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## \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

By Laura Jean Libbey.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\* CHAPTER VIII.

He would spend just five minutes more with Aurelia ere he turned the boat around to go back for Margaret, Gerald told himself. would be but a few blissful ments stolen out of a fleeting lifetime-why should he deny himself that comfort?

It was delightful to sit there holding those slim, white hands, listening to her gay laughter and ready wit, looking into the heaven those dark, wondrous eyes.

To Aurelia it was pleasant to float down with the tide, listening to the low-breathed words of this handsome young fellow, whose every look, every action told her madly he was in love with her. "What should you do, Gerald,

she asked, laughingly, "if the skiff should overturn in this, the deepest part of the water? Would you make for the shore and save yourself, or

"Aurelia," he cut in hurriedly, drawing back from her with white, pained face, "can it be possible you think so meanly me as that? Why, darling!" cried, huskily, forgetting in the intensity of the thought, the endearing language that fell from his lips, "I would save your life at the risk of my own."

"In preference to saving that any one else in the whole wide world?" questioned Aurelia, in

"Yes," he answered, drawing her

"Why?" she whispered, giving him another glance from those wine-dark eyes that no man had ever resisted. The spell of the moment carried him away; he threw prudence to the winds, and answered her from the very depths of his heart: "Because I love you! yes, I love

you, Aurelia!" he cried; "I love you so well that if I could not save you I would want to die with you." And, as he spoke, he caught her in his arms and kissed the lovely

mouth, the dark eyes and dazzling absolutely forgot me - is that it, face, repeating over and over again | Gerald?" she asked. "You that he loved her better than itself, and begging her to tell him that she cared for him just a little

Aurelia struggled out of his arms with a saucy little laugh. "Well, if you love me, quite crush me," she cried, "But tell me, Aurelia, do you-can

you ever care for me?" he urged. "You must tell me, darling." "I'll have to make up my whether I do or not, and I'll you-"

"When?" he cuts in eagerly again. "Perhaps to-morrow," she answers, her vanity flattered by the [said, "a.d believe me that I hate eagerness in his face, but the next | myself as I speak-that I would instant the smile on her lips gives give you the world, were it mine, place to a sort of gasp. "Look, to free myself from the odium, in Gerald!" she cried in consternation, your eyes, that must ever cling to "look! there is the farmhouse-we me; you ask me for the truth, are miles away from the island-and cannot keep it back from you. Yes,

Margaret!" Gerald grew white to the lips. | lia." Great Heaven! how completely he had forgotten Margaret.

It seemed to him that all in a moment he had fallen from heights of Heaven to earth. glanced at his watch in the bright moonlight, and saw nearly two hours had passed. "There is but one thing to do,

Aurelia," he said hurriedly, that is to leave you here at farm house and go back myself after

your-your sister. To this Aurelia readily agreed. As he helped her out of the boat, holding her in his arms an instant the stream. again, he could not resist the im-

"I-I must see you alone to-morrow morning in the orchard, Aurelia. I-I have something to tell

Gerald Romaine watched the little slim figure, until she reached house; then, springing into the skin and picking up the oars, with few rapid strokes from his strong, muscular arms, he was soon shooting upstream again. He many took time to catch his breath until he sighted the island, and

few moments later reached it. Springing out hurriedly he secured his boat, and dashed up the sands in search of Margaret.

That she was not where he had left her, it took him but a moment to He called loudly upon her name,

but no voice answered him. Had she learned that she had been left alone here, and, through terror, thrown herself into the water? Nono, Margaret was not a girl to com-

her fear had been. How distressed Gerald was now, to think that he was the cause of all this trouble.

Just as he was about giving the search, and sit down and to think clearly what had best done, he heard a low moan scarce ly a rod's distance from him, and hurrying at once in the direction from whence it had proceeded, he saw Margaret slowly rising from knees to her feet, and press her hands to her head in an uncertain

In an instant he was by her side. "Margaret," he cried, distressedly, "what can I say to you?-censure me in your own heart-you must-that is all my fault-I am sorrier than words can tell. Oh, Margaret, can you ever forgive me for this?"

