

KERSHAM MANOR.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

"Not unconditionally. You will find a paper in my desk telling you what I should like you to do. It is quite informal; you can disregard it completely if you like," said the dying man, with a faint, pathetic smile, which a leaping flame illumined and stamped for ever on Sebastian's brain; "it has no legal force, but it expresses my wishes, and I do not think that you will disregard them."

"No never, never!" exclaimed Sebastian. "I should never ask you to do what was unreasonable, I hope," said Sir Roland pleasantly, though his voice was growing faint. "I thank you, my boy—my son—Sebastian. I should not deprive you of any portion of my earnings, were it not for setting right what has been, in my opinion, a great wrong."

There was a silence; he relinquished Sebastian's hand and turned his head on the pillow as if to sleep, but his mind was still busy with the subject, for after the lapse of some moments he said, rather absently:—"The Neaves have left Woodbury. You might find out what has become of them by inquiry in the town. They must have left friends behind. Henry Wyatt ran away with Alice Neave."

There was another long silence. Sebastian took a seat at the bedside, and thought over his uncle's communication. It did not seem to him that there would be much difficulty in tracing his missing cousin. The loss of the money did not affect him at all. His mind rapidly diverged to other subjects, where Nina and Sir Roland held the prominent places. He was almost startled when his uncle spoke again.

"It is a pity," he said, "that I must go hence before I have finished my book. I have been at work on it for some years now."

"Is it not nearly done?"

"Very nearly. I have named you my literary executor, Sebastian. Will you see that it is brought out?"

"Most certainly."

"I have not tied you down to time. Do it when you have leisure. Not for a year or two, perhaps. And then—there is another little matter—you will find a mass of paper relative to my own life and experiences: there is indeed an autobiography, which may not be without interest to the world. But these I leave in your hands, Sebastian. There are certain views that I should like to have indicated, but it is evident that my hand will not accomplish the work I had mapped out. I leave it to you."

"If it is not exactly in my line," said Sebastian hesitatingly, "if I feel that it is beyond me—"

"Then choose someone else to do it. I do not want to tie your life down to mine, dear boy. Only the private papers the autobiography—they must remain in your hands. If you do not put them into shape let no one else."

Sebastian felt an unaccustomed thickness in his throat as he replied. What he said he never exactly knew, for at that moment a sudden faintness attacked the invalid and all further thought of anything but remedies and stimulants was impossible. The fainting-fit lasted for some time and left Sir Roland exceedingly feeble. His eye still brightened with a smile when Sebastian drew near, but he was too weak to speak.

Once or twice the flame of life leaped up; it wavered, flickered, sank again, and then went out forever.

Sebastian grieved for Sir Roland as not many sons grieve for their fathers. Stephen Malet sorrowed with him, and Kersham Manor was a house of mourning for many a day.

The young man turned to Nina for comfort. Those who knew Nina best feared that he would not find it, for she was not a fish nature, and sorrow soon led her. But they were mistaken. In a love-time, a girl's nature has elasticity.

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do not chronicle my movements (save in the police reports now and then) as they did yours in your more active days. I suppose you are now permanently located at Kersham. I laugh to myself sometimes when I think of the contrast between us. If you saw me in the dens which I inhabit, where what you and such as you call vice reigns, triumphs, and runs riot, you would laugh too. A contrast to the peaceful precincts of your Manor House, indeed!

"I have not sunk to this level without a struggle. You know well enough that I have been handicapped in life through no fault of my own. If you are as rich as report declares you to be, you will not miss a sum sufficient to set me on my feet again. I will not whine and erings for it: you owe me something, and I merely ask for what I consider mine. Send your enclosure to the address given above: I expect to be here for some time, as I am ill and not disposed to move.—Your cousin,

"HENRY WYATT."

The dates were somewhat surprising. The letter had been written on the thirteenth of November, but not despatched (as the envelope testified) until the twenty-ninth. Sir Roland's letter had been sent on the first of December, and returned to him on the seventh. By that time he was prostrated by illness, and had been able to do nothing more in the way of inquiry. But he had penciled a few lines on a sheet of paper to this effect:

"I charge my dear boy Sebastian to find this man Henry Wyatt, and to give him one-third of the money that I have left. For Sebastian will have enough, and Henry has been wrongfully deprived of what was due to him. Fiat justitia. Sebastian knows my wishes.—R.M."

