LORD KILLEEN'S REVENGE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

He came toward her across the polished oaken floor, strewn with Oriental rugs and bits of sacred carpet, with a step swift but subdued, and with an expression in his eyes that somehow comforted her, even whilst it drove a knife into her heart. It spoke of a sympathy that felt with her and for her, and that raised from its grave again the little fragile form that had been to her as her heart's blood. It was the first time she had seen him since the child's death, and remembrance was strong upon her. Yet, through all her quickened grief, she knew she was glad to see him; there was a sense of rest, of comfort in his presence. She knew that he understood her; that he would not mistake her forced composure for coldness; that he could fathom the depth of her suffering, and, having fathomed, would not accuse her of exaggeration in her grief. He was apart from and unlike all the others, she thought—save, indeed, Constantia, who had proved herself beyond doubt a friend.

"I am glad to see you," he said, gravely. He took her extended hand, and pressed it gently. He had considered what he would say to her before coming in; but now all his eloquence forsook him, as he gazed into her mournful eyes, and noted, with a wondering pain, the changes that one short month of anguish had wrought upon her face.

She was pale, hollow-eyed, hopeless. Her nights had been spent in weeping, her days in consuming regret "Grief filled the room up of her absent child," and whitened her lips, and made tremulous the beautiful hand that used to be so softly firm.

"You have been away," she said.

"Not so far that I could not hear of you. I managed to get some news every day." His bronzed, lean face flushed, and he looked down at his hat. "Sad news," he said, very gently.

"It is a month to-day," returned she, in a tone so low that he could scarcely hear her; and then all at once her fortitude forsook her, and she covered her face with her hands, and broke into bitter weeping. Before all her other visitors she had compelled herself to a calm, the strain of which upon her aching heart was terrible; but before this man, who was, after all, but a stranger to her, her strength failed, the tears sprung forth, and as they ran her heart was eased, her spirit knew relief.

"Speak to me of it," said O'Grady, in his musical, cultured voice, through which a touch of the old ineradicable brogue, rich, and soft, and tender, ran unrebuked.

"Ah, what is there to say," said she, "but that I have lost my all? I am a creature bereft of every good. When last you saw me, there was at least hope—a stricken one, perhaps—but now there is nothing."

"Still tell me of it," he urged. "To speak will do you good. 'Give sorrow words.' They tell me you are undemonstrative, strangely silent. Surely that is not wise."

"They have told you more than that." She lifted her large, heavy eyes to his, and looked at him fixedly. "They have told you I am cold, unfeeling—a very stone! I confess that is what I have felt at times—a stone. What is there to rouse for? To show love or longing?"

"Surely there are many things—inferior to that one great treasure gone, but still of use."

"There is nothing," she said, stonily. "The child is dead!" She had fallen back unconsciously into that old frozen manner of hers, so that he was able to judge of the apparent unconcern of which her neighbors accused her, Donna alone excepted. But then he had declined to discuss the matter with Mrs. Dundas, and had openly avoided her pretty attempts at amnesty, much to that seductive matron's amusement, and a little to her chagrin.

"Who shall forbid you to dwell upon that sad fact?" said he. "But I would have you regard it in a different spirit. Surely life is not altogether barren, so entirely bereft of joy, that you should thus give up all your best years to a sorrow uncontrollable."

"It is a simple thing to you to give advice like that," she said, with a faint touch of reproach in her gentle voice. "But you—you have not known."

"Yes, yes, I see. I know what you would say." He spoke quite humbly now, and leaned toward her. "'Every one can master a grief but he that has it.' Yes, that is entirely true. But I did not come here to trouble you, only to help you; and now, almost in the beginning I have gone completely wrong. Yet"—he paused, and looked at her reflectively— "I would be of some good to you if I could."

"I know it. I know that," she cried, a little wildly. "But who can help me? 'My grief lies all within.' It destroys me as it grows. And every moment seems to add a cubit to its stature." She rose, and swept by him, the deep crape of her gown seeming to add a certain intensity to her woe. She walked up and down the room in silence for a minute or two, and then burst forth again, as though silence was torture to her—she, who before his coming had felt silence her only security.

