STRONGER THAN DEATH

OR

A RANSOMED LIFE

CHAPTER XII.

Harry Trevor's vacations were spent at Lavella, of course, and his very first vacation was marked by a startling incident that had its after consequences. Not by father and mother only was his welcome warm. Lucy received him with shy joy; Dr. Ardel and little Jeanette with wild, obstrperous delight.

There was a visitor at Lavella on the occasion of his first home-coming. Indeed, Edgar Wickham (now Colonel Wickham) was a constant visitor to the place, and made little secret of the strong attraction that drew him there. Wickham's promotion in in the army had been rapid. Twice he distinguished himself in action. Good looks, wealth, combined with military reputation, made him a "lion" in London, and there were many fair would-be lion-tamers anxious to share his cage. But he was still unmarried, and like to continue so. unless Lucy Ray smiled at last on his patient wooing.

In this wooing John Trevor was his strong ally, and had even spoken in a gentle, fatherly fashion to Lucy on his behalf; so far without avail. But Eva, in spite of herself, was pleased with an unreasoning pleasure, to see that Lucy's heart still clung to its first choice. Lucy, it is true, seldom spoke to Dr. Ardel, who made Jeanette his chosen companion. But Eva saw that ever and again the clear blue eyes would turn on the man-boy a glance of yearning, pitying love. Keen-witted jealousy gave Wickham too an inkling of the truth. But he made no sign, or, if there were a change, his manner to Dr. Ardel grew kinder than before.

So life flowed smoothly at Lavella, with sunshine on its rippling surface, and no hint of chill or danger in the depths below.

This summer afternoon Harry Trevor and Lucy had gone a long, lazy row up the river. Dr. Ardel had challenged Colonel Wickham to a game of lawn tennis, and Wickham had cherily thrown his book aside to humor him. It was quite a hollow affair from the first. Dr. Ardel was an unrivalled player. He had regained his marvellous skill in all sports, like one recalling a half-forgotten language, as though there were a sort of memory in nerve and muscle. From Wickham he won game after game, and set after set, with consummate ease, while Jeannette, who had appointed herself marker and umpire, crowed with unconcealed delight at her big playmate's triumph.

But Wickham's good-humor was not in the least affected.

"Game and set. That's the fourth," he said; "it's getting monotonous. My dear fellow, you don't give me a look in. I'll have my revenge, though, some day."

Ardel laughed a boisterous, boyish laugh as he filled himself a foaming tankard of beer.

"Here's better luck, Colonel," he cried, and drained it at a draught. "Nasty bitter after-taste," he muttered, with a comical grimace: "the dregs of the cask, I dare say."

Then he called out to Jeanette, "Come along for a game? I'll give you forty and play backhand. Will you umpire, Colonel, just for this one set?"

But it was soon painfully apparent that Ardel's skill had departed from him. His body trembled and stiffened alternately. He lost control of his muscles. His arms and legs moved with involuntary jerks, like the limbs of a puppet. A look of fright and pain came suddenly upon his face. He staggered two or three times and recovered himself, then, with a low, half-strangled cry, he fell, and lay prone on the grass under the hot glare of the sun, stiff and still, with his teeth clenched tight.

That half-strangled cry seemed to reach the soul of young Trevor far up the river. Lucy, lying back in the stern of the boat, with hand dangling in the clear, cool water as they moved languidly down with the current, saw a look of pain and fear start to the boy's face. She saw his body suddenly stiffen and stretch to his oars, and felt their light boat lift with the straining strokes and tear through the water with sharp hiss of foam at the prow.

"I am wanted," is all he said, and he spoke like one in a dream. The water foamed white at their prow, and the banks, and the trees on them, slid swiftly by.

At a turn of the river Lucy caught sight of the tennis ground and a group of people on it clustered round a prostrate figure. "Look! look!" she cried; but Harry Trevor never turned his head for a moment, never eased the fierce strain on the oars until he ran the boat's nose on the bank and leaped out, leaving Lucy to follow as she could.

He darted straight for the tennis ground, and in a moment was with the group gathered round the prostrate body of Dr. Ardel, who lay stiff and still, as in the rigour of death, the feet curved and the strong teeth locked tight as a rat-trap.

Dr. Bartley, who happened to be in the house at the time, was bending helplessly over the body.

"Is it sunstroke, doctor?" Colonel Wickham asked, as Harry Trevor came up panting. "He was playing in the fierce sun all the afternoon without a hat."

"It's poisoning by strychnine," the doctor answered gravely; "the symptoms are unmistakable. In the last stage, too; there is no hope."

One quick, searching glance Trevor cast at the prostrate body, as if to assure himself the doctor spoke the truth, and then turned and ran for the house.

