impossible. Lance and Gwen had sickened with scarlatina, and of course, all communication was at end for some time to come. So that, perhaps, the only person who sighed over the separation was Cecil, and she was fortunately kept so busy by her little patients that she had not time to think much of the future.

By the middle of August, Lance and Gwen had recovered, and were taken down to the sea-side. But in spite of lovely weather that summer's holiday proved a very dreary one. Roy was in the depths of de-

pression, and it seemed to Cecil that a great shadow had fallen upon everything.

"Robin," said Mrs. Boniface, "I want you to take that child to Switzerland for a month; this place is doing her no good at all. She wants change and mountain air."

So the father and mother plotted and planned, and in September Cecil, much against her will, was packed off to Switzerland to see snow-mountains and water-falls.

Still, being a sensible girl, she did her best with what was put before her, and though her mind was a good deal with Sigrid and Frithiof in their trouble and anxiety, yet physically she gained great good from the tour, and came back with a color in her cheeks which satisfied her mother.

"By the bye, dearie," remarked Mrs. Boniface, the day after her return, "your father thought you would like to hear the 'Elijah' to-night at the Albert Hall, and he has left you two tickets."

"Wh— Albani is singing, is she not?" cried Cecil. "Oh, yes; I should like to go, of all things!"

"Then I will tell you what we will do; we will send a card and ask Mrs. Horner to go with you, for it's the church meeting to-night, and father and I do not want to miss it."

Cecil could make no objection to this, though her pleasure was rather damped by the prospect of having Mrs. Horner as her companion. There was little love lost between them, for the innate refinement of the one jarred upon the innate vulgarity of the other, and vice versa.

It was a little after seven o'clock when Cecil drove to the Horners' house and was ushered into the gorgeous drawing-room.

"My dear," exclaimed Mrs. Horner, entering with a perturbed face, "did not my letter reach you in time? I made sure it would. The fact is, I am not feeling quite up to going to-night. Could you find any one else, do you think, who would go with you?"

Cecil thought for a moment. "Sigrid would have liked it, but I know she is too busy just now," she remarked.

"And oh, dear, far better go alone than take Miss Falck!" said Mrs. Horner; "I shall never forget what I endured when I took her with me to hear Corney Grain; she laughed aloud, my dear; laughed till she positively cried, and even went so far as to clap her hands. It makes me hot to think of it even."

"I always enjoy going anywhere with Sigrid," said Cecil. "It seems to me that her wonderful faculty for enjoying everything is very much to be envied. However, as there is no chance of her going to-night, I will call and see whether one of the Greenwoods is disengaged."

So with hasty farewells she went off, laughing to herself as the cab rattled along, to think of Mrs. Horner's discomfort and Sigrid's intense appreciation of Corney Grain. Fate, however, seemed to be against her; her friends the Greenwoods were out for the evening, and there was nothing left for it but to drive home again; or else to go in alone and trust to finding Roy afterward. She decided to go alone, and writing a few words on a card asking Roy to come to her at the end of the oratorio, she sent it to the artist's room by one of the attendants, and settled herself down to enjoy the music, secretly rather glad to have an empty chair instead of Mrs. Horner beside her.

All at once the color rushed to her cheeks, for, looking up, she saw Frithiof crossing the platform; she watched him place the score on the conductor's desk, and turn to answer the question of some one in the orchestra, then disappear again within the swing-doors leading to the back regions. She wondered a little that Roy did not come to her; or, at any rate, send her some message, and at the end of the last chorus began to feel a little anxious and uncomfortable. At last, to her great relief, she saw Frithiof coming toward her.

"Your brother has never come," he said, in reply to her greeting. "I suppose this fog must have hindered him, for he told me he should be here; and I have been expecting him every moment."

"Is the fog so bad as all that?" said Cecil, rather anxiously.

"It was very bad when I came," said Frithiof. "However, by good luck, I managed to grope my way to Portland Road, and came down by the Metropolitan. Will you let me see you home?"

"Thank you, but it is so dreadfully out of your way. I should be very glad if you would, only it is troubling you so much."

"You will be giving me a real pleasure," he said. "I expect there will be a rush on the trains. Shall we try for a cab?"