"It is all here," she said, stopping with some abruptness before him, and laying her hand upon her heart. "Day by day the ache grows keener. It will kill me soon, I trust."

"Consider!" he said, rising in his turn with abruptness to his feet. "You think only of your grief. There are others—" He checked himself passionately.

"There is no one," she said. "And for myself I do not care. I have been hardly used. I—" She paused, and struggled with herself for composure. "I asked— I demanded— I— I prayed upon my bended knees all night and half my days, that that one thing should be granted me by Heaven. That one poor little life I wrestled for—no more, no more—but it was denied me! Why should I be thankful, grateful, as they tell me I should be, for life itself, when its sweets are dragged from my very arms?"

She appealed to him with large, miserable eyes, and hands outstretched. Her heart seemed full to overflowing. O'Grady, by a gentle movement, led her to her chair and compelled her to reseat herself. She was so wasted, so worn a thing that he feared excitement for her. When he would have released her hand she still clung to it in girlish, imploring fashion, and so he sat beside her holding her palm in his, without a suspicion of passion, or anything less sad and scared than her dire affliction.

"You dwell so keenly on your own loss that you forget her gain," he said, alluding to the little one for whom she was pining. "Is any life, even the most joyous here, so desirable a thing that you would have her quit the glories of the celestial land to join it? That pure, angelic spirit is now beyond the reach of pain, and grief, and disappointment, and care, and all the ills to which we two, and all the rest of the world, are heirs. Let her rest in her sweet peace. Do not desire her return. From rapture, pure and unalloyed, to a happiness imperfect as ours is, even in its most perfect state, would be but a poor exchange indeed."

"Ah! There is truth in that," she said. Her face remained fixed in its mournful seeming, but from her sad eyes two large tears distilled themselves and ran down her pale cheeks. Others followed them. But the angry rebellion against the powers above had died from her, and her face was softened.

Then something moving him, he began to speak to her, to picture to her the happy life of the child in the realm whither, as yet, she could not follow her. He was ever an earnest man who followed the right as well as in him lay, and eschewed the wrong, but it had never dawned upon him, until this hour, that he had indeed a thirst for things divine. The beauty, the holiness of the unseen life had entered into him, and taken possession of him, whilst yet he lay in ignorance of it.

To himself it was a marvel how he thus delineated to her the perfection of the life to come. The style, the subject was foreign to him, yet he fancied, nay, he knew, that all he pictured he believed, and that the grandeur of the idea that the little child had reached high heaven and a Father's care and love, was forever (ah, the splendor of that thought!), forever free and absolved from earthly stain and grief, was glorious to him.

Later on he smiled to himself as he recalled that hour. But the smile had no skepticism in it, and was born more of surprise than of agnostic doubt.

Just then, however, he was not smiling. He had entered into her sorrow with an acuteness that should have warned him, and was conscious of a sense of triumphant relief as he saw her sad eyes clear beneath his words, and her expression of fixed despair give way to a tender submission.

The twilight deepened. The perfume from the gardens was wafted softly inward, and from a hundred tiny nests the last sweet crooning of the birds broke forth. All spoke of rest, of peace, of joy, to be again renewed—and bathed in it, the mother's heart took courage and awoke again to hope. Beyond the twilight, the growing darkness, there was a glorious light, where she and her little one might meet heart to heart again.

O'Grady rose to bid her farewell. Now a sense of shame, of humiliation was full upon him. That he, the man of the world, careless of most things, should have dared to open out to this sweet saint a suggestion of a higher life, seemed presumptuously absurd. He bent over her hand and tried to murmur something of what he felt, but she did not hear him.