He came back more slowly, carrying a tumbler in one hand, and in the other a green glass bottle with a glass stopper.

He knelt down beside the prostrate body, when the doctor interposed,—

"What's this for, my boy?" he said sharply.

But Trevor turned upon him a look so full of stern authority that he quailed.

"You can do nothing," he hissed out; "don't hinder those who can." The quick action, the steady confidence of the boy, seemed to mesmerize the group round the body. He spilt some drops from the bottle on his handkerchief, and dabbed it on the white, set face. The body quivered slightly, the lips parted, and the teeth unclenched. Trevor raised the head, the whole body moving with it, stiff as a board. He set the tumbler's edge to the white lips and dexterously poured the contents of the half-filled tumbler to the last drop through the parted teeth.

At that moment Lucy came up running from the water side. She was flushed by the run, but the flush faded from her cheeks as she saw Ardel lying there so still.

"O God! is he dead?" she cried out.

But the kneeling boy smiled up at her with confident hope. "Nor like to die," he answered softly.

Even as he spoke a quiver ran through the prostrate body and another and another, then there was a deep sigh of relief, the stiffened muscles relaxed their tension, and the great limbs lay limp as a sleeping child's Eva watched with parted lips and straining eyes. Wickham was trembling like a leaf.

John Trevor was the first to speak. There was wonder, almost fear in his voice. He spoke not as father to son, but as man to his master.

"What have you done, Harry?"

"Saved his life, sir, I believe," the boy answered modestly. "Feel his heart, doctor; already it beats easily. The color is returning to his face; his eyes are opening."

"Where am I?" Ardel murmured, but so feebly they could hardly hear the words.

Harry Trevor helped him to his feet and sustained him. He swayed like a child who has just learned to walk.

"A few hours' sleep," Harry whispered to the doctor. "and he will be himself again. Then the two moved slowly across the lawn together, the others following.

When the boy came down from Ardel's room all anxiety had passed from his face. The look of imperious command was gone too. He seemed abashed and ashamed. and ready to apologize for the part he had played.

"Ardel is asleep, doctor," he said, "sleeping soundly. I think all danger is past."

But the doctor's dignity was ruffled. "I don't know what trickery has been practised on me," he said sharply. "The symptoms of strychnine poisoning were wonderfully counterfeited."

"They were real," Trevor answered simply.

"But this sudden and mysterious cure?"

"The cure is proof positive," the other replied. Then he went on hastily, like one caught in an offence, and stammering out an excuse: "I should have told you that I found, some time since, the medicine chest which had been lost—Ardel's medicine case. I meant to have told it. Amongst the bottles I found this one."

He handed a quaint-shaped vial to the doctor, who looked at it and smelt it curiously.

"Look at the label, doctor," said the boy. On the label was written, "Antidote to strychnine; twenty drops in half a tumbler of water." The ink was fresh and black, as though the words had only been written a minute before. But the writing was the writing of Dr. Ardel of the old days, or a perfect imitation of it.

"When I saw—when I heard you say—that it was strychnine poisoning," Trevor said modestly, "of course I ran for this antidote at once. If I was rude or disrecpectful, Dr. Bartley, I'm sure you will forgive me. It was my anxiety was to blame for it."

John Trevor reddened with pride in his son. Lucy and Eva beamed on him delightedly. Even the doctor's professional pride was completely mollified.

"You have saved his life, my dear boy," he said pleasantly, "and I heartily congratulate you. Yet that is not quite true, either," he added, smiling at his own conceit. "You helped, no doubt. But, in a certain sense, we must confess that Dr. Ardel saved himself."

"Yes," Harry Trevor answered quickly, assenting, with flushed face; "Dr. Ardel saved himself."

He was right in his prophecy. Vivian Ardel awoke from his long sleep like a giant refreshed. Neither then nor afterwards did he feel the slightest ill effects from the potent poison that had mingled with his blood. Nor were his strong nerves in the least shaken by the danger he had passed. He laughed like a boy when he was told it was his own antidote that had saved him. There was no trace of regret or envy in his voice.

"I must have been a wonderful josser in those days, Harry," he said, "though I'm not up to much now. It was lucky I had you beside me yesterday. No." when Trevor offered to restore the medicine chest; "you must keep it. You know how to make good use of it, and I don't, and never will."

Of course there was inquiry and investigation, but it came to nothing. The coachman, it was discovered, had got strychnine to put an old dying dog out of his pain. But how the strychnine had come into the beer tankard or the beer jug was a mystery, and till long afterwards a mystery it remained. Colonel Wickham, who seemed most of all appalled by the catastrophe, was keen in his investigations. But even he had to give up at last in despair.

