STRONGER THAN DEATH

OR

A RANSOMED LIFE

CHAPTER X.

Trevor was first into the nursery in the grey dawn of the morning. He started back amazed at the sight that met his eyes. In the cushioned chair, sobbing fretfully, like a three-year-old child, sat Vivian Ardel, while the child in the cot close beside gazed out at him with wide-open, wistful eyes, which closed softly as Trevor came into the room.

Vivian Ardel sprang from his chair to meet him, babbling meaninglessly, like a frightened baby. The cry of horror had scarce passed from Trevor's lips when Eva stole into the room behind. Ardel turned at once to her with a half-articulate muttering of delight, and fondled her like a dog, all the intellect gone out of his face. Still the child in the cot slept on, breathing quickly.

"My God!" Eva cried out, as she looked and heard. "His reason has snapped under the double strain. He has saved us both, John, but at what a cost! Better my boy and I were lying dead together than this should be."

She threw herself, weeping piteously, into her husband's arms, and still the strong man babbled and the child slept.

There was the sound of quick wheels on the gravel sweep, as punctual Dr. Bartley drove to the door.

Dr. Bartley was never surprised at anything. He was not surprised now.

"Boy much better," he said. "Just as I expected. I had great confidence in the last draught which I prescribed. You will remember, Mrs. Trevor, that I set my face against all those new-fangled operations from the first."

No one told him that his last draught had not been tasted. No one told him of the miracle by which the child's life was saved.

Eva would scarce give him time to glance at the child's cot. "Oh! yes, he is quite safe now," she said; and the careless confidence of her voice jarred on him. He had seen her so heart-broken—now the child seemed nothing to her.

"You know Dr. Ardel?" she asked abruptly, "Dr. Vivian Ardel?"

"Of course, my dear lady," he answered, with bland composure; "not to know him argues myself unknown. I have met him frequently in consultation. He has made diphtheria a special study. I should, perhaps, have advised you to call him in this case of ours, but I knew he was abroad."

"He is returned!" she cried excitedly; "he is here—here in this house! But not the Vivian Ardel whom you and all the world knew and wondered at. His reason has been stricken down in the night; he is as helpless, mindless, as the child in that cot."

Even Dr. Bartley's composure was not proof against this. He saw Vivian Ardel at once. He found the case "sad, very sad, but quite simple." "Paralysis of the brain. Long-continued and active effort had worn out a once magnificent organ. The symptoms were unmistakable."

"We almost always find this total lapse of memory," he went on, "this premature turning to second childhood. You observe his delusion, my dear Mrs. Trevor. He fancies himself your child Harry. His mind, you tell me, was on a strain about the child. That would entirely account for the form his delusion has assumed. No, I'm afraid there is absolutely no hope. We must rather look for deterioration than improvement, as the disease progresses until the mind completely fades away. The body, so far, seems unaffected, but this cannot last long. It's a 'withering at the top,' Mrs. Trevor, as Swift finely put it—'a withering at the top.'

"You have nothing to reproach yourself, my dear lady," he went on soothingly, "in bringing him down here. A little irregular, perhaps, from the professional point of view; but then he was, I understand, an old friend. So far as poor Ardel himself is concerned, the attack was inevitable—absolutely inevitable. It was the result of long-continued softening of the brain. That child seems still to be a little uneasy; I think I will give it a soothing draught. As I was saying, poor Ardel's collapse could not be long postponed. It was fortunate the stroke took him here amongst his friends, where he can be carefully tended to the end. Candidly, Mrs. Trevor, I do not think the end can be long deferred. I will see him again, of course—a most interesting case. But there is nothing that I can do, nothing that any one can do, to help him. His reason is irretrievably gone, and I fear his life will not long be spared."

The specialists on brain disease who were called in during the next few days were not quite so glid and confident as Dr. Bartley. The case puzzled them a little, they confessed; there were some symptoms quite out of the common; but, on the whole, they agreed with their confident colleague. "Reason would flicker down to a spark and go out. There was no hope, absolutely no hope."

The result belied their gloomy prophesies. Even within a week a distinct improvement was visible. Dr. Ardel (if his body without his soul may be called by that name) was at first frightened and petulant, as if some sudden change had come upon him which he could but dimly realize. He wimpered and moped all day. No one but little Harry Trevor could coax him out of these dismal moods. The child's toys delighted him. It was indeed something pitiable to see the big man on his knees, playing with tin soldiers and cannon, and quite forgetting his vague trouble in his childish excitement.

Meanwhile Lucy and Jeannette had come back from their visit to the south of France. They were in London, and the question arose, if it would yet be quite safe to have them down to Lavella. It chanced that little Harry Trevor was in the parlour when this question was discussed between his father and mother and Dr. Bartley.