"You will come again," she asked, anxiously. She looked quite beautiful in the dying sunset, in her long crape robes, with that wrapt expression on her face, and O'Grady found himself lowering his eyes guiltily before hers. There was no doubt of the sincerity of her desire to see him again. To see him, however, frequently, would in all probability be nothing to her, would not lead her on one pin's point beyond the spot on which she stood; but with him, how would it be? To be near her often, to grow familiar with those sweet eyes, and parted lips—

He pulled himself together with a little start, and took her hand and said "Good-bye" in as orthodox a fashion as was possible.

"Thank you. I shall have few pleasures so desirable as this you have offered me," he said, smiling pleasantly. He did not hold her hand the eighth part of a minute, though he knew he would have given a good many years of his life to have held and kissed it. He got through the ordeal very well, however, and presently found himself outside the door conscious of only two things—that he had not betrayed himself, and that her eyes had followed him until the portiere had hidden him from sight.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

It was close on midnight. Mrs Dundas was at home to-night, and a considerable portion of the county was at home with her. Her evenings were sufficiently attractive, with the slight touch of foreign manner that ran through them, and the vague, delicious sense of something forbidden that lay underneath the outward respectability—and that might at any moment break into a fuller life—to draw to her all the younger portions of the community, and with them, of course, the heads. There was always a little music at these reunions, very good; there was also a little conversation, good too, though decidedly bad—strange paradox! But of course this belonged to the few, and the junior members knew nothing of it. There was a dancing of a delightfully desultory sort, that ended in prolonged half hours in shady, scented conservatories; and in a couple of snug, cozy little apartments that led off the drawing-room there were cards.

A gentle manipulation on the part of the hostess had driven all the elderly squires and their spouses, who were addicted to a mild whist with its sixpenny points into one of these rooms; the other was reserved for a livelier game, in which she herself seldom failed to take part. The excitement of it was a sort of stimulant that set her pulses throbbing and her blood aflame; it redeemed the dullness of the neighborhood, and made her almost content with the emotionless life she led with Mr. Dundas. Lately, even this pleasure had failed her a little, and she had striven to entice it back to her by playing for bolder and heavier stakes.

As the clock chimed midnight, she rose from the table a considerable loser. For a respectable country-house game, the loss was indeed altogether beyond bounds. She lost principally to Featherston, who, since that affair at the masked ball, had been, she felt, her avowed enemy. His silken manner, and the scrupulousness of his behavior generally, did not deceive her as to the fact that he had not, and never would, forgive her. That little deception about the cross on the shoulder of the domino had rankled in his mind, and bred, and borne bitter fruit.

She rose from the table this man's debtor to a considerable degree; she rose smiling, however, though she hardly knew how she was to pay him. To appeal to her husband would, of course, produce a sum required without a second's hesitation—a hundred and fifty would be little or nothing to him—but Mr. Dundas had a prejudice against high play in his own house, and Donna felt it would be an act of folly to betray to him the fact that she, the mistress of it, had been the one to lead the ball in that direction. High play he abhorred as a vulgarity, an unpardonable betise when committed beneath one's own roof. At one's club—why, yes. In that lay all the difference: that was every man's ground, the other was his ground only—and hers.

She beat the ground a little angrily with her foot as she comprehended all this, but she smiled so sweetly as she did it that no one noticed her irritation, except Featherston. He followed her to the door, and in the vestibule beyond that led to the drawing-room, laid his hand lightly on her arm.

"A moment," he said, so delicately that it might have deceived any one save her.

"As many as you will," she said, a little sharply; sharply, too, she shook his hand from her arm. "But if you have anything to say, say it as quickly as may be; I am wanted in the drawing-room.

"I am sure wherever you may be, you are always wanted somewhere else," replied he, suavely. "Yet that fact, it appears, did not occur to you until—"

"I found I was in a luckless vein," interrupted she, impatiently. "Is that what you would say? Have no fear, sir," she looked at him with an insolence not to be surpassed, "you shall be paid."

"You mistake me," he said, with a smile that chilled her; "the debt is on my side. I owe you that which I fear I never can repay."

She bit her lip, and then burst out laughing.

