STRONGER THAN DEATH

OR

A RANSOMED LIFE

CHAPTER XIII.

At seventeen years of age Harry Trevor left Eton, having had a distinctly good time at school. A letter from the head-master had gone before him to John Trevor.

"My dear John,"—it ran; they had been classfellows at Eton,—"Your son is a marvel. In my experience I have known nothing like him. He is that rarest of rare birds—a modest genius. He will do anything you like—but show off; shines everywhere except in the examinations. Almost the only boy—or man, for that matter—I ever knew who learned for learning's sake, and not for profit or display. He has studied what pleased, not what paid; and wandered far afield from the beaten track of our school curriculum. Yet even in the scgool curriculum he could have distanced all competitors. He will do great things at the University" (for to both men Oxford was the University), "if he wants to. That's the rub. There is not in his character the slightest tincture of emulation, which, as you know, is often the polite word for envy, but is a good, work-a-day, serviceable virtue (or vice), all the same. Unless you can find 'some spur to prick the side of his intent,' he will drop quietly out of the race that he can win so easily. For him to try is to triumph. I did my best to rouse him, but after an hour's talk he left me half persuaded that it was not 'worth while.' Hoping for all our sakes you will succeed where I failed,

"Ever, my dear Trevor,

"Sincerely yours,

"Matthew Moorehead."

Following this letter the day after its posting. Harry Trevor got down to Lavella on the morning of a glorious spring day, when the smiling land looked its best in its fresh finery of green and gold. John Trevor and Eva, smiling too, met him at the door, and welcomed him and made much of him. All three breakfasted together.

Between those three, who so loved each other, pleasant talk flowed from morning to noon, touching many topics as it went with drifts and eddies here and there, but holding its main current on the boy's life at school and his prospects for the future.

All the time his friend's letter held its place in the judge's mind. It was inevitable that his thoughts should find words at last.

"You will find Oxford more to your taste than Eton, Harry," he said.

"I think not," the other answered. "Indeed, with your permission, sir, I don't intend to try. I enjoyed my school-days, but I have had enough of them."

"But a university is not a school, my boy."

"A higher class school—that's all. I don't need it."

"Oh, Harry!" the father cried out, in consternation; "you are surely jesting. I have had a letter from your head-master prophesying for you a brilliant university career. It would make you too vain to read it for you."

"Hardly that, I think," young Trevor said, smiling. It is curious on what terms of easy, affectionate familiarity the son and father were. "I trust vanity is not my weakness. Moorehead—I beg his pardon, Dr. Moorehead—is very kind to say kind things of me. He was good to me at school, and gave me a pretty free hand, for which I am deeply grateful. But I want more freedom still with the rest of my life."

"Moorehead is certain that the highest honors in the University are open to you. You have only to accept success."

"But I don't want University honors."

"But for my sake, Harry—for your mother's sake—don't rob us of the joy and pride we will feel in your triumphs."

Eva, who was sitting close by, said nothing, but there was wistful entreaty in her eyes, and Harry Trevor paused before he answered.

"No," he said at last, abruptly, "it cannot be. It wouldn't be fair, it wouldn't be honest, to——" he checked himself as abruptly. "I am very sorry to disappoint you, mother" (he had almost said "Eva"), "but I feel strongly about this, and I trust I may be let have my own way. Who knows? hereafter I may do something to please you both better than winning big boys' prizes at the University—some real, honest work in the world. Just for a little while I should like to rest and enjoy myself. Won't you let me?"

There the discussion ended, as all discussions with Harry Trevor ended, by his having his own way.

"Take your own course, my boy," John Trevor said heartily; "I've an idea you know best what's good for you."

"Just a taste of the fresh air and sunshine is good for one. But where are the others?" I have been expecting every moment to see them, Ardel and little Jeannette, and—Lucy."

"And Colonel Wickham," Eva added, with a smile. "He's staying with us just now, Harry. The whole party have all gone up the river since early morning. They mean to camp out for the day. It was Lucy thought of it. She guessed that for the first few hours we would like to have you all to ourselves. If you care to follow, you will catch them on the near point of Lisavanny Island."

"Will you not come?"

She shook her head smilingly. "It's my busy day, and I've idled the whole morning pleasantly away."

"Will you, sir?"

Judge Trevor pointed good-humoredly to a huge pile of books and papers that overflowed from his desk on to the chairs and floor.

"That judgment has to be finished by to-morrow, and your mother is not the only person you have idled this morning."

"That's a hint. The sooner I am out of your way the better. I will take a selfish canoe and stroll quietly up the river after them. Good-bye till dinner-time."

But when he got to the boathouse, instead of a selfish canoe, he selected a shiny mahogany pleasure-boat, with a pair of light sculls and a cosy, cushioned seat at the stern.

