

A Dark Shadow;

Or, A Coming Vengeance

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

Clive found some letters and a telegram, which required immediate attention, awaiting him; and when he returned to Grosvenor Square the platoon was at the door; but he found Lady Edith in the drawing-room looking downcast and disappointed.

"Father has just sent to say that he has been detained by important business—politics, of course! We eat and drink and sleep politics—he suggests that we should go by train later. But it isn't at all the thing we planned is it? Who wants to go in a stuffy train? I want to drive behind the new gees."

Her disappointment was evidently so keen that Clive said, almost unthinkingly: "Why shouldn't I drive you down, and Lord Chesterleigh join us by train?"

"Why, how clever of you!" she cried, her face lighting up. "That will be splendid. We shan't lose our drive after all. I'll write a note to him."

She stopped, and the color rose to her face; for she had suddenly remembered that it was scarcely the conventional thing for her to be driving about the country alone with Clive. And yet how delightful it would be! After all, they could take the groom, which they had not intended doing. And even if it were a sin against Society's unwritten code, would it not be worth while to come to it?

"Yes; I'll write to father!"

"The nearest station is called Perry," remarked Clive, who had been looking at the Bradshaw, and had not noticed her hesitation to hear his plan.

She scribbled a note, and placed it on the table which her father used for writing; and they went out to the carriage. It was, as she said, a splendid carriage, and the color rose to her face as she desired. She was in good spirits when Clive and she started; they rose still higher as they left London behind and drove through the lanes, softly glowing in the spring green. Clive was glad to get away from London and the eternal round of work; and he felt happier, at any rate, at peace, than he had been since the fatal day Mina had cast him off; indeed, he would have been almost to be unhappy in such perfect weather, and with so beautiful and bright a companion.

They halted half-way to rest the horses, and got some tea for themselves, and, in defiance of conventionality, they drank it at the table outside the rustic inn. When they started again, she asked Clive to let her drive.

"Do you think you can manage them?" he said. "They are young and fresh still."

"Oh, yes," she replied. "Besides, I can't come to any harm while you are sitting beside me."

He told the groom to take up a link in the curb, and he sat and watched her closely as she drove, and with a certain admiration; for she managed the high-falooted horses very well. After a while Clive turned to her and said: "You are a man of rather deaf at times, and this is one of his bad days. He is much older than he looks," she remarked, after Clive had repeated the question and had received a satisfactory reply; "but nearly all our servants are old; we scarcely ever discharge them for anything short of murder; and I think that some of them are really attached to us."

"Your old ayah, Sara, for instance," said Clive, "seems very devoted."

Lady Edith nodded and said: "Oh, she is quite silly," she said. "I mean in this devotion of hers. She would let any of us jump on her. She belongs to a very hot and passionate race, and is unserving in her own way. Sometimes she reminds me of one of the cats, the big wild cats in her own jungles; softly purring one moment, all claws and fangs the next. By the way, you are a great favorite of hers. I hope you feel flattered."

"I do," said Clive; "but I am rather surprised. I thought she regarded me somewhat unfavorably."

"Oh, that was some time ago, perhaps, when she knew you were always regarded one with a certain amount of suspicion; it is their nature to do, as Dr. Watts says."

"Well, I'm glad I'm in her good books now," said Clive. "What a pretty bit of country we are going through."

"Isn't it lovely!" she responded. "I don't know when I have seen anything so beautiful, or when I have enjoyed it so much as I do now. What nonsense it is to say that there is no happiness in this world."

She turned her face to him; it was radiant; her eyes, blue as the sky, shone with the happiness of only a child; she spoke her delicately-cut lips were half-parted with a smile of unalloyed pleasure.

Clive checked a sigh. "I am glad," he said.

They reached Palmer's Green, and their arrival created no little stir at the tiny out-of-the-way inn. It was a charming little place, half-covered by ivy and alight with spring flowers. The "parlor" was scrupulously clean, and, for a wonder, had an odor of lavender and damp.

Clive found that chops were above the capacity of the establishment; but he ordered ham and eggs and a high tea. The landlady, quite one of the worthy old type, took Lady Edith upstairs; but bustled back to Clive to assure him that she would make them as comfortable as she possibly could.

"Perhaps you and your good lady would like to go and see the church while the meal's being prepared," she said. "It's considered to be a very fine old building, and there's some rare ancient monuments and carvings."

