The Red Witch

Or The Wooing Of Constantia.

CHAPTER XXII.

Constantia went home with Lady Varley, who, anxious about her ailing child, left quite early in the evening. At first the girl's mind was so distraught with recollections of Donna's treachery, and Featherston's falseness that she could hardly think of anything else, and had not even wondered at the fact of Lady Varley's abrupt departure. But after a while she became sensible of the extreme quiet of her companion, whose face she could not see in the brougham. She put out her hand at last and touched hers, to find that it was icy cold, and that the fingers were clenched. Her touch woke Yolande from her fit of dumb misery, and with a sharp sigh she roused herself.

"How slow Hunt is driving !" she cried feverishly. "Shall we ever be at home ? Speak to him, Constantia."

Constantia did as she was desired, and then, a little unnerved by Lady Varley's manner, waited in silence for what she next might say. But she said nothing. She sought and found the girl's hand again and pressed it with a convulsive earnestness, but no words escaped her.

"You are unhappy—uneasy," returned Constantia at last.

"Uneasy ? What a word !" returned she, with terrible though repressed agitation. "My child, my darling, how could I have left her, even for a moment ! And all this horrible night, it has seemed like a nightmare. Yes, I have been justly punished. But I did not leave her willingly, Connie, you will believe that. It was forced upon me. I could hardly have refused to enter that woman's house, and yet——Oh, forgive me, dear ! I forgot she was your cousin."

"She is no cousin of mine," cried Constantia vehemently. "I disown her. She is nothing to me. Nothing !"

"Yes, yes ? Is it so between you ? Yet I should not have spoken. Has she been cruel to you, Connie—to a girl like you ? What ! Is this only Hillside ? Why, we should be at Araglin by this time. Oh, what hours can lie in thirty minutes ! Connie ! Connie ! If anything should have happened."

An awful fear had seized hold on her. She was trembling violently. She half rose in the carriage as though it was impossible to her, in her state of impatience, to sit any longer still, but Constantia placed her arms round her, and drew her back very gently into her seat. It was a shock to her to see Lady Varley, who was always so studiously cold and calm, thus given over to despair, and half wild with nervous dread.

She sought eagerly to soothe her, and by degrees Lady Varley grew comparatively calm. The arrival at the hall door, however, tended more to calm her nerves than even Constantia's tender endeavors. She sprang from the carriage, and hurried past the servants and up to the nursery, with only a sign to Constantia to follow her. She had apparently forgotten to drop the girl at The Cottage, and Constantia had been too alarmed about her to mention it. Besides, would it not be selfish to leave her in her present mood ? Connie was sufficiently read in human nature to understand that there was something beneath her anxiety for her child, something inferior to that sacred care, but yet strong enough to disturb and harass her.

Her own grievance was forgotten in this supreme grief. How sad it all was for her—her child dying, her husband faithless ! Constantia clenched her hands, as she thought of Donna's gay, triumphant laugh—as she pictured her making a light jest out of the knowledge of Varley's submission to her power, his treachery to his wife. Could such things be, and the world still go on in all its round of careless mirth, its swift pleasure that scarce gave time for thought or justice ? Surely the day of reckoning would come ! but in the meantime must Yolande suffer—must she sink beneath her troubles, with no hand held out to help her ?

She looked at Lady Varley's clear-cut features, calm again, now that the momentary suspense was at an end, and told herself that perhaps she wronged her. She was too pure, too proud a woman to sink beneath dishonor undeserved. There were those who were dragged down beneath the wave of affliction, but there were also those who rose out of it with senses dulled indeed, and wounds all gaping, but with faces serene and passionless, though the cruel rocks had cut sore. These give no sign of the agony within. These have their reward. The stormy petrel skimming the tempestuous wave knows such wild throes of passion fierce and strong as are unknown to the gentler bird who cowers amidst the fragrant inland branches, to hide it from the coming storm.

In Lady Varley there was the divine strength of womanhood, that knows all, endures all, and still is strong.

She turned suddenly to Constantia, and met the girl's eyes bent wistfully upon her. There was genuine love in them, that she saw, and a sorrow that she would not see.

"You are tired," she said. "Come with me. You must go to sleep at once."

"Are you going to stay here ?" asked Constantia quickly.