"Ah! that absurd affair about the dominoes," she cried, gayly. "Did it hurt so much, then? Was the pretty Constantia ruffled? Has she been relentless since? Is that your grievance? Truly, my dear Featherston, you must have lived in an ideal world up to this to take so much to heart so mild a sling of the outrageous fortune that threatens us all hourly. The thought of a moment should not so affect you."

"It was the thought of many moments. You purposely deceived me; you have done me a wrong not to be undone!"

"How, then? If I mistake not, your impassioned syllables that night were meant for me; I did not receive them—true; and if she did, why, it opened her eyes, that is all."

"For that opening I have you to thank." For the moment his courteous calm forsook him, and his words came with a disagreeable force from between his lips, and his eyes flashed. "It was a studied deception," he said. "You lied to me.

"An ugly word, my friend," said she, with a pale smile.

"It is possible you heard it before," returned he.

She made in impatient movement that brought her more beneath the influence of the swinging lamp that hung in the vestibule. It caught her now, and lit up her red hair into a brighter glory, and showed the glitter of her lovely eyes, and the alabaster whiteness of her skin. Her arms were bare from the shoulders, and exquisitely molded, and the hands clasped beneath were clinched angrily.

"You speak to me of morality," said she, in a low, mocking tone. "You! who felt no qualms about making love to another man's wife, even while your heart was given to a young and guileless girl! You!" She threw up her head with a scorn unutterable. "I defy any one to say I have done no good thing in my life," she said, "when I can prove I have been the means of parting her from you. Constantia is a production of this curious age, too uncommon to be thrown away."

"I understand that remark! It is one thing more to be grateful for. I have not forgotten the past that lies between us, in which you let your humor have full play—at any expense. But you went a trifle too far when you deliberately planned to separate me from the only woman I shall ever love. You thought you had me at your feet; that I was another of your fatuous slaves, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things, but I tell you"—He paused for a moment as though to gather breath, and then the veneer fell from him, the smooth, soft accent vanished, and he stood face to face with her, with venom written in open characters upon his rather low brow. He had slipped the mask for once, and the real man, poor and splenetic, stood naked—"that never for one moment did your image displace hers from my heart. Constantia beside you gleamed as a star within a cloud. Had the necessity arisen, I would at any time have flung you aside for her; and now, by your evil machinations, she is lost to me."

Another woman beneath this insult might have shown vehement displeasure, and so given joy to her adversary. Donna knew better. She sunk into a chair near her, and gave way to that noiseless, irritating laughter of hers. It was hardly acting on her part; she was honestly amused. The man's conceit was so entire; his belief, that he was galling her by his declared preference for another, so earnest.

When her silent mirth had come to an end, she sighed as if in sorrow for it, and looked up at him, to grow once more diverted by the indignant anger on his face.

"You are enchanting. You are exceptional," she cried, lightly. "You should cultivate an air like that. It is unique—unpurchased! If you posed just so as the Giaour to some eminent artist, you would make yourself famous. Well, what is it now? You look big with importance yet. Get it over, and you will feel ever so much the better for it."

"You think the day is yours, and that I have grossly exaggerated the facts stated. But you forget that a limit over-reached is dangerous, and that there is reason in everything."

"Tut!" she answered, gayly. "There you err. There isn't a spark of it in you."

At this moment two or three people entered the room, and stood chatting together at the lower end. Mrs. Dundas, who was equal to most emergencies, lowered her voice without a seeming effort, and bestowed a smile on Featherston, warm with the kindest friendliness.

Featherston, however, was beyond care for the morrow.

"Jeer as you will," he said, in a tone distinctly incensed, "I shall always—"

"To rave in a crowd is to feel small in the morning," she put in easily, still with her charming smile. "In spite of you I befriend you, you see."

"From this hour there is no friendship between us," returned he, with a frown, but his voice was lowered, and that was all she wanted.

"As you will," she said, sweetly, smiling down a yawn very successfully indeed. "Ah!" as her own name came to her from a room near, "there they are, calling upon me to sing them something. I fear I have given you too much time already. But how the minutes run when spent in the society of one thoroughly appreciated! I must drag myself away. There are the exigencies of the hostess to be remembered. I have too long neglected them because," with a brilliant glance, "of you. It desolates me to leave you; yet what will you? I am a slave, a captive; beyond lie my tyrants."