Sir Roland had been curiously free from the taint of selfishness or worldliness. He had lived in a region where these lower virtues could not touch him. "Les défauts de ses qualités" were not altogether wanting. He had a slightly exaggerated disdain for the love of money, and was completely unable to understand the minds of persons who loved it.

It is not therefore to be wondered at that Sebastian should feel little concern at the loss of a third of his fortune or that he should also be a trifle slack in going to work to find his cousin, Henry Wyatt. In his spare hours he plunged eagerly into the autobiographical papers which his uncle had left behind, and began to arrange and annotate them. He would have to return to his post in early spring; and he was anxious to fix his marriage-day. But Mrs. La Touche was too prudent to let it be settled yet. She said that it would look like disrespect to dear Sir Roland's memory.

So Sebastian went back to Russia in March. Before his departure he saw Sir Roland's solicitor, and consulted him as to the best means of finding Henry Wyatt. The solicitor, Mr. Colburn, a man very learned in the law, pointed out to him that he had better proceed cautiously; that he was not legally bound to give away any of the money at all, that if he found Wyatt to be a man of bad character it would be better to pay him an allowance instead of handing over ten thousand pounds for him to make ducks and drakes of.

Mr. Colburn was an honest man. He put advertisements into the leading daily papers, stating that Henry Wyatt, formerly of Kersham Manor, would, by applying to Messrs. Colburn and Horsley, hear of something to his advantage. But no Henry Wyatt appeared. Parish registers were consulted, but no record of his death was found. Of a ne'er-do-well like Henry Wyatt nothing could be predicted with safety.

"The odd thing is that a fortnight should have elapsed between the writing and the posting of his letter," Mr. Colburn wrote to Sebastian. "A great many things may have happened in that time. I sent a young man to Manchester to make inquiries; but he failed to ascertain anything of importance. Wyatt was known in the neighborhood, and so was a young woman who lived with him—whether his daughter or his wife does not appear. They left the neighborhood suddenly toward the end of November, and have not been seen or heard of since. Mr. Wyatt was a man of drunken habits and dissipated life. It is quite possible that he has come to a sudden and violent end. All we can do now is to continue advertising, if you do not object to the expense, and wait to see whether anything is received."

Sebastian replied, "Continue advertising as long as you like." So Mr. Colburn continued to advertise. A man like Sebastian always was consulted. He reserved that sum for ever. And Mr. Colburn wrote that Henry

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guide her with wisdom, she did a thing that she afterwards regretted. She accepted Mrs. La Touche's invitation to become the children's resident governess, gave up the lonely little house at Kennet's Green, and went to live at the Dower House.

"I would not on any account say to the poor girl," said Mrs. La Touche, making a virtue of her reticence, "but her mother's death was really quite providential. She would always have been a drag on poor Miss Denison; and I should have had to get a resident governess for the children sooner or later, so that, really, things fit into each other exceedingly well. I am sure Miss Denison ought to be thankful for her mother's release."

Mrs. La Touche thought herself very meritorious for the pains she took to "keep up her position." It was all for her daughters' sake, she said; and perhaps it was. But what sort of a life would she herself have led had she been deprived of her pretty house, her flowers, her diletante music and painting, her light and lavish skimming of the latest reviews, the amenities of social life and triumphs of success.

When Esther and Nina had been at school together, the younger girl had shown some taste for various of her lighter studies and Esther hoped that they might resume them together. "If you can find time to read with Nina a little, I shall be pleased."

Esther used to wonder a little whether Mrs. La Touche thought her destitute of all the tastes and aptitudes of other girls of her age, when she conversed with her so glibly about the children's studies and about nothing else.

Common report speaks of private governesses as poor, persecuted creatures; and common report as usual, lies. Esther was "well treated" in every sense of the word; she had all the luxuries of life enjoyed by her pupils, a pleasant house to live in—much larger and finer than she had ever occupied before; and she was treated with respect and consideration, and she received fair, if not large, pay for her services.

Esther had rather drifted into this life than chosen it involuntarily, and was perhaps one of the persons least fitted to endure it. She was sensitive and proud; she had, like her father, a highly strung nervous organization; and she had a thirst for knowledge and for experience which made her impatient of restraint.