"Yes ; I generally stay here every night. I do not sit up—you must not think that," with a wan smile, "but it eases my heart," laying her hand lightly on her bosom, "to be near her ; and so I have had that couch over there," pointing to a distant corner, "prepared for me. I do not martyr myself, you see," with another sad attempt at a smile ; "I can sleep if I choose, but I like to be near her." A heavy sigh escaped her as she finished. Constantia could see that her heart was broken—that in her secret soul, hard as she battled against it, she had lost all hope in her little one's recovery.

"Let me stay with you," entreated she miserably. "Do not send me away. This arm-chair is very comfortable, and—— Do let me stay with you."

"As you will, dearest," said Lady Varley gently. She said something in a low voice to one of the women, and presently wine and sandwiches were brought, which she pressed on Constantia. She touched nothing herself, and after that took no notice at all of her guest. Between her hours of sleep and waking, the girl saw that Lady Varley had spent her night upon her knees beside the tiny cot, praying for what a gracious Lord had seen fit to deny her.

The morning dawned and deepened, and still the child lived. Apparently it was no worse, no better ; but was it no worse ? Towards noon, Constantia, with whom Lady Varley would not consent to part, entreated and prevailed with her to take a walk for half-an-hour in the garden as she could not sleep.

It was terrible to Constantia to see how she clung to a belief in the child's recovery, the child who was already half way on its journey to heaven ; but she persuaded her to go into the garden with a silent caress, and a hopeful word or two, all the same.

Lady Varley went down the staircase with a languid step, and out into the sweet summer air. It was midday, and the sun was high in the heaven, and the perfume from the open flowers filled the passing breeze. All was cloudless blue above her head, all was green beneath her feet. The day was indeed a golden one, so rich in sweets that one felt overpowered by it, and thought only of some shady nook where one might sit beneath a branching elm and dream the hours away. A tremulous haze lay over the distant sea, and the rocks shone out white as burnished silver.

All round her grew the flowers. It was "the time of roses," and crimson, cream, and white, they bloomed at every turn. As they nodded their sleepy heads, a delicate odor escaped from them that was wafted hither and thither until the very wind grew languid with it, and in the centres of their warm bosoms yellow-winged bees hummed drowsily.

As Yolande turned aside to reach the ivied gate that led to the cool shade of the orchard, she met her husband sauntering slowly in her direction.

CHAPTER XXIII.

He halted somewhat abruptly and then came on ; but it was evident to her that his first impulse had been to avoid her if possible. She gave no sign of having noticed this ; and, indeed, the relations between them of late had been so strained that it scarcely troubled her.

"I had no idea I should see you here," he said, less awkwardly than he thought. "I fancied you in the nursery ; at least, your women told me you were there. How is she ?" He alluded to his child.

"Just the same way, I think." Her eyes were on the groond, and her tone was carefully composed. It was impossible, therefore, for him to know the anguish that was consuming her.

"I daresay it will be nothing," he said cheerfully. He had not seen the child for a week, and so knew nothing about it. His careless tone grated on her. His own child ! Was he dead to all things—save one ? She controlled herself, however, and stood waiting to hear what he should say. "I often told you that doctors were false prophets," he said ; "you should not give ear to their croakings—you should not fret as you do."

"True," she said ; "it is a foolish thing to fret over any matter, small or great."

There was meaning in her tone, and Varley winced a little.

"You left very early last night," he said presently. He was regarding her intently, and she felt it.

"Yes ; I was tired," she said.

"For one so uniformly truthful—one who so prides herself upon her yea being a yea—that is scarcely honest, is it ?" asked he, laughing, yet with a only partially concealed sneer. "Say, rather, you did not care for your company."

"It was very excellent company, as it appeared to me. Almost every one we knew or liked was there."

"That surprised you, perhaps ; but, as I have often told you, Mrs. Dundas, in spite of certain rumors that may have reached you, is not so altogether objectionable as you believe."

She lifted her head now, and looked full at him. Her dark eyes flashed.

"Who told you I thought her objectionable ?" she asked. "Did it occur to you that there might be reason for my so thinking of her ? I certainly never said so."

"Your manner towards her is barely civil, however. She is an old friend of mine, and, of course, I am bound to be friendly. As my——"

"Why should you apologize for your—friendship ?" interrupted she, with a curious smile. "Pray do not; surely there is no necessity—to your wife !"