The joy of life ran riot in young Trevor's veins, and vague visions of delight, too vague for word or thought, stirred his heart to restless ecstasy. Round the last long reach of the stream the boat swept in an even curve into widening water, where the river lay at large with a wooded island steeped in sunshine in its midst. At the island's edge a delicate spiral of blue grey smoke broke from the tree-tops to merge in the deeper blue of the sky. He eased his stroke and shipped his oars, letting the boat glide. It slid over the glassy surface, smooth as a bird on stretched wings, with no sound but the low music of rippling water at the prow.

With a deft touch of his oars he checked the boat under the overhanging branches, and hung suspended on the clear water, where the opening trees gave the living picture clearly to his eyes.

Ardel—the great Dr. Ardel—was down on his knees before a small wood fire, which flickered faintly with a smoke-like flame in the ardent sunshine that broke upon it through the rents in the high green roof. Close to his side Jeannette stood waiting, with a burnished brass tea-kettle in her hand.

At that moment Colonel Wickham was speaking earnestly and Lucy was listening patiently, with eyes on the green sward and white hands nervously interlaced.

Though he was a good forty yards away, Harry Trevor felt like an eavesdropper, so plain from their faces was the purport of their talk. So he dipped his oars again with a splash and ran his boat's pointed prow deep into the yielding moss of the bank.

Quick-eyed Jeannette saw him first, and cried to the others. There was a rush to the bank to greet and welcome him, and Ardel and Jeannette were boisterous in their joy. A look of anger passed over Wickham's face, just the shadow of a cloud, and was gone, and he greeted the new-comer frankly. Only Lucy hung back a little, though the light of welcome was shining kindly in her eyes.

Tea was made and the luncheon basket unpacked, and Jeanette played hostess with the delight of a child in its own make-believe, and the pleasant meal heightened the charm of the pleasant company and sylvan scene.

Jeannette at last leaped up with a little cry of dismay as she caught a glimpse of the red sunset through the trees. "It's a quarter-past six," she cried. "I went bail we would be back in good time for dinner at seven."

"Half an hour to row, and a quarter of an hour to dress; we'll be in jolly good time," Ardel answered, while he slung the luncheon basket lightly to his shoulder and started for the water's edge, where their boat lay.

"Come with me?" Harry Trevor whispered to Lucy, as they followed together in the rear of the party.

"Deserting us, Miss Ray?" Wickham called out from the other boat. "Take care that boy does not drown you." He took the front seat in the boat; Ardel rowed stroke, Jeannette facing him, with the silken strings of the rudder between her fingers.

"Is it to be a race?" she said, glancing a saucy challenge over her shoulder at the other boat that followed.

"Oh, a race, by all means," said Dr. Ardel, always eager for physical effort and excitement.

"Not this time," Harry Trevor answered laughingly. "Two to one is too hard a handicap, especially when one of the two is Vivian Ardel."

"I'll change boats if——" Ardel began impetuously, but he glanced at Jeannette in the stern and stopped short.

"Race away," cried Trevor, "if you want to race. Give old time a licking, and tell them we are coming."

"All right," Ardel cried cheerily. "Ready there, Colonel?"

The two oars dipped together without a splash, and the boat shot, like a darting fish, into the current.

"How well Ardel rows!" Trevor said to Lucy, as the front boat drew swiftly away. "See how the oar bends to his stroke and the boat flies."

"Oh! Dr. Ardel is a marvel to me," she said softly. "He is younger to-day than when I first met him, —met him to speak to him, I mean, —ever so many years ago. I was a young girl then, and you were a baby, Harry. You need not smile superior, sir. I often had you on my knee in those days and read fairy-tales to you.

"You have often heard, of course, how Dr. Ardel saved my life at the risk of his own. Well, it was a little after that I had my first and last talk with him—with the real Dr. Ardel, I mean. Every word is still fresh in my mind." She blushed softly at the tender remembrance. "I always think of him as he was then. The real Dr. Ardei is dead, Harry; as dead as if his body were in the grave. The man we know so well and love so well is Dr. Ardel only in outward shape. You are as like the real man as he is."

Harry Trevor smiled—a queer, amused little smile.

"You need not laugh. You are far more like the real Doctor Ardel than he is," she added defiantly. "Yet he is the man himself, not you. The man who saved my life and gave me happiness; the man in whose soul is hidden— obscured, it may be, but not lost—the genius of which I got one brief glance on that memorable evening. I would forfeit my life freely, Harry, to give him back his real self."

The sentence began lightly and ended very earnestly.

"He is so young," she said, after a pause. "In thought and spirit he is far younger than you are, Harry, who are not half his age."