She stood quietly beside him, me here so long," she said, "and ] where is Aurelia?" and the unnatural sound of her voice startled even

"Come with me to the boat, Margaret," he said, "and I will tell you, I will keep nothing back from

"Tell me here and now, Gerald," she said, "and I ask you again, where is Aurelia?" He moved uneasily, and his eyes

fell under her steady gaze. Then it came out-how he had ken Aurelia into the boat, to drift a little way with the tide, and the time flew by unheeded, until, glancing up, they found themselves opposite the farmhouse, where Aurelia had remained, and he had hurried back

quickly after her. He added that himself an arrant coward, and that no words-nothing could excuse what he had done.

"While you were with Aurelia you life tell me the truth-you forgot very existence-is it so?" "It was so, Margaret," mitted, huskily.

She looked into his face, and almost seemed to him that he could see her soul leave her body. "I know," she faltered, as

permitted him to place her in boat-"I know what you are going to tell me next. I read it in your eyes. You have learned to love Aurelia, Gerald. Tell me all about it," she said, huskily. "Be quick, that I may know the worst."

"Listen to me, Margaret," it is my misfortune to love Aure-

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'Yes," he said, and she saw i... face flush and his eyes brighten. "I am sure she does." He was ashamed to tell his story, yet something seemed to urge him

"Let me tell you, Margaret," he cried huskily, "all about it. From the time I asked you to be my wife, up to one short fortnight ago, I had every intention to be true to you; my heart was true to you, so were my thoughts. When I came home from New York I had no other plan in life, no other desire than to come home and marry you and settle down to quiet happiness. It is hard for a man to confess a weakness; I am ashamed to own You remember the day came home, how we crossed the clover fields together. I had thought of treachery to you, but the moment my eyes rested on Aurelia's face I fell madly in love with her, and then, in that moment, knew that I had never really loved The fierce, maddening that thrilled through my heart in a single instant, as my eyes met Aurelia's, differed from my calm affection for you, as a seething torrent differs from a mountain brook. Do not think I yielded without a struggle; no man ever fought a harder fight with himself than I did to conquer love, but it was useless. The more I saw her, the more I loved her. I was powerless to resist Now you know all, Margaret,'b went on huskily, "and if you say that I must keep my promise and marry you, I will do so, but you will know that though I stood at the altar with you, my heart would be Aurelia's. I leave my fate

vour hands." "What is it that you expect me to face growing whiter and whiter still. it, and he will sooth me, and kiss me say those cruel words?" he cried. | take him from me, when I love kim Why does not your own instinct so well!" tell you?"

"You wish me to give you back your freedom, is that it, Gerald? Let me hear the words from your

"If you think best, Margaret," he murmured, burying his face in his hands, for he could not endure the steady calm of those eyes, that seemed burning into his very soul. With a wild cry she flung herself face downward in the bottom of the

He would fain have raised her and

He did not love her, but he would have kissed the tears mit suicide, no matter how great her face. The sound of those rible sobs pierced his heart with pain sharper than that of a "Do not touch me," she cried, as

he bent over her, "do not touch me or I shall die!' The most terrible moments of his more faintly still. life were those he spent in listening | "Oh, bother Gerald," cried the

who loved him so well, and whose now, if he has been telling you of heart he was breaking.

a murderer as he stood there, not in a theatre; he was so awfully daring to touch her, but as the pas- earnest, poor fellow, that I had to sionate sobs grew fainter, he raised keep my handkerchief stuffed in my nor and placed her on the seat be mouth to keep from laughing outside him, and this time she did not resist. "Margaret," he said gently,

am so grieved! I had hoped would not feel it so keenly.' With the greatest effort ol her life it was that you happened to leave | she turned to him. "I can listen to you now again," she said. "You were asking me-what was it? Say it once more, that I may feel sure it is not some horrible dream from which I will awaken presently- Ah, yes, I remember, you, the lover whom I have loved so well, whom I was soon to call husband-you are asking me to give you up-because you have learned to love another. Listen, Gerald Romaine," she cried, rising slowly to her feet in the rocking boat. "Listen! Take my answer through life with you!"