"As my wife, I was going to say," he went on quickly, and with a darkened brow, "I had hoped you would have shown her at least courtesy ; but to leave her house as you did last night was to give her up to the cruel insinuations of our world. There was a want of refinement in it, a lack of delicacy that I should not have looked for in you."

"You are very good," said Yolande, with a curl of her lip. "You credit me with fine feelings in one breath and destroy your credit in the next. But truce to this pretense," she cried suddenly, lifting to his a face pale and stern. "I do not like your friend, and let that admission explain all."

"But why ?" demanded he angrily.

"Let that rest."

"I will not. What fault do you find in her ?"

"You are a warm partisan," said she, in a low, dangerous tone. "Is it wise, then, to insist ?"

"I think so. As you have yourself suggested, it will be well to put an end to all fencing in this matter. In censuring her it has seemed to me, of late, that you censure me."

"You have courage," she said.

"Why not ? What is it, I again ask, that you find fault with in her?"

She threw up her head as if about to speak ; her face grew deadly white her lips parted. What ever she knew she was about then to disclose ; but something checked her. She withdrew her eyes, and by a supreme effort beat down the emotion that was trying to conquer her. Presently she was calm again, and only the tight clasp of her hands betrayed any feeling whatsoever.

"I think her vulgar," said she slowly, contemptuously.

Varley was surprised, and too relieved to be annoyed. He had failed to read between the lines, and did not guess at the sleeping volcano that lay within her breast. He suspected her of knowing, or guessing more than it was expedient she should know ; but her answer had convinced him that whatever were her suspicions, her knowledge was sufficiently imperfect to prevent her accusing him openly.

"Oh, if that is all," he said lightly, "it was a pity you did not remain for the rest of the evening. It was about the best dance we have had here for many a day. I quite enjoyed it."

To this she made no answer. A straggling spray of a blackberry bush near had caught her gown, and she now made herself busy unfastening it.

"As you justly remarked, all our best friends were there," he went on, with an assumption of gayety that sat, however, rather uneasily upon him. "O'Grady, amongst others. By-the-bye," he said lightly, turning to her with a lively smile, "you must confess that the time you did spend there, short as it was, was not altogether dull. You and O'Grady, I could see,"—here he laughed indulgently—"enjoyed it—together."

Lady Varley started as if he had struck her, and raised her eyes slowly to his. She was paler than before, if possible, with a scorn unspeakable. Was this sidelong accusation meant as a condonement of his own offence ? Was it a vile effort to kill the sense of shame within him by an attempt to drag her down to his lower level—to sully her, the tall, pale, pure creature who stood before him—to cast filth upon his wife ?"

With a sharp movement she put her hand to her throat. Her nostrils dilated.

"Take care !" she said in a low tone. "Neglect, insult me, as you will, but do not dare seek to lower me to the standard of the woman for whom you have betrayed me !"

She had withdrawn from him a step or two, and now stood regarding him with large, contemptuous eyes. Every line of her figure breathed of vehement indignation, her tall, slender form, girlish still in its outlines, was uplifted to its fullest height, and was fulfilled with the indignant passion that had at last driven her to speech.

An uneasy laugh broke from Varley. "Now I guessed," he said, "that underneath your assumed indifference some such thing as this was working. I don't know who put it into your head, but I suppose that little devil Constantia. You have magnified a very ordinary friendship into an affaire de coeur. Women who insist on living an anchorite life like yours, are bound to find some safety-valve for their fancies. It is a pity you should have chosen this one. It is a pity, too, that you take things so terribly seriously." Here he smiled with an attempt at carelessness, though in reality he was somewhat quelled by the suddenness of her accusation. "If you were a little less intense, you would be easier to——" He hesitated.

"Live with ?" she suggested calmly. She paused, always with her eyes fixed immovably on his face. As she spoke, they seemed to burn into him ; but otherwise she was calm, although her heart was on fire, and her soul riven. "There is always a remedy," she said at last, in a tone so low as to sound like a distant bell, yet so clear as to smite heavily upon his ear.

Just yet he was undecided as to whether he would or would not desire a separation, and so he revolted from her suggestion. Donna's hold over him, strong as it was, had not quite led him to despise the world's opinion.

"You must be mad to talk to me like this on so trivial a cause," he was beginning, but she interrupted him.

"Heroics are out of place here," she said. "I know your real desire, and a word will do. Believe me, I would gladly cast my life adrift from yours."