"It was God sent you, Harry," said Lucy to young Trevor, as they paced together the long wooded walk where she had spent that delightful, unforgotten hour with Vivian Ardel in the old days. "How could you know? How did the call come to you?"

"It was a strange feeling, Lucy—sudden and strange," he answered. "I seemed to feel the taste of strychnine in my mouth, to know that I had swallowed it. I felt myself stagger and fall, and lie there helpless and lifeless. I knew there was not one moment to spare. I knew that I was trembling on the brink of dissolution. Oh! it was agony while it lasted."

He broke off with a gasp almost of pain. His wild words and voice frightened her—he who was always so placid. His face had grown ghastly, and the drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead. He seemed to have forgotten she was beside him.

She laid a timid hand on his arm. "Why, Harry," she said, "what has come to you?"

With a strong effort he curbed his feelings as a man curbs an unruly steed, forcing it to be still.

"It is the reaction, I suppose. The strain was killing while it lasted. You know, Lucy,"—a faint smile flickered on his lips,—"Ardel is more than a brother to me. He is as dear to me as my own flesh and blood."

Then and afterwards Lucy found a mystery in his words, and pondered vainly over their meaning.

(To be continued.)

Bleeding Piles and Erysipelas

Two Severe Cases Which Illustrate the Extraordinary Soothing, Healing Virtues of

DR. CHASE'S OINTMENT.

Scores of people do not think of trying Dr. Chase's Ointment for bleeding piles because they have used so many other treatments in vain and do not believe their ailment curable. It is by curing when others fail that Dr. Chase's Ointment has won such a record for itself. It will not fail to promptly relieve and completely cure any form of piles, no matter how severe or of how long standing.

Mr. James Uriah Pye, Marie Joseph, Guysborough Co., N.S., writes: "I was bad with bleeding piles for about four years and could get no help. Dr. Chase's Ointment cured me in a very short time, and I cannot praise it too highly for this cure. Mrs. Thomas Smith was troubled with erysipelas in the feet and legs and was all swollen up. I gave her some of the ointment, which took out the swelling and healed all the sores. She had tried many treatments before, but none seemed to do her any good. I am telling my friends about the wonderful cures which Dr. Chase's Ointment made for Mrs. Smith and myself, and would say that it is only a pleasure for me to recommend so excellent a preparation."

Wherever there is irritation, inflammation, ulceration or itching of the skin Dr. Chase's Ointment will bring quick relief and will ultimately heal and cure. On this account it is useful in scores of ways in every home for the cure of eczema, salt rheum, tetter, scald head, chafing, itching peculiar to women, pin worms, piles and all sorts of skin diseases and eruptions.

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.

WELL AND STRONG.

AFTER ELEVEN YEARS OF GREAT SUFFERING.

A Wonderful Tribute to the Power of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to Cure Stubborn Diseases.

Proof upon proof has accumulated that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will cure when doctors, hospital treatment and all other medicines fail. Paralyzed limbs have been restored to strength, rheumatic sufferers made well, weak, anaemic girls and women made bright, active and strong; neuralgic pains banished, and the poor dyspeptic given a new digestion when it seemed almost hopeless to expect a cure. Here is a bit of strong proof that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills bring health and strength after years of suffering. Mr. Louis Brien is a well known resident of St. Didace, Que., and tells of his years of suffering as follows: "Eleven years ago, while working in the bush, I strained myself and brought on terrible pains in my stomach and back, where the trouble seemed to locate. I had frequent fits of vomiting, which caused much distress. Sometimes I could work, and then again for months at a time I would be wholly unable to do anything; but even at the time I could work I was always suffering. At different times I was treated by three doctors, but they were unable to help me. Then I went to Montreal and put myself under the care of a doctor there. His medicine relieved me while I was inactive, but as soon as I attempted work or exertion of any kind, the pains returned worse than before. All this time I was growing weaker and less able to resist the inroads of the trouble. Then Dr. Williams' Pink Pills were brought to my notice, and I began to use them. From that time I began to regain my health and by the time I had used thirteen boxes I was once more a well, strong man. The proof of this is that I can do as hard a day's work as anyone and never have the slightest symptoms of the old trouble. I am only sorry that I did not know of the pills sooner—they would have saved me much suffering and money as well."

With such proof as this, that even apparently hopeless cases can be cured, there can be no reasonable doubt that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will restore health in all cases where given a fair trial. These pills are sold by all medicine dealers or will be sent by mail at 50c. per box or six boxes for $2.50, by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont. See that the full name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," is printed on the wrapper around every box.

SLEEPING IN A CRADLE.