Now while the three discussed the return of the wanderers his eyes left his book and he listened eagerly. Dr. Bartley laughed at the father's and mother's fears, assuring them that all danger of infection was long passed.

"Then," said Trevor, convinced, "I will wire Lucy to come on to-morrow, and have the broughman to meet her at the midday train. Better still, I will go up to London and bring them back with me."

All of a sudden the little boy dropped his picture-book and ran between them, his face flushed and his eyes bright with excitement.

"Don't, don't," he cried, so hastily that his words tripped each other up, "don't bring them home yet. The danger is not over: they will die as Willie died."

John Trevor smilingly took the boy on his knee and soothed and petted him. "You hear what the doctor says, Harry. There is no danger now."

But the child persisted piteously, "Not yet; not yet."

"Don't laugh at the poor little fellow, John," Eva interposed. "He does not seem to me the same child since his illness. Don't worry your poor little head, Harry. Father and Doctor know what is best. Won't you be glad to have Jen back to play with, and Aunt Lucy?"

"I would, but:——"

"Don't say 'but' to me, pet." This with a pretty assumption of the stern mother. "Run away now with your story-book to the nursery, or, or," for he went very slowly, "you can go to Dr. Ardel's room, if you prefer it."

Lucy and Jeannette returned next day, both dressed in black.

Lucy dreaded sorely the meeting with Dr. Ardel, for Eva had written her the sad story, and the pity of it gripped her heart with a grief too tense for tears.

Trembling violently, she walked with Eva from the nursery to the little sitting-room or study which had always been reserved for Ardel's special use at Lavella, and which was still his room.

A gush of pitying tears half blinded her as she looked into the room. Dr. Ardel was on his knees on the floor, intent on the latest toy that Harry had lent him. It was an ingenious mechanical contrivance worked by springs and clockwork.

The sight and sound chilled Lucy's heart with the vague, half-grotesque horror of a bad dream.

A book that she carried dropped from her stiffening fingers and came down with a bang on the floor. Ardel heard and turned his head. Then he leaped to his feet, the toy forgotten, and sprang towards her, shouting joyously,—

"Lucy! Lucy! welcome home, Aunt Lucy! You will make me quite well again, won't you?"

"But you are not ill?" To her own surprise, she found herself for a moment talking to him quite naturally, as she would to a little child.

"Oh, no; it's not that. Don't you see, I am not your own little Harry any more? I'm grown up all of a sudden, just like Dr. Ardel. But you will steal the bad fairy's wand and change me back again. Oh, Lucy, I'm very tired of being so big." Then, with childhood's sudden change of mood, the strong man burst out crying. "I want to be my own self again, Lucy," he whispered through his tears.

"Oh, with all my heart I wish you were your own self again," she said very earnestly, the tears of pity streaming down her cheeks as she spoke. "But wishing won't help you."

She sat beside him on a sofa and talked to him soothingly, as to a child. Presently he surprised her by asking for a story that was a special favorite with little Harry Trevor, and before she was half-way through the tale he was again full of excitement about the princess and the wicked dwarf, quite forgetful of his grievance of having suddenly grown up like Dr. Ardel.

"We must make him as happy as we can, Eva, and keep on hoping for the best," she whispered, as they left the room together.

A week had not passed when Lucy herself began to droop and pine a little. Curiously enough, little Harry Trevor was the first to notice it. One morning he walked straight into the parlor, where husband and wife were alone together, still puzzling and grieving over the awful blow that had stricken down the mind of their dearest friend.

The child broke in abruptly upon their talk. "Lucy is ill," he said, "very ill. I think she has got diptera."

At this dread word Eva turned ghastly pale, and would have fallen, but her husband's strong hand was around her in a moment.

"Eva! Eva!" he cried; "don't be a coward without cause! It's only the silly nonsense of the child, who has picked the word up like a parrot. Run away to the nursery, Harry. Don't you see you have frightened the life out of your mother?"

But the boy stood his ground a little doggedly as it seemed.

"It's true, it's true," he persisted. "Ask her if she hasn't got a sore throat. She will die if you don't take care."

"Oh, John!" Eva suddenly interposed, "the child is right. I know and feel it is true. Lucy has been looking pale for the last day or two. We should never have brought her and Jeanette here so soon. If we had but taken the child's advice! There is wisdom in the mouths of babes, we are told. But there is no use thinking of that now. We must have the doctor sent for at once."

"Let us see Lucy first, my dear," the practical Queen's counsel quietly interposed. "I trust there is no ground for fear."

But there was ground for fear.

Day by day and night by night Eva watched by Lucy's bedside.

Bitterest mockery of hope, crowning agony of it all, in the next room was Dr. Ardel, who had beaten back the disease so easily, now powerless as a little child to help or save.

Eva, in her despair, made one trial of his powers.