"I can well believe it," he answered slowly. "I sometimes feel as old as if I had begun life at the dawn of the creation—older than the eternal hills; older than this ancient river, which rolled down to the sea a thousand years ago as it does to-day, with naked, painted savages on its banks, who lives their lives out, whose bodies are now dust, or air, or water, and whose souls are——"

"Don't, Harry, don't. You know how it hurts me to hear you talk like that. Clever boys, I have often heard, like to play at being unbelievers. They get sense as they grow older."

Again that queer smile stirred the corners of his mouth, but died out demuredly under her searching eyes.

"Dr. Ardel was not quite orthodox, I have heard," he said quietly.

"I don't know. In my one talk with him there was no hint of unbelief. To me he seemed all wisdom and gentleness. I was full of gratitude, and admiration, and fear of him," she went on, "fear, above all. Eva—your mother, I mean—spoke of him as a kind of god. I dared hardly look or speak at first. But he was so gentle that I forgot my fear. Never in my life shall I have an hour like that again. Often he looks as he did then. Age has hardly touched him at all, and for a moment or two I cheat myself into the belief he is the same; but the moment he speaks the delusion is gone. His thoughts are the thoughts of a boy. I never knew him to take life seriously for an hour until Jeannette came back from school in France six months ago. But that would never do, of course."

"What would never do?" he asked, smiling.

"Oh, you know as well as I do. He is forty-seven years and she is just sixteen. It's quite too absurd." There was a curious eatnestness in her insistency.

Jeannette seemed to like him?" Harry ventured.

"Oh! Jeannette likes him, in a way. Sometimes she half forgets how old he is. But now that you are home——"

"Why, what have I to do with it, Lucy?"

"Oh! nothing, of course," she said quickly, half amused, half confused at his amazement. "You have the strangest effect on me, Harry: I never speak with you for five minutes without quite forgetting how young you are. I never feel like this with Jeannette, and she looks older than her age, and you look younger. I might easily be your mother, you know."

"I know nothing of the kind," Harry interposed, with quite unnecessary earnestness.

His eyes met hers, and there was a moment's self-conscious, embarrassed silence before either spoke again.

"Tell me something of your school life, Harry," she said, glancing sharply from the dangerous topic, as a skater glances aside from thin ice. "Are you glad it's all over?"

"It was a pleasant life enough," he said at last, "but I'm not sorry it is over."

"When do you go to Oxford?" she asked.

"Never": and he told her of the discussion and the decision of the morning. "Do you think I was right, Lucy?"

"Oh, I think you were quite right. But still, I want to know what next. You are not one to waste your life in idleness."

"I hardly know what next," he replied, speaking slowly. "I have chosen my profession. But first there is something else, something infinitely more important that——"

"Which profession?" she interrupted hastily; "not the Army or the Navy, I hope?"

"No, not the Army or the Navy. I have no taste for the science of slaughter in any of its departments. It's my ambition to save, not kill. In my profession—I mean, the profession I have chosen—a man is always found on the right side in the eternal struggle between life and death."

She glanced at him in quick surprise. "How strange!" she cried. "Dr. Ardel spoke just like that to me. Oh! I remember it so well. Can you possibly have——" She broke off laughing as her eyes rested on the smooth, fresh, boyish face of her companion.

"Oh, Harry! I declare you have bewitched and bewildered me again. I was just going to ask you if you remembered what Dr. Ardel said when you were a three-year-old baby. I never can remember for five minutes at a time how young you really are."

"Don't remember it, Lucy," he broke out abruptly, almost fiercely mastered by the passion that was burning in him. "Think of me always as a man in thought, in feeling, in resolve—a man that loves you, and will love you to the hour of his death."

"My poor Harry!" she said softly, at last, "my poor, foolish boy! I cannot laugh at this; you seem so horribly in earnest. But you will laugh at it yourself a few months—maybe a few weeks hence, and then I'll join you."

"But, Lucy——" he began.

"No! no! no!" she interrupted, a touch of sternness in her gentle voice; "I must hear no more of this folly, now or ever. The time will come, and come soon, when you will thank me for refusing to listen to you."

"Never!" he retorted; "my love is more than my life to me. Is there no hope, Lucy? I can wait."

She smiled in spite of herself. "Wait; yes, Harry, wait till I'm an old woman Not such a long wait, either. Surely your sense of humor should have saved you from this folly."

"Tell me one thing, at least," he insisted, "that there is no other who——"

A faint blush flickered on her cheek, but her pure eyes met his glance steadily. "That is a question you have no right to ask, but I will answer it. The past is past. There is no other. Let that be the end."

(To be continued.)

Are You One of the Weak Ones?