In such circumstances a vigorous nature must find food for itself. The turn given to Esther's thoughts by her mother's death led her to religion. But her parents would have been shocked by the sort of religious teaching that attacked her. Mr. Wright, the Curate, was a strong High Churchman. He was delighted to find in Esther a promising subject for his ministrations. Mrs. La Touche was quite content that Miss Denison should attend a class at Mr. Wright's house on Saturday afternoons (oh, the blessed change of getting into somebody else's house for even one hour of a half-holiday!), and here she went through a course of "instruction," which resulted in her turning into an ardent Churchwoman with Ritualistic leaning. Possibly this set shows how hard pressed she was for interests.

CHAPTER XX

A SILENT LIFE.

"Batbahren sollst du—sollst entbahren." GORTIE.

When Sebastian came home in the following spring for his marriage he was struck with the change in Esther's appearance. He questioned Nina when he was alone with her.

"What have you been doing to Esther?" "Doing to her!" said Nina, rather pettishly. "I don't know that we have done anything. And, Sebastian, mamma does not like her to be called 'Kather' now. Do call her Miss Denison."

Sebastian laughed a little. "She looks like a shadow of herself. She has lost all her color and has black marks under her eyes."

"How closely you must have observed her!" said Nina. "I did not know that men took such notice of girls' looks."

"My dear Nina, the change is too evident to pass unremarked by any of Miss Denison's friends. I always considered myself Esther's friend; and surely you do so too?"

"Of course, Sebastian. I was always Esther's friend at school, and I am her friend still. I know she does not look well; but it's all her own fault."

"Why?"

"My dear boy," said Nina, "don't you know that this is Lent, and that Esther has become a violent Ritualist? The consequence is, that she starves herself and goes to church at every spare moment. Mamma is extremely angry, but she can not do anything to stop it."

Sebastian was surprised at this information, but said no more, not quite liking the tone in which it was conveyed to him. He took an early opportunity of speaking to Esther herself; but it was not easy to find a time when Mrs. La Touche and Nina were not by. His opportunity came on a Sunday morning, when he walked out between eight and nine o'clock to look at the graves in the Kersham church-

He turned and saw her coming toward him over the shining grass. She did not see him. She had just left the church with the other worshippers; two little books were clasped in her ungloved hand.

She saw him before she reached the grave, and the sight caused her to stop short for one brief moment. She neither blushed nor uttered an exclamation; indeed she turned even paler than she had been before.

The sight of the cross of primroses gave him courage. "You laid it here?" he said, coming to her side.

Esther bowed her head. "I brought one for my mother and one for him."

"It was good of you," said Sebastian. "Very good."

"Oh no, no! You forget: I knew him a little, and I loved him. He will always stand to me as the type of a great man; the noblest and greatest man that I ever knew."

"And to me too," Sebastian responded simply.

"Will you come with me to my mother's grave too?" she said.

He followed her in silence, and in silence they stood beside the stone on which was recorded Margaret Denison's name. A great tear fell from Esther's eyes as she knelt down to rearrange some flowers that had been blown aside by the morning breeze. Sebastian saw it, and as they turned away, he said impulsively:

"Don't grieve."

"I don't," said Esther, with a tremulous smile. "For her sake I am glad."

They did not speak again until they neared the churchyard gate, and then Sebastian asked, "How often do you bring flowers here?"

"Every Sunday morning."

"Have you any difficulty in getting them? For I could speak to the gardener at my uncle's, and he would always supply you."

"Thank you, but—I don't know if you will understand the feeling—it seems as though it would be spoiled for me if I had the flowers given by any one else. That is why I often get wild-flowers only. But I forgot—perhaps you would like him to have your flowers; but then—then you must get somebody else to make the cross."

"I want no one but you to make it, Esther. Do as you please. I only want to make things easier for you," said Sebastian.

"Oh, it was very wrong of me to say that," she cried. "It was all my self-will, my self-indulgence. Please forgive me. I shall be glad of the flowers; I am very much obliged to you."

"No, I would much rather see your wild flowers, Esther, and he would have havelked them more. My offer was a blunder; forget it. I thank you a thousand times for what you have done. When I am out of England I shall be glad to remember it. My uncle was father, brother, teacher, playmate, to me, all in one."

"Now tell me," he said, "what makes you look so ill and pale? Nina puts it down to your High Churchism, as she calls it. I hope you are taking care of yourself?"

"Yes," she answered meekly.

TO CONNECT IRELAND AND ENGLAND.

A Proposition to Build a Tunnel under the Irish Sea.