She waved her hand airily to him, and swept past him with a bewildering glance and a deprecating shake of her lovely head that illustrated quite a poignancy of regret at having thus abruptly to relinquish the happiness of being with him.

The insolence of it all was so astounding that Featherston stood staring after her, speechless, immovable. She swept by him into the next room, and from where he stood he could hear the murmur of voices round the piano, and understood that she was being pressed to sing. As she did most things, she sung extremely well, with a verve, a brio, that startled when her choice ran on French ballads, and with a pathos (that startled even more because so unexpected from her), strong and passionately tender, when she permitted herself an English or Irish song.

He knew her touch upon the piano, the few delicately yet firmly executed chords that preluded her song; and then her voice broke forth in a little air she was absurdly fond of—the words half life, half gloom; joy mingled with a surely coming despair! A song one would have thought wonderfully unsuited to her!

"So fulfilled with joy was she,
Life was like a summer sea,
So light—so free!
Wintry blasts can come and go,
Here are storms, and sleet, and snow,
Heigho!

"Sunny flowers and bird songs meet
For one with love low at her feet,
So fond, so sweet!
Rosebuds rain-killed, die ere blown,
Death, as life, is lightly sown.
We sigh! We moan!

"Long she watched the summer through,
Blossoms withered, song-birds flew.
Eheu!
Night, like day, comes soon or late;
Here, black-mantled, creeps dark fate;
Hope is dead, now mourns its mate."

She sung it in a rather whimsical fashion, and rose laughing from the piano. She resisted their entreaties to sing again, and passed through them with a light and playful touch here and there, disappearing from amongst them almost before they knew she was gone.

She went swiftly through the hall toward a small room that opened from it, and that was half library, half boudoir. It was an inspiration of her own, and she delighted in it. No one entered it without her permission, and a balcony running outside the windows of it was connected with the one that led to the dancing-room, and also with another room of hers—one more private still—in which the last great act of her life was played. She walked swiftly to the windows, saw that they were fastened, and pulled the curtains closely across them. She had penciled a few words upon a card, and given it to a footman, and now stood in the center of this, her favorite room, awaiting the answer to it. It came quickly. Lord Varley pushed open the door, and advanced eagerly toward her.

(To Be Continued.)

A THOUGHTFUL WIFE.

The young physician was tired when he returned from his evening's calls, but as he settled back in his easy chair, and his pretty wife of only a month or two took a seat beside him, he asked affectionately:

"And has my little wife been lonely?"

"Oh, no," she said animatedly; "at least, not very. I've found something to busy myself with."

"Indeed!" he said. "What is it?"

"Oh, I'm organizing a class. A lot of young girls and married women are in it, and we're exchanging experiences and teaching each other how to cook."

"What do you do with the things you cook?" he asked interestedly.

"Oh, we send them to the neighbors just to show what we can do. There's one lodging house gets most of it. It's great fun."

"Dear little woman," he said, leaning over and kissing her. "Always thoughtful of your husband's practice. Always anxious to extend it."

IN NO DANGER.

Mrs. Minks (severely)—"George, there is an account in the paper about a business man leaving his wife and running off with a pretty type-writer girl."

Mr. Minks—"Indeed."

"Yes, and it's the third account of the kind I've seen this week."

"That doesn't interest me."

"It does me. You have a pretty type-writer girl in your office."

"No, we haven't. My partner eloped with her last week."

WHEN THE BIG WHEEL BROKE.

Sorrows and Humors of the Last Accident to It in Earl's Court, London.