She told him that Lucy was sick, was dying of diphtheria, and begged his help. For one moment he wept childlishly for "poor Lucy," but the next he was absorbed in his delight in a new toy.

It was quite otherwise with little Harry Trevor. The poor child moped about the house, broken-hearted, with dumb, touching sorrow in his eyes.

All that medical science could do was done, without avail. To a famous specialist from London Eva described Ardel's treatment and its result.

"Ah," he said, kindly but hopelessly, "Dr. Ardel was a wonderful man. It is such a pity, such a pity. But there are no Dr. Ardels left amongst us. The serum he used was of his own discovery. Indeed, he told me when we last met that he had just found a sovereign specific for diphtheria, which he meant to reveal to the profession. Now that beneficent secret is lost to the world for ever."

"Is there, then, no hope, doctor?" Eva interposed faintly.

"Well, I would not go quite so far as that, Mrs. Trevor. While there is life there is hope, you know. There is no accounting for the vagaries of Nature. But it is one of the most virulent cases I have known in my practice. No, no, you must not give way like that, my dear lady. You are overstrung by watching and nursing night and day. I must have to forbid you in the sick-room altogether if you don't take better care of yourself."

(To be continued.)

A Case of Eczema No Pen Describes.

After Three Years of Terrible Suffering Little Mary Millar Was Permanently Cured by

DR. CHASE'S OINTMENT.

Many of the cures brough about by Dr. Chase's Ointment are so much like miracles that people can scarcely believe them. When Baby Millar became a victim of eczema her parents did everything that could be done to get her cured. Three doctors tried all the means in their power, but without success, and then all sorts of remedies were used, with the vain hope that something would bring relief from the disease that seemed to be burning up the living flesh.

It was not until Dr. Chase's Ointment was used that relief and cure came. This case is certified to by a prominent Sunday school superintendent of St. Catharines.

Mrs. Wm. Millar, St. Catharines, Ont., writes:—"My daughter, Mary, when six months old contracted eczema and for three years this disease baffled all treatment. Her case was one of the worst that ever came to my notice, and she suffered what no pen can ever describe. I had her treated by three different doctors, but all to no purpose whatever, and all sorts of balms, soaps and lotions were tried with no beneficial results.

"Finally I decided to use Dr. Chase's Ointment, and to my surprise she began to improve immediately, and after regular treatment for a time the disease of so long-standing completely disappeared. As that was four years ago, and not a symptom of this distressing ailment has ever shown itself since, the cure must certainly be a permanent one. At the time of this cure we were living in Cornwall, Ont., and the doctors there feared that if she was not cured of eczema she would go into a decline."

Mr. S. Richardson, jun., Superintendent Christ's Church Sunday School, St. Catharines, Ont., writes: "I am acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Millar and believe they would not make any statement knowing it to be in any way misleading or untrue."

Dr. Chase's Ointment, 60 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Company, Toronto. To protect you against imitations the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous receipt book author, are on every box of his remedies.

NEW OFFICE RULES.

A Few Hints For Some People Who will Not see the Point.

1. Gentlemen entering this office will please leave the door wide open.

2. Those having no business will please call often, remain as long as possible, take a chair, and make themselves comfortable.

3. Gentlemen are requested to smoke, especially during office hours; Havanas and newspapers supplied. Expectorate on the floor, as the spittoons are only for ornament.

4. The money in this office is not intended for business purposes—by no means—it is solely to lend. Please note this.

5. Talk loud and whistle, especially when we are engaged; if this has not the desired effect, sing.

6. Put your feet on the tables or lean on the desks; it will be of great assistance to those writing upon them.

7. Gentlemen will please examine our letters, and jot down the names and addresses of our customers, particularly if they are in the same profession.

8. As we are always glad to see old friends, it will be particularly refreshing to receive a visit and a renewal of orders from any former customer who has passed through the Bankruptcy Court and paid us not more than ten cents in the dollar. A warm welcome may be relied on.

9. Having no occupation for our office-boy, he is entirely at the service of callers.

10. The following are kept at this office for public convenience: A stock of umbrellas (silk), all the local newspapers, time-tables, and all other guides and directories; also a supply of notepaper, envelopes, and stamps.

N.B.—Private notepaper for private letters may also be had if desired.

11. Should you find our principals engaged, do not hesitate to interrupt them. No business can possibly be of greater importance than yours.

12. If you have the opportunity of overhearing any conversation, do not hesitate to listen. You may gain information which may be useful in the event of disputes arising.

13. In case you wish to inspect our premises kindly do so during wet weather, and carry your umbrella with you; we admire the effect on the floor, it gives an air of comfort to the establishment. (The umbrella-stand is only for ornament, and on no account to be used.)

DR. A. W. CHASE'S CATARRH CURE ... 25c.

is sent direct to the diseased parts by the Improved Blower. Heals the ulcers, clears the air passages, stops droppings in the throat and permanently cures Catarrh and Hay Fever. Blower free. All dealers, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Buffalo.