Among the other startling propositions is one to shorten the sea distance between New York and Europe by means of a tunnel connecting Ireland with Great Britain. Several years ago plans were drawn for a canal to connect Ireland and Scotland. The distance is about twenty-one miles, the cost would be \$30,000,000 or \$35,000,000 and the number of years the work would take would be about six. This is another of the propositions which have been revived during the last few weeks, and it is strengthened or bolstered up by the philosophical suggestions as to the improved relations that would exist between England and Ireland if railroad connections were possible between the two countries.

The canal across Scotland, which has been from time to time talked about, has been restored to a live subject by the completion of the great English canal. One of these propositions is to connect the Firths of Moray and Lorn, making use of the chain of lakes in the way. Another is to connect Glasgow and Edinburgh by a canal which would also connect the two oceans; few hills intervene and there is so much water already in the way that it is thought probable the project would not be expensive. But it remains to be seen how much traffic could be obtained for canals of this character, and whether there would be any possibility of a revenue sufficient to justify the expenditure.

Few, if any, of these projects are likely to lead to any active work, though some of them are quite as simple and easy as the Suez Canal, the Fourth Bridge or the Manchester Canal, all of which were once denounced as the outcome of crazy intellect and wild fanaticism. Under any circumstances the successful completion of a task so generally denounced as impossible is almost inevitably the forerunner of gigantic enterprises likely to make or lose immense sums of money for their projectors.

CURRENT ELECTRICAL NEWS.

The haulage problem is one which has received the careful attention of mine owners at all times. For years mules were used in the mines for hauling, and in some cases are still used; rope cables replaced mules in many places, and now we have the electric locomotive taking the place of both. A model electric plant for this purpose has lately been installed at Rock Springs, Wyo. The economy attained by the use of the electric locomotive is shown by the fact that by its aid it is reported that thirty cars were run from the loading point to the end of the track, a distance of about 600 feet, there dumped and returned to mine in twenty minutes.

To those persons whose sole idea of electroplating is connected with the plating of silver services and kindred articles it may be a surprise to learn that the same principle has been applied to the plating of the hulls of vessels with copper. Vessels with iron bottoms are easily fouled, causing an immense loss of efficiency, as a vessel covered with barnacles, etc., will take twice as much coal to run it at a given speed as when the bottom is clean. It has been found that a difference of electrical potential of 11-2 volts and a current of 7-2 amperes per square foot are sufficient for a deposition of copper electrically, and by the improved methods which are now available a vessel 400 feet long and having a draught of twenty feet can be coated with its 5,570 pounds of protecting copper in a week's time.

Not be content with placing the electric lighting in our streets, buildings and almost every other imaginable place, the electrical engineer is now about to undertake the lighting of the ocean highway. It is proposed in France to light up the course usually taken by transatlantic vessels between Newfoundland and Ireland, the means to be employed being ten large lightships anchored about 120 miles apart, these ships to be connected to the shore and to each other by electric cables.

The last number of the Scientific American tells young men how to become electrical engineers. It says that an educated mechanical engineer can become an electrical engineer with a few months of study. The electrical station of the day is based for its successful operation largely on economy in the generation and utilization of steam, as the student must make up his mind to acquire the fullest knowledge of steam engineering and practice. When he feels that he is a thorough mechanical and steam engineer it will be time for him to think of completing his education by special attention to the electrical branches. As for higher mathematics in practical work, little more than elementary algebra is necessary. His last and graduating course will be an experience in the actual labors of an electrical station.

It has been found by a continued series of experiments that magnetized iron will lose more by electrolytic action than iron not so influenced. The difference is said to average about 3 per cent. under the conditions of the experiments.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Discovery of Reefs of Gold—King Lobengula Prepared to Surrender. A London special says:—A despatch from Cape Town says that although reefs of gold are visible near Bulwayo, late the headquarters of the Matabele King Lobengula, but now in possession of the forces of the British South Africa Company, no prospecting is allowed. The forces at Fort Salisbury are being disbanded, and the breaking up of the forces at the other forts is commencing. The remainder of the campaign against the Matabele will be carried on by the Matabeleland police force, which is now being organized.

Despatches from Fort Victoria say Lobengula has sent a letter to Major Gold Adams concerning the termination of the Matabele war. The King admits that he is willing to discuss the terms of his surrender. His young Matabele warriors, however, are still anxious to fight, and he feels that he may not be able to restrain them. Major Gold Adams expressed strong hopes that a settlement will be reached without further hostilities.

More copies of the Bible have been sold in the past twenty-five years than of any other book published.