So they walked out together into the dense fog, Cecil with a blissful sense of confidence in the man who piloted her so adroitly through the crowd.

At last, after much difficulty, Frithiof secured a hansom, and put her into it. She was secretly relieved that he got in too.

"I will come back with you if you will allow me," he said; "for I am not quite sure whether this is not a more dangerous part of the adventure than when we were on foot. I never saw such a fog! Why, we can't even see the horse, much less where he is going."

"How thankful I am that you were here! It would have been dreadful all alone," said Cecil; and she explained to him how Mrs. Horner had failed her at the last moment. "You have not met my mother since she came back from the sea. Are you still afraid of infection? The house has been thoroughly painted and fumigated."

"Oh, it is not that," said Frithiof; "but while this cloud is still over me, I can't come. You do not realize how it affects everything."

"It does not affect your own home."

"No, that's true," said Frithiof. "It has made me value that more, and it has made me value your friendship more. But, you see, you are the only one at Rowan Tree House who still believes in me; and how you manage to do it passes my comprehension—when there is nothing to prove me innocent."

"None of the things which we believe in most can be absolutely proved," said Cecil. "I can't logically justify my belief in you any more than in our old talks I could justify my belief in the unseen world."

"Do you remember that first Sunday when I was staying with you, and you asked me whether I had found a Norwegian church?"

"Yes, very well. It vexed me so much to have said anything about it, but you see, I had always lived with people who went to church or chapel as regularly as they took their meals."

"Well, do you know I was wrong; there is a Norwegian church down near the Commercial Docks at Rotherhithe. It is too far for Sigrid and Swanhild to go very often, but to me it is like a bit of Norway planted down in this great wilderness of houses," he said. "It was strange that I should have happened to come across it so unexpectedly, just at the time when I most needed it."

"But that surely is what always happens," said Cecil. "When we really need a thing we get it."

"You learned, before I did, to distinguish between needing and wanting," said Frithiof. "But I, you see, had to lose everything before understanding—to lose even my reputation for common honesty. Even now it seems to me hardly possible that life should go on under such a cloud as that. Yet the days pass somehow, and I believe that it was this trouble which drove me to what I really needed."

"It is good of you to tell me this," said Cecil. "It seems to put meaning into this mystery which is always puzzling me and seeming so useless and unjust. By the bye,

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Roy tells me that Darnell has left."

"Yes," said Frithiof, "he left at Michaelmas. Things have been rather smoother since then."

"I can't help thinking that his leaving just now is indirect evidence against him," said Cecil. "Sigrid and I suspected him from the first. Do not you suspect him?"

"Yes," he replied, "I do. But without any reason."

"Why did he go?"  
"His wife was ill, and was ordered to a warmer climate. He has taken a situation at Plymouth. After all, there is no real evidence against him, and a great deal of evidence against me. How is it that you suspect him?"

"It is because I know you had nothing to do with it," said Cecil. He had guessed what her answer would be, yet loved to hear her say the words.

(To be continued.)

### Armageddon Explained.

Armageddon in the Hebrew signifies the Hill of Megiddo or Mount of Destruction. It was famous as the battlefield on which Gideon vanquished the Midianites, also for the defeat of King Saul in his battle with the Philistines and for the defeat of Ahab in the battle of Jezreel. All those battles were typical.

### QUEEN MARY LIKES ROSES.

Hundreds of New Bushes in Buckingham Palace Gardens.

Queen Mary's favorite flower is the rose, and some hundreds of new trees have been placed in the gardens at Buckingham Palace, particularly where her Majesty can see them from the windows of her private apartments.

Perhaps, as is only becoming in a former Duchess of York, she displays a leaning toward the white rose, with the deep crimson rose next in favor. A new rose garden was provided for her entertainment last year at Windsor.

Even a royal household has its domestic storm waves. Queen Mary, who is nothing if not old fashioned in her ideas and ways, disapproves of the luxurious tendency of the age, which has spread even to the servants. Consequently there has been retrenchment lately at Buckingham Palace. And when the household staff complained of the food provided recently and the Queen heard of it she said they were quite at liberty to quit the royal household.

A cheerful man can always get attention when he has a tale of woe to tell.

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