TABLE FRUIT TREES.

To eat fruit fresh from the trees at a banqueting table is one of the latest luxuries of English epicures. Certain fruiterers in the West-end of London are now making preparations for an abundant supply of dwarf fruit trees laden with cherries, peaches, pears, and apples for ornament and dessert at the dinners of the coming season. The tiny fruit trees, which, although four or five years old, are only some 3 feet high, not only make a delightful table decoration, but produce a delicious dessert.

LIONS IN A BALLOON.

Probably the most remarkable balloon ascent ever made took place at Roubaix recently. The author of this singular exploit was a Captain Henri, a menagerie proprietor, who went up in a cage-boat attached to a balloon, with two lions in the cage with him, and two aeronauts, MM. Wellet and Duchateau, on the top of the cage. The ascent took place at 5 p.m., and the balloon rose splendidly in presence of a great crowd, taking a course towards the Belgian frontier, descending without accident at Etaimbourg at 6.30.

BOYS OF TO-DAY

WILL BE THE MEN OF THE FUTURE.

They Should be Rugged and Sturdy, Full of Life and Ready for Work, Play or Study—Keep Them Healthy.

Growing boys should always be healthy and rugged. Ready for play, ready for study, and ready at any time for a hearty meal. This condition denotes good health, but there are entirely too many who do not come up to this standard. They take no part in the manly games all healthy boys indulge in; they are stoop-shouldered, dull and listless; they complain of frequent headaches, and their appetite is variable. Sometimes parents say, "Oh, they'll outgrow it." But they won't—its the blood that's out of condition, and instead of getting better they get worse. What boys of this class require to make them bright, active and strong, is a tonic, something that will build up the blood and make the nerves strong. There is no medicine that can do this as quickly and as effectively as Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Mrs. Mary Compton, of Merriton, Ont., tells what these pills did for her sixteen year old son. She says: "About two years ago my son Samuel began to decline in health. He grew very pale and thin and at times experienced serious weak spells, coupled with a tired, worn out feeling, and as the weeks went by he grew worse. This alarmed me, for my husband had died of what the doctors called pernicious anaemia, and I feared my son was going the same way. I had often read that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills would cure anaemia, and decided that he should try them. A couple of boxes made a decided improvement in his condition, and by the time he had taken a half dozen boxes his health was better than it had been for some years previous. His weight had increased, his listlessness had disappeared, and he was blessed with a good appetite. I may add that other members of my family have been benefitted by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and I consider these pills the best of all medicines."

Poor and watery blood is the cause of nearly all diseases, and it is because Dr. Williams' Pink Pills act directly upon the blood, both enriching it and increasing the quantity, that they cure such troubles as anaemia, rheumatism, indigestion, neuralgia, heart troubles, incipient consumption and the various ailments that afflict so many women. These pills may be had from any dealer in medicine or will be sent post paid at 50c. a box or six boxes for $2.50 by writing to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont. If you value your health never allow a dealer to persuade you to take something else.

ROYAL DESSERT SERVICR.

The famous Sevres dessert service, which is kept in cabinets in the green drawing-room at Windsor, and in which President Loubet was most interested, is probably worth about $400,000. The service was purchased by George IV., when Prince of Wales, for quite a small sum. It passed on his death in accordance with his will to William IV., who generously made it over to the Crown instead of keeping it as his own private property, which he could have done if so disposed.

THE EARTH'S MEASUREMENT.

After nearly thirty years of constant effort and the expenditure of nearly $500,000, scientists have succeeded in accurately measuring the earth. They have learned that its diameter through the Equator is 7,926 miles; its height from Pole to Pole 7,899 miles. The earth, therefore, is flattened at the Poles; and while this fact has long been asserted, the actual measurement has removed the question from the domain of doubt.

MAKE BABY FEEL GOOD.

A baby's temper depends upon how he feels. If ailing he will be cross, worry the mother and annoy everybody in the house; if feeling well he will be bright, active and happy. It is easy to keep your baby feeling good by profiting by the experience of mothers who give their little ones Baby's Own Tablets. One of these mothers, Mrs. C. W. Shore, Castleton, Ont., says:—"Our child, eight months old, has always been troubled with indigestion. We had medicine from two doctors and tried other remedies without benefit. I then sent for a box of Baby's Own Tablets and found them just what was required. The child is now all right and is doing well."

Indigestion, colic, constipation, diarrhoea, simple fevers, in fact all the minor ailments of little ones are cured by Baby's Own Tablets. They always do good and cannot possibly do harm, and may be given to the youngest infant with perfect safety. Sold by druggists or direct by mail, at 25c a box, by addressing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

The universal idea of a level-headed man is one who agrees with you.