Clive looked up sharply at the "your good lady," and was about to correct the woman; but he checked himself; it was scarcely worth while to take any notice of the mistake. He proposed the church to Lady Edith when she came down; she assented promptly; and they strolled to it. It really was a fine old church; and they got the key from the sexton's cottage, and examined the monuments, the carved oak, and the brasses. There was a suggestion of intimacy in the way they strolled about alone together, of which Clive was vaguely conscious, and which Lady Edith keenly felt; certainly her happiness was not yet waning.

"I wonder whether Lord Chesterleigh will be here in time for tea?" he said. "I don't know," replied Lady Edith easily. "He may not come until it is just time to start for home. It will be bright moonlight to-night, and he will enjoy the drive. I know I shall."

They wandered about the lanes for half an hour, sometimes silent, sometimes talking in the leisurely, rambling way born of the occasion and their surroundings; then they got hungry, and made their way back to the inn, and a nondescript but enticing meal awaiting them. Lady Edith enjoyed it immensely, and declared that she would often have just such a meal at Grosvenor Square.

"But I am afraid it would be different there," she said with a little sigh. She presided over the tea at one end of the table, and Clive sat behind the ham and eggs at the other; and they certainly looked so very much like a recently married couple that there was some excuse for the landlady, who waited, beaming on them benevolently, after the manner of her kind all the world over when they are regarded a bride and bridegroom.

"I really cannot eat any more," Lady Edith declared with a laugh, as she refused a further supply from the huge dish. "I have enjoyed it so much."

"They have certainly done us very well," admitted Clive. "I'll go and look at the horses."

"That means that you want to smoke," said Lady Edith, smiling up at him. "Pray do so here, when you come back, if you want to. I like it."

Clive found the horses all right, and talked them over with the aged William. "You don't know how far it is from the station, I suppose?"

Lord Chesterleigh is coming down by train; William touched his hat, and repeated in the negative, and Clive, as he sauntered off, said:

"You can loosen those curbs going back."

"At once, sir?" asked William.

"Oh, yes, if you like," said Clive absently.

Meanwhile, Lady Edith had wandered into the old-fashioned garden.

"What beautiful flowers you have," she said to the landlady. "I did not know that there were so many blooming so early in the year."

"It's my son's hobby, m's'am," said the landlady beamingly. "I hope you'll please to pick any that takes your fancy, and make a bouquet for your good gentleman."

Lady Edith's face flamed, and, like Clive, she was about to correct the woman, but she too checked herself, thinking, as he had thought, that it did not matter. But the simple words rang in her ears, and she stooped over some fragrant stocks to hide her blushing face. Clive found her picking the flowers.

"I've full permission," she said. "Are't they lovely! Smell!" She held the bunch to her nose, but men are not particularly delicate in such matters, and she, with a little gesture of impatience and womanly scorn at his efforts, put it in its place, found a pin, and fixed it. She was necessary very close to him, and, as he looked down at her, he could not fail to notice the loveliness of the upturned face in its frame of golden hair, blown a little loose by the soft breeze. She glanced up to meet his gaze, her eyes fell suddenly, a faint blush rose to her face, and she turned her head away.

Clive was only human, and like most men who are worth anything at all, admired beauty of any kind. If there had been no Mina he would have been stirred to the depths by the proximity of this extremely beautiful woman; even as it was, he was not insensible to her charms. He moved unhesitatingly.

"Shall we walk towards the station on the chance of meeting Lord Chesterleigh?" he said.

Lady Edith stifled a sigh, but of course assented promptly. Having received minute instructions as to how they should proceed; and, of course, lost it. However, they reached the station at last, and, inquiring when the next London train came in, were informed by an aged porter that it was due in about a hour's time. Clive slipped him and, describing Lord Chesterleigh, told the porter to direct the gentleman answering that description to the inn.

They went back slowly; the moon had risen from the low bank of clouds, and the pretty, "gentle" country seemed lapped in peace; it was a night for lovers, and the music of a thrush singing softly in an elm was echoed by Lady Edith's heart.

If only the night could last! If she could hold the assurance that they too should spend many such hours together alone! She glanced at him now and again; but though Clive was too well-mannered to be absent or preoccupied, she had a painful sense that his feelings were not in harmony with hers; if they were, how could he refrain from speaking the words of love for which her soul thirsted?

The night grew slightly chilly; the landlady, with kindly forethought, had lit a fire, and though the room was not cold, the blaze, reflected in the old panelling, made the room cheerful. Lady Edith drew a low chair up to the fire, and leaned forward with her hands clasped round her knees, making a very graceful picture; it was as if rank and fashion were playing at country simplicity; she appeared to be a new character; that night thought Clive as he leaned against the mantelshelf above her, and smoked a cigarette. Her voice, when she spoke—there were long intervals of silence, broken only by the spluttering and the crackling of the fire of great logs—was soft and low and almost dreamy.