CHAPTER IX.

In an instant Gerald Romaine had sprung forward and grasped

"For the love of Heaven sit down, Margaret!" he cried hoarsely, quite believed she intended to leap from the rocking boat into the dark, swirling river.

"You had better take time to think over the matter calmly, Margaret," he said, "and give me my answer to-morrow.

She turned her white, wistful face toward him, and Gerald Romaine was startled by it. Years could not have aged it more in passing over her than this one hour of anguish

She held up her slender, hand with a quick gesture. "As well now as at any other time, Gerald," she said, in a very faint, quivering voice. "It is best have it over with now. could not endure a repetition of this -never again. You ask me to set you free, Gerald-to break for you the solemn pledge that binds you to me-forgetting that a betrothal vow is as solemn and binding in

sight of God as a marriage vow." "I leave my fate in your hands, Margaret. If you say that I must keep my engagement and marry you, I will do so. Oh, it grieves me to speak the truth, but it must be

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You might have spared me that!" she said, in a low, intensive voice, drawing her hands haughtily "Do not let me see how pleased you are; it only adds to the cruelty. Show some little regret- you might affect some

little sorrow, even though you not feel it." "Heaven knows that I am not quite so heartless as not to feel sorrow for what has occurred. affairs like this are better to be adjusted before than after marriage." The boat touched the shore.

helped her out silently, and silently enough they wended their way gether up the daisy-studded that led to the house. Never did man feel himself to be more miserable, contemptible-base. He despised himself for the part he had played, yet he was so completely under the spell of dark-eyed Aurelia that he could not resist the love that held

"Good-night, Margaret," he said, they reached the door- "goodnight, and Heaven bless you. me-that we are not to part in anger--could we not-be friends still?" "I cannot promise that-I must take time to think it over," she answered, turning quickly away.

She did not go to per own room just then. She felt that it would be beyond the power of her endurance to look upon the dark, sparkling face of the girl who had won her lover from her, until the great battle with herself was over and she felt calmer. "I do not seem to realize that Ger-

ald and I have parted-forever," she sobbed to herself, her tears falling thick and fast. "It seems like some horrible dream, from which I will awaken presently, and that I shall do-to say, Gerald?" she asked, her fly to Gerald's arms and tell him of "Oh, Margaret, why do you make away my tears. How could Heaven

> Suddenly the door just ahead of her was flung wide open, and Aurelia | more to think It over?" she pouted,

"Oh, here you are at last, Margaret!" she exclaimed. "I thought you would never come. Did Gerald tell you how it happened; that we untied the boat and drifted off?" And two white arms were flung tightly about her neck, and a soft, dimpled, flushed cheek was laid against hers. my! but wasn't I terrified when discovered we had drifted so far, "My God! My God!" he heard Margy, and had left you away back on the island. Oh, how awfully pale you are, Margy; but you haven't anshielded the trembling figure in his swered me. Did not Gerald tell you all about it?"

"Yes," said Margaret, very faintly. "he told me." "I sat up and waited for you. couldn't go to sleep until you

came," yawned Aurelia. "I wanted demurely. to talk to you about something." "I think I know what it is-it is about Gerald," replied Margaret,

to the passionate weeping of the girl beauty, petulantly. "I do wonder, all the nonsense he was talking to The terrible sobs died away at me to-night? Oh, Margy, you ought last, and Gerald's own eyes were to have been in the boat to have dim with tears. He almost felt like heard him-it was as good as a play

"Aurelia," cried Margaret, in a voice ringing with bitter pain, "tell me, do you love Gerald Romaine or

Aurelia threw back her dark, curly head with a gay laugh.