"To join it to——"

(To Be Continued).

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.
Here's good fun for girls and boys,
Taste the candy and buy the toys;
Jumping-jack and chatter-box,
Wooden man and paper ox;
Rubber doll and dancing cow,
Christmas shopping's fine just now.

UNHEALTHY MONTHS.

December is the most deadly month in the year in London, with March a good second ; but January is the most unhealthy in France, and March in Germany.

For Throat Irritation

Hoarseness, Dry Throat, Sore Throat, Bronchial Troubles, Coughs, Colds and Asthma, Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine is a Cure of Proven Merit.

There are more ministers, singers and public speakers using Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine than any other similar preparation, because it is exactly suited to their needs. By taking a dose of this preparation before going on the platform they feel certain of freedom from dry throat, hoarseness and throat irritation, than which there can be nothing more embarrassing to a singer or speaker.

Besides the annoyance of throat irritation public speakers seem to be especially susceptible to bronchial trouble, pneumonia and lung diseases, and for this reason it seems wise to have in your grip when leaving home a bottle of Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine, which is beyond all doubt the most thoroughly effective treatment for bronchial and lung troubles that is to be obtained.

Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine aids expectoration, clears the throat and air passages, soothes and quiets the nerves which cause coughing, and thoroughly cures all throat and bronchial troubles. There are other preparations of Linseed and Turpentine put up in imitation of Dr. Chase's. Be sure that the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase are on the bottle you buy. 25 cents a bottle; family size, three times as much, 60 cents. At all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

WEAK AND NERVOUS.

MAGISTRATE DAUPHINE'S DEPLORABLE CONDITION.

Despite Medical Treatment, He Became Weaker and Weaker, Until He Could Scarcely Sign His Name.

Mr. James Dauphine, of East Bridgewater, or as he is better known as ex-Councillor Dauphine, has been a sick man for the past three years. His health gradually forsook him, until by degrees he was forced to give up doing all kinds of work. He consulted a physician and took a large quantity of medicine, but it did him no good and he gradually grew weaker and weaker. His duties as a magistrate necessitated his doing much writing, and being an excellent penman in his days of good health it came very hard to him when his hand shook so much he could scarcely keep it steady enough to sign his name. His daughter, seeing his deplorable condition, advised him to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and after a bit of coaxing he was induced to try them. There was no noticeable change in his condition until he had started taking the third box. From that on the improvement was rapid. He grew stronger every day, his appetite increased, the weariness and lassitude departed from his limbs, some of the lustre of his youth returned to his eye, and by the time five boxes were used, Mr. Dauphine felt a new man. The weight of years and the burden of sickness have rolled from his shoulders, his hands are now steady and his pen can run as rapidly as ever. He attributes his cure to the ministration of a good wife and Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Mr. Dauphine is 73 years of age, but feels as young and vigorous as he did years ago, and is ever ready to praise in the warmest terms the health-giving qualities of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are the friend of the weak and ailing. They surpass all other medicines in their tonic, strengthening qualities, and make weak and despondent people bright, active and healthy. These pills are sold by all dealers in medicine, or can be had by mail, postpaid, at 50 cents per box, or six boxes for $2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

INCREASE IN POPULATION

The increase in population during the past 100 years of people of European origin, according to Sir Robert Griffin, the famous English statistician, has been 170,000,000, at the beginning of the century to 510,000,000 at its close. The growth of the United States alone has been from a little over 5,000,000 to nearly 80,000,000. The English population of the British empire has increased from about 15,000,000 to 55,000,000. Germany and Russia also show remarkable growth, from 20,000,000 to 55,000,000 in one case and from 40,000,000 to 135,000,000 in the other. France has increased from 25,000,000 to only 40,000,000.

CANADA AT GLASGOW FAIR.

In a business sense, the Exhibition, as representative of national or foreign trade and industry, has not escaped some more or less just criticism, says the London Imperial Argus. Still such industrial exhibitions are seldom all that the expert thinks desirable, and how far deficiencies are due in management or to external causes it is not always easy to decide. Whatever the shortcoming may have been at Glasgow, however, our colonies, at least, appear to have scored a splendid success. The exhibits from Canada, Queensland, and other States, have provided the chief attraction of the Exhibition to many thousands of visitors and have done much, we trust, to stimulate public interest in and knowledge of, the resources of our empire.