Consciously or unconsciously, she was exerting the influence of sex; and unconsciously or unconsciously, Clive was being drawn under its spell. A clock struck the hour; he started, and looked at his watch.

"Lord Chesterleigh ought to have been here half an hour ago," he said. "How the time flies!"

"Father is not coming," she said, with anything but poignant regret. "I suppose we ought to be starting."

Clive knew that if Lord Chesterleigh were not coming, they ought not to be just starting; but ought to have done so some hours ago; indeed, ought not to have come at all; but he nodded cheerfully, and went out to tell William to put the horses to, and help him to get the carriage ready. The horses were not in the stable, the carriage was not to be seen, and did not come when Clive called him; but the landlady came to the back door, and regarded Clive with some surprise.

"Were you calling for your man, sir?" she inquired. "He's gone."

"Gone? Gone where?" asked Clive.

"Gone back to London, sir," she replied. "He started back long while ago." She saw by Clive's face that something was amiss, though he instantly suppressed any show of surprise. "I gave him his tea early, because he said that you were going back by train, and that he was to take the horses back to London at once."

"Ah, yes," said Clive casually. "When is the next train, by the way?"

"The next train is at half past eight, and the next day train is at ten."

"I'll ask, sir," she said. "The porter is in the taproom."

Clive returned to the parlor with a smile which he trusted would not appear false to Lady Edith.

"Your man understood something that I said, and has driven back to London; we shall have to return by the train," he said in a matter-of-fact tone. "I'm very sorry."

Lady Edith laughed. She would have preferred the drive home alone with him; but they might be alone in the railway carriage—and the laugh was still on her lips when the landlady came in, dropped a curtsey, and said:

"The next train has gone, sir; it went more than half an hour ago."

The Meaning of a Name

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means everything that is choicest in fine tea. "SALADA" means the world's best tea—"hill-grown Ceylon"—with all the exquisite freshness and flavor retained by the sealed lead packages.

BLACK, GREEN or MIXED

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CHAPTER XXII.

The laugh died from Lady Edith's lips, and she stared with dilated eyes at the woman; for suddenly, in a flash, she realized the situation. The landlady looked from one to the other with some distress.

"I'm very sorry, sir," she murmured. "If so be as you'd like to stay, I'd do my best to make you comfortable."

The blood burnt in Lady Edith's face; then it died away, as she made to the door, she rose to her feet. Clive was pale, too, and he said instantly, almost sternly:

"We must return to London, and to-night, at once. Will you please get us a carriage, a fly, anything?"

The landlady began to see her mistake, and nervously stammered an apology. Clive cut her short.

"Yes; yes! No matter! The carriage, the fly."

The woman almost broke down. "There isn't such a thing in the place, sir, she said. 'We've no horse or carriage of any kind; there's nothing but a rough pony and cart, not fit for anything.'"

"Pray do not be alarmed. It was not your fault—it was mine, all mine. What is the nearest place?"

"You might get a fly at Hansford; that's the next town three miles. If you go across to his house, I'll send my boy to see if he can get one; but I'm not at all sure that he will. Oh, dear, dear! If I'd only known."

"I will go," said Clive; "the boy can show me the way."

He closed the door on the woman and forced a smile.

"What an awkward fix!" he said. "But I shall be sure to get some kind of carriage. Please don't be distressed on my account—I will be back as quickly as I can; please don't fret about it."

He took a step or two towards her; she had sunk into the chair again, and with hands tightly clasped in her lap was staring anxiously at the door. He took up his hat in his bosom could refrain from pitying her. She seemed to Clive like a child, to be soothed, reassured. His hand went to her shoulder; but it fell to his side again before he touched her, and without another word, he left the room quickly.

He and the boy reached Hansford, to find a small village wrapped in peaceful slumber. With some difficulty Clive succeeded in waking up the landlord of the inn, and obtaining a rickshaw, which was, in fact, a vehicle which only resembled the ordinary fly in its antiquity and mustiness—and with still greater difficulty obtained a driver, with whom Clive and the boy returned to Palmer's Green.

Lady Edith was already dressed for the journey. She was calm but very pale, and, after a swift glance at Clive, her eyes avoided his. He borrowed some wraps and a rug from the landlady, and made Lady Edith as comfortable as he could in the vehicle. At the last moment he got a glass of hot milk, and insisted upon her drinking it. He wondered whether she would prefer that he should ride on the seat beside her, or whether she would prefer that he should sit beside her.