There is a man of seventy in Paris named Wallace Superneau, who still sleeps in the cradle he was rocked in when a baby, and he has never slept one night of his long life in any other bed. The youngest of a family of boys, Wallace retained his place in the cradle as he grew older. He soon became too tall to lie in it at full length, but he overcame this difficulty by drawing his knees upward. Each night to this day he rests his feet squarely on the bottom of the cradle, sways his knees to and fro, and rocks himself to sleep as he did when a small boy. The habit was formed in babyhood and never broken.

TAILORING BY WEIGHT.

Many men of modest dimensions have thought it hard that they should be charged by their tailor on the same scale as the men whom twice as much cloth is needed to clothe. The Garment Makers' Convention at Chicago has decided that in future the clothing of corpulent men will be paid for according to bulk. The weight of men of normal size is arbitrarily fixed at 150 lb., and for each 100 lb. over that weight the fat man will be taxed $5 additional for his clothes. "Anti-Fat" and similar remedies will be more in demand in the States than ever.

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.

WAS HE KILLED?

Mr. and Mrs. Slocum Were in Great Doubt.

A few evenings since Mr. Slocum was reading an account of a dreadful accident which happened at the factory in the town of L——, and which the editor had described in a great many words.

"I declare, wife, that was an awful accident over at the mill," said Mr. Slocum.

"What's it about, Mr. Slocum?"

"I'll read the 'count, wife, and then you'll know all about it."

Mr. S. began to read:—

"Horrible and Fatal Accident.—It becomes our melancholy and painful duty to record the particulars of an accident that occurred at the lower mill, in this village, yesterday afternoon, by which a human being, in the prime of life, was hurried to that bourne from which, as the immortal Shakespeare says, 'no traveler returns.'"

"Do tell!" exclaimed Mrs. S.

"Mr. David Jones, a workman who has but few superiors this side of the city, was superintending one of the large drums——"

"I wonder if 'twas a bass drum, such as has 'Epluribus Unum' printed on't?"

"When he became entangled. His arm was drawn around the drum, and finally his whole body was drawn over the shaft at a fearful rate. When his situation was discovered he had revolved with immense velocity about fifteen minutes, his head and limbs striking a large beam a distinct blow at each revolution."

"Poor creature! How it must have hurt him!"

"When the machinery had been stopped it was found that Mr. Jones' arms and legs were macerated into jelly."

"Well, didn't it kill him?" asked Mrs. Slocum, with increasing interest.

"Portions of the dura mater, cerebrum, and cerebellum, in confused masses, were scattered about the floor. In short, the gates of eternity had opened upon him."

Here Mr. Slocum paused to wipe his spectacles, and his wife seized the opportunity to press the question:—

"Was the man killed?"

"I don't know; haven't come to that place yet; you'll know when I have finished the piece."

And Mr. Slocum continued reading:—

"It was evident, when the shapeless form was taken down and it was no longer tenanted by the immortal spirit, that the vital spark was extinct."

"Was the man killed?—that's what I want to come at," said Mrs. Slocum.

"Do have a little patience," said Mr. S., eyeing his better-half over his spectacles. "I presume we shall come upon it right away." And he went on reading:—

"This fatal casualty has cast a gloom over our village, and we trust that it will prove a warning to all persons who are called upon to regulate the powerful machinery of our mills."

"Now," said Mrs. Slocum, perceiving that the narrative was ended, "now I should like to know whether the man was killed or not?"

Mr. Slocum looked puzzled. He scratched his head, scrutinized the article he had been perusing, and took a careful survey of the paper.

"I declare, wife," said he, "it's curious; but really the paper don't say!"

A LETTER TO MOTHERS.

Mrs. Jas. E. Harley, Worthington, Ont., gives permission to publish the following letter for the benefit of other mothers who have young children in their homes. She says:—"I have many reasons to be grateful to Baby's Own Tablets, and to recommend them to other mothers. Our little girl is now about fourteen months old, and she has taken the Tablets at intervals since she was two months old, and I cannot speak too highly of them. Since I came here about a year ago, every mother who has small children has asked me what I gave our baby to keep her in such even health, and I have replied 'absolutely nothing but Baby's Own Tablets.' Now nearly every child here gets the Tablets when a medicine is needed, and the old-fashioned crude medicines, such as castor oil and soothing preparations, which mothers formerly gave their little ones, are discarded. Our family doctor also strongly praises the Tablets, and says they are a wonderful medicine for children. Accept my thanks for all the good your Tablets have done my little one, and I hope other mothers will profit by my experience."

Baby's Own Tablets can be given with absolute safety to the youngest, frailest child, and they are guaranteed to cure all the minor ailments of little ones. Sold by all medicine dealers or mailed at 25 cents a box by writing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

INCREASED INSANITY.

Nearly 23,000 persons became insane in England and Wales last year—a higher number than in any year since records have been kept. The increase over the previous year was 3,251.