Subject to Sinking Spells and Feelings of Languor, Depression and Weakness—You Can be Helped by

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

Very many people feel much as you do. They do not like to confess that they are sick, but they are weak and languid, feel drowsy and depressed after meals, are easily tired and discouraged, suffer from indigestion, sleeplessness, irritability and general bodily weakness. At times, it may be, some of the old-time vigor returns, but you no more than get your hopes aroused when the sinking spells come on again and you are as helpless and disheartened as ever.

Such symptoms point to lack of nourishment in the blood and an exhausted nervous system. You can get well if you will but restore the system by using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. This great food cure forms new blood and instils new force and energy into the wasted and depleted nerve cells. It makes you well in nature's way by supplying to the blood and nerves the very elements in which they are lacking.

These symptoms of which you complain are but a warning of approaching nervous prostration, paralysis, locomotor ataxia or even insanity. The time to act is before these dreadful diseases of the nerves have fastened themselves upon you. They are much easier to prevent than to cure, as many know, on account of long years of helplessness and suffering.

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food will give you new hope and courage. Not only will you be able to feel the benefit you are deriving from it, but by noting your increase in weight you can prove conclusively that new, firm flesh and tissue is being added to your body.

The success of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food in curing all ailments arising from weakness of the blood and an exhausted condition of the nerves has been phenomenal. 50 cents a box, 6 boxes for $2.50, at all dealers or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto. To protect you against imitations the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous receipt book author, are on every box.

WEAK AND NERVOUS.

Thousands of Lives Made Miserable by a Trouble Easily Overcome.

Thousands of people throughout this country suffer continually from nervousness—their blood is poor and watery, their nerves unstrung and jaded. They are pale, weak, often troubled with headaches and dizziness, are exhausted with the slightest exertion, and often feel as though life were a burden. There is only one absolutely certain way to get new health and strength and that is through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. These pills make new, rich, red blood, strengthen the nerves, and bring health, strength and happiness to those who use them. Mr. D. W. Daley, Crystal City, Manitoba, proves the truth of this. He says:—"I have used Dr. Williams' Pink Pills with wonderful results. Before using them I was weak and nervous; my blood was poor; I was pale and suffered from pains in the region of the heart. Now after the use of eight boxes of the pills my nerves are strong; my blood is pure and rich; I have a good color and my heart action is regular. I think there is no medicine can equal Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for these troubles."

This is the verdict of all people who have given the pills a fair trial, and those who are sick can obtain new health and strength through the use of this medicine. Do not waste money and further enhanger your health by taking any substitute. See that the full name of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People is printed on the wrapper around every box. If you cannot get the pills from your dealer they will be sent by mail at 50 cents a box or six boxes for $2.50 by writing to The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

NOTES FROM MANYWHERE.

The electric roads of the United States carried last year three times the population of the earth.

It costs $10 a week to feed a horse in Pretoria. There is plenty of fertile land in the country, but little water.

Plant life is much more tolerant than animal life of extremes of temperature, growth having been observed, in some instances, as low as zero and in other instances as high as 72 degrees centigrade. It is true that a freezing process does not destroy life. A fish or a frog will, on thawing, become quite lively again.

MERRY, HAPPY BABIES.

There is no greater treasure on earth than a healthy, happy, merry baby. Anything therefore that will keep the little one in this condition is a priceless boon to mothers, Mrs Wm. Bull, Maple Creek, N.W.T., tells how she accomplished this end; she says:—"I am happy to say that Baby's Own Tablets have done my baby girl a world of good. She was badly troubled with constipation and very cross and peevish, but since using the Tablets she is all right. I give her the Tablets once or twice a week and she is now such a merry, happy little thing that there can be no doubt Baby's Own Tablets are just the thing for little ones."

Here is a lesson for other mothers who want a safe and certain medicine for the ailments from which their little ones suffer from time to time. These Tablets are sold under a guarantee to contain no opiate or harmful drug, and they are good for all children from the new born babe to the well grown child. Sold at 25 cents a box or sent by mail by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

VALUE OF GOLD COINAGE.

No less a sum than £6,908,000 was issued in 1902 from the Royal Mint in gold coins, as against £2,599,000 in 1901. The Edward VII. £5 pieces put into circulation were of the value of £174,000, and the £2 pieces of the value of £30,000. The number of pieces struck was 122,386,550.

CHAMOIS IS VANISHING.

Attention has recently been called by scientists to the disappearance of the chamois from the French Alps. These graceful animals, in spite of the fact that they conceal their homes and places of refuge in the most inaccessible spots, at heights varying from 2,600 feet to 11,500 feet, are mercilessly hunted out and shot down, so that there is danger of their complete extinction.

Piles To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain and absolute cure for each and every form of itching, bleeding and protruding piles, the manufacturers have guaranteed it. See testimonials in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured. 60c a box, at all dealers or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

Dr. Chase's Ointment