The night was as lovely as the day had been; and, under other circumstances, the drive would have been enjoyable enough. As it was, Clive said that it was incumbent upon him to render it as little miserable as possible; and he tried to talk to her to divert her from dwelling on the embarrassing situation; and after a time her face lit, his pallor and grew brighter; the fact was she could not be unhappy while she was by his side and so near, so very near, to him.

She said very little, but nestled amidst her wraps, her eyes glancing at him now and again, and at times closing as if she were asleep; but she was not sleeping; she was asking herself what he would do when they reached town. Would he—was it possible that a still greater happiness than that she was feeling might be born of this contretemps?

Clive was also asking himself, during the intervals in which she seemed to be sleeping, what course he should take. Had his carelessness compromised her? If so, his course was plain, his duty obvious. A vague doubt that was almost a dread assailed him; and yet with the doubt was mingled an intense pity for the woman he had placed in such an awkward predicament, whose good name he had so unwittingly imperiled.

(To be continued.)

An auctioneer cries because he is making an honest living.

It's easier to borrow \$10 worth of trouble than it is to negotiate the loan of 10 cents in cash.

THE KING OF SIAM.

He Has Refused to Follow in the Steps of His Fathers.

When the young King—then Prince of Siam turned his back upon the beauties of the court and would have none of them, he established a record of celibacy unheard of in that far Eastern land.

Now marriage by a Siamese sovereign means not the simple taking of one life-partner, but the complicated and interesting absorption of a hundred of them.

The late King Chulalongkorn possessed three spouses when he was Crown Prince; this number he increased to five score when he ascended the throne; his father before him had many hundreds of wives.

The action of the present young monarch is therefore all the more astounding to the Siamese mind.

And yet the Siamese ladies are among the most beautiful of women. They are pleasant companions, loyal, and make ideal wives, and surely a hundred or even fifty of them combined ought to be able to satisfy even the most fastidious and exacting of husbands.

And still young King Vajiravudh refuses to wed! A feasible reason

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The King of Siam.

The Canny Scott. Andrew Carnegie's story of a Scot's boy well illustrates his countrymen's power to see quickly every circumstance that may operate to their advantage. The boy's grandmother was packing luncheon for him to take to school one morning. Suddenly, looking up in the old lady's face, he said, "Grandmother, does yer specs magnify?"

"A little, my child," she answered.

"Aweel, then," said the boy, "I wad just like it if ye wad take them off when yer packin' my lunch."

Saving of the Soap. "Willie, did you wash your hands before sitting down to table?"

"One of 'em, ma; the other didn't need it."

might be that he had formed some attachment, lawful or otherwise, while he was on travel and study bent, but to oppose this theory there was never a suspicion of scandal attached to the Prince when he was at Sandhurst, and Christ's College, Oxford. Neither did any amatory episode come to light during his visits to Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Vienna, and London, when he was at the most impressionable of ages. Not a word during his trip through the United States.

Prince Vajiravudh, during his sojourn abroad, became deeply imbued with the Western idea of monogamy, and since he is to marry but one wife, he desires a very pearl among women as his only spouse. And if he acts towards her as he acts in all other matters pertaining to his country and to himself, he will make his Queen the most envied bride in the country.

The lucky lady of his choice, by the way, will be the bride of a pleasant-looking young man of thirty-four, who graduated at Oxford and Heidelberg, is a delightful conversationalist, speaks and writes several European and Asiatic languages, has written well in prose and poetry, is a good horseman,

fencer, and all-round sportsman. Ever since the days of King Mongkut a very sociable and charming colony of Europeans and Americans has been established in the capital. There are half-a-dozen clubs within a few miles of the city, and this increasing social element needs a leader, and who so appropriate as the Queen?

But the King of Siam looks for more than this in his white wife; he needs her help to carry out the stupendous ideas he holds for his country's and his people's welfare.

Already, in the three years he has sat upon the throne, he has shown of what stuff kings are made. He has carried out the wishes of his father in affairs of State and religion; he has altered or entirely changed when he considered necessary; he has pressed many young men into new positions. Prince Porabandh, the present ambassador at Washington, is only thirty, and also graduate of an English university.

At his coronation he in as many words declared to his Western friends: "Whatever I may have gained from the West I shall engrain upon the East, but my people must remain essentially Siamese."

To help him elevate his subjects is why Vajiravudh desires a white woman as his bride; to help him to make his nation recognized among the greater nations of the world as one of more than local and Eastern importance!

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