Visitors to London during the last two years have found that the great wheel at Earl's Court was one of the things that must be seen and tried if one wanted to do London thoroughly, and those who did try it may congratulate themselves that they didn't have the experience that befell some 400 Merrymakers there about ten days ago. With its forty cars, each carrying its full compliment of passengers, the big wheel stopped suddenly. From 8.30 in the evening until 1 o'clock the next afternoon most of the passengers were kept high up in the air, while their friends on the ground shouted encouragement and sent up food by means of a rope. A similar accident occurred to this wheel a year ago, and the English newspapers dismissed it with brief mention. There was more humor than danger in the situation, and the London newspapers missed both. The experiences of the passengers who were in the big wheel a week ago when it stopped were decidedly uncomfortable. When the cry went up,

"THE WHEEL HAS STOPPED!"

there were thousands of people enjoying the attractions of the Empire of India exhibition and listening to the bands in the brilliantly lighted gardens. A rush was made from all parts of the grounds to the wheel. The people found the electric-lighted cars with their occupants halted nigh in the air. The women in them raised an outcry and their friends on the ground yelled back encouragement. It was impossible to repair the damage to the wheel so that the cars could be lowered before daybreak, and every effort was put forth to make the prisoners in them as comfortable as they could be under the circumstances. The night was cool and few of the women in the cars were provided with wraps suitable to such exposure at an altitude of 300 feet. The restaurant attached to the exhibition was kept open all night, and to the cars to which a rope could be thrown food was sent.

The staff of attendants upon the wheel is composed in the majority of instances of old seamen. Two of these clambered round the rim of the wheel, carrying with them ropes, by means of which baskets of provisions were drawn up. The occupants of one of the cars, however, were the first to secure communication with terra firma, the result of an ingenious thought of Miss F. Landsdale, of Chester terrace. This young woman possessed a reel of cotton, and carefully lowering it from the window of the car in which she was imprisoned a stout string was attached. This, upon being drawn up, brought a rope, to which was attached a basket containing

LIGHT REFRESHMENT.

The sailors already referred to afterward reached other occupants, although some of the cars were out of their reach, in consequence of their swinging outward.

There were women in the cars who called down frantically that the wheel must be moved because it was necessary for them to get home that night.

Some of these who were imprisoned threw down messages on slips of paper to be sent to their friends who might be waiting for them. Several of the enforced imprisonments might have had awkward sequels had not the managers of the wheel gladly given certificates to the effect that the bearers had passed the night in the air because of an accident.

The break was repaired at 1 in the afternoon. Before that time many of the passengers had been brought down by means of chairs attached to ropes. When the wheel was in working order again the remainder of the passengers were liberated. The London newspapers refer to the "generosity" of the management in providing a breakfast for these passengers after they got back to earth.

PEARLS OF TRUTH.

The heart that has once been bathed in love's pure fountain retains the pulse of youth forever.—Landor.

Cowardice is not synonymous with prudence. It often happens that the better part of discretion is valor.—Hazlitt.

Those who are formed to win general admiration are seldom calculated to bestow individual happiness.—Lady Blessington.

Never write anything that does not give you great pleasure; emotion is easily propagated from the writer to the reader.—Joubert.

Kind words prevent a good deal of that preverseness which rough and imperious usage often produces in generous minds.—Locke.

For the infinite has sowed his name in the lessons in burning stars, but on earth he has sowed his name in tender flowers.—Richter.

The universal and absolute law is that natural justice which can not be written down, but which appeals to the hearts of all.—Victor Cousin.

Many books require no thought from those who read them, and for a simple reason—they made no such demand upon those who wrote them.—Colton.

When all is summed up a man never speaks of himself without loss; his accusations of himself are always believed, his praises never.—Montaigne.

I never drink. I can not do it on equal terms with others. It costs them only one day, but me three—the first in sinning, the second in suffering, and the third in repenting.—Sterne.

To be idle and to be poor have always been reproaches; and therefore every man endeavors with his utmost care to hide his poverty from others and his idleness from himself.—Johnson.

A POOR BOARDING-HOUSE.

Miss de Pink—"I will be so glad when George and I are married, and he can have a home of his own."

Friend—"He boards now, I suppose."

"Yes, and such a time as he must have. Even their coffee can't be anything but hot water and burnt peas, because he has to chew real coffee half the time to make up."