"Gracious! how much in earnest you and Gerald are in everything you say and do. Do I love him? Why, Margy, anybody would think you of probation was over." were born yesterday to hear you talk like that. He's awfully nice to flirt with, you know, but goodness! he's not the style of a man for a girl like me to fall in love with by any must be brilliant, polished, highly the love-letters are of at least ten WE HAVE A NUMBER cultured-a man I could be proud of -a man whom all the world looked | teems with ardent adoration. up to, and the world of women want-

ed, and envied me for winning." Margaret dropped on her knees beside Aurelia, and clasped her white

to him in not leading him on, dear," she entreated, eagerly; "the bitterest pain that a human heart can know, is the pain of loving one whose love you can never, never win in return. Oh, Aurelia, spare him from that death in life. If he asks you for

your love tell him the truth." "I shall do nothing of the kind," declared Aurelia, puckering her brows into the prettiest of frowns. "If I did, he would go away at once; then I would have no one to flirt with, no one to pick up my handkerchief, follow me about and adore me, and life would be simply unen durable to me in this dull old farm-

"Oh, Aurelia, do not lead him believe you love him if you do not," persisted Margaret. "It is sin to win the heart of a good and noble man just to throw it away. It is awful to think that a dainty, delicate girl who would faint at the sight of a wound-who would not injure one hair on a man's head, would deliberately break his heart and blight his life to feed her own vanity. Do you think man can never Aurelia laughed, and the laughter

that came from those crimson lips, though taunting, was as sweet as silver chiming bells.

ald Romaine was tossing restlessly on his pillow trying to sleep, but sleep would not come to him; one thought seemed to haunt his brain and hold him from it. He was free now-free to win Aurelia if he could. He could hardly wait for to-morra= "

The hours rolled steadily on, and at last the pink flush in the eastern sky heralded the birth of a new day. Gerald was up with the dawn, but it was late as usual when Aurelia made her appearance. He did not have an opportunity to exchange a word alone with her all the morning, and this fact nearly drove him distfacted. The dark, laughing eyes that met him, invited him to linger near her; but at his approach, Aurelia invariably flitted away.

At length he found her alone in the garden, and in an instant, like all impetuous lovers, he was at her

"Oh, Aurelia, have you purposely avoided me?" he cried. "You must have known that I was counting the hours until I could talk to you. Don't try to break away from me, Aurelia, and do listen to me. shall listen-you must."

"Now, Gerald," she cried, gayly, "what could be important enough for you to wear a sober face about -like that?"

He looked at her reproachfully. "Surely, you have not forgotten have you, darling?" he whispered, tenderly. "You remember, dear, you promised to give me my answer today, whether you love me or not, and whether you will be my wife. You know how I adore you, precious. love you so well that I cannot live without you."

He was certainly blind that he could not see that it was not love which shone out of the laughing eyes into which he gazed eagersy.

To Aurelia it was the wine of life, listening to the tale of love that every man that had ever known her had whispered in her ear. He put his arm about her gently and drew her toward him.

"Answer me, precious," he whispered-"don't you see how eager I am waiting for it?" "Can't I wait a week or a month

giving him a swift, shy glance from those wondrous dark eyes. "No-a thousand times no! Suspense would kill me," he declared. "My darling, tell me, will you be

Down deep in her heart Aurelia was thinking that this playing at love would give a new zest to Lr Why not give him the promise he pleaded for so earnestly?-

words were easily spoken. "I suppose I must, if you want me so very much, Gerald," answered, coyly. "When, my darling!" he cried, straining her rapturously to

"Oh, we won't trouble our heads about that just yet," she

CHAPTER X.

Gerald looked down into the lovely, dimpled face with a fond smile. "We must settle the all-important question here and now, Aurelia," he declared, with all a young lover's impatience; "you have promised to be my wife; now you must tell me how long I will have to wait ere I can claim the treasure that I have won - will it be days or weeks?"

"It will be neither days nor weeks -it will be months, Gerald," she declared, shaking her curly head

decisively. He caught her in his arms. "Cruel Aurelia," he cried, "you surely cannot mean that; why, one month will seem a year-how could I live through two or three of them, and be near you? I would get along best away from you until the time

He would go away-that did not please Aurelia at all; a lover who is away from one is as good as lover at all. True, there may be letters, but affection transmitted by pen and paper soon cools, unless closely-written pages, and every line

enough in all of us-in Aurelia Lancaster it amounted to a mania; it is the key to all the foolish, wicked, senseless things you will find her "If you don't love Gerald, be kind doing through this history's short course. If she could have had her will, every man, woman and child would have bowed down in adoration before her-and in the summer time most girls like to have a lover. In the winter the fire is lover enough for any one. The frosty splendor of the stars provokes no yearning | SOLE AGENT. in any human soul towards any other; we peep at them through icy casements, then drop the curtain, snivering, and leave them alone to their high, cold play in the sky. But who can look at a July moon-

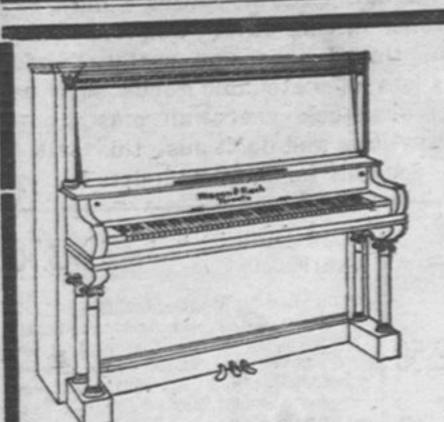
No; the summer days at the old farmhouse would be unendurable without some one to help her pass the time away. "Aurelia," he pleaded, "could you

-would you marry me in three weeks' time?' "If you had said three months time I would have said 'yes,' " she murmured, "either three or months."

"Then it shall be three months, my darling," he cried, "three months from to-day. I shall live through that time somehow and then-oh, the joy, the delight of the anticipation of claiming you! You are my own now, Aurelia," he cried rapturously. "Tell me that no one else shall ever make love to you, or kiss you; you will never be an-

the love of gratified vanity, humility before her; she liked watch the light in his eyes tender or hard, as she willed it; she liked to see that he trembled at her she found it inexpressibly sweet, as most girls do, to hold this nower over her lover. (To be Continued.





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Margaret did not cry out, or uttold-we should never be happy, for "Your goody-goody notions quite ter any moan, though the sword my heart would be Aurelia's." overwhelm me, Margy," she cried; "Of -course not," replied Aurelia had fallen and pierced her heart. The " May Heaven, in its mercy, spare "anyone to hear you talk would imthe terrible calm on her face and the inwith delicious assurance. from marrying a man whose agine that men were angels. Pretty He tentness of her gaze frightened him. "You will be true to me forever, articles too numerous to mention. Call and get prices. heart is another's," breathed Marangels they would make; they would clear He had read the story once of a garet, adding, faintly: "I-I-give break the heart of every girl "Yes, I will be true forever," dethat young girl who had lost her reaback your freedom, Gerald. came across if they could. son because her lover grew cold, and clared Aurella From this hour our lives part formust have noticed that for He caught her little hands in his, told her he loved her no longer. Was heart-broken man, there are at least covered them with burning Margaret going mad? If she But the "forever" which would twenty heart-broken women. Now said something, reproached him with kisses; his heart was too full for part him from Margaret would give don't preach to me, Margy, that's a TERMS--Cash or Trade. utterance. Of his love-passionate, bitter words, it would not have been him Aurelia, and that thought shone reckless, fervent- there was no so terrible to endure as this awful dear." plainly enough in his eyes. And the beauty buried her laughing silence, broken only by the wash of doubt; with Aurelia it was simply "Oh, Margaret," he cried, grateface in the pillow, pressed her pink the waves as the boat glided down "how generous you are-how palms tightly over her ears, and was deep desire to keep him at her side; noble!" and he bent his fair, hand-Early Closing-Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings blissfully unconscious of all Margarshe liked to see his face flush and "Tell me about it," she pulse, strong as life itself, to press again; "keep nothing from me. Does some head eagerly over the et was saying; and in this way she pale under her words; she liked to \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* dropped off to sleep, leaving Margarher to his heart and murmured Aurelia-my sister-love-you?" see his head bowed in such utter In another part of the house Ger-To Cure a Cold-in One Day