STRONGER THAN DEATH

OR

A RANSOMED LIFE

CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont.)

He flushed with pleasure, but stumbled at the hint she shyly gave. Young Trevor helped him out. He seemed curiously eager to help Ardel in this strange love affair.

"Would to-morrow suit you, Jen, for a second exhibition? Ardel will give me my revenge, I know, and I'll do my best to make the play worth looking at; though bad is my best when he is concerned."

"You'll come too, Wickham," said Ardel delightedly.

The handsome colonel started from a brown study. "Oh, I am afraid not; I shall be busy."

"Cannot you spare us an hour or two to see fair play?"

"All right," he answered smiling, "I'll come—to see fair play."

So it was settled.

They were a curious contrast, those two who stood facing each other next day, in close-fitting silk jerseys, foils in hand, before the wire masks went on. Harry Trevor was of the Saxon type, fair face and sturdy figure, square shouldered and strong limbed, good looking but commonplace, blue-eyed, curly haired with the fresh complexion of a girl. He looked more than ever a boy confronted with Ardel's stately figure. In the soft wave of Ardel's dark brown hair there were touches of white, "a sable silvered," but there were no lines on the broad brow, no dimming of the dark eyes. The tall figure that faced Trevor so gracefully was still in the full prime and strength of mature manhood. A young spirit seemed to have kept his body young.

Between the two women who watched the trial from the balcony the contrast was not less striking. Laughing eyed, dimpled, buxom Jeannette was the very embodiment of gay youth, Lucy of pure and gentle womanhood. It was curious to note that the boy's eyes went up for encouragement to the woman, and the man's to the schoolgirl.

In every game of chance or skill, even the casual spectators invariably take sides. Which side did Lucy take and which Jeannette? They could not themselves have told. While the men and women talked together before the trial, Lucy was strong for Trevor and Jeannette for Ardel. But when the two stood facing each other in the arena, each woman felt her sympathy waver and shift from the champion of her first choice till Lucy's interest centred in the man, and Jeannette's in the boy.

Wickham who, from the first, seemed strangely and even nervously excited by the scene, handed to each man the foil he had used on the previous day, and gave the signal to begin, shuffling and bungling over the simple task.

The long salute was performed with easy grace. Ardel loved the quaint ceremony of his favorite sport, and would pretermit no pass or wave or flourish of the foils.

Then the blades kissed, and for a long minute the swordsmen, motionless as statues, and as graceful, with foils advanced and feet firmly planted, and open left hand raised high over the shoulder, stood searching each other's eyes.

Ardel moved first—just a little quiver of the right hand and wrist—but his blade's point slipped under Trevor's and back again, once, twice, three times, elusive alike to eye and touch, then his body went forward with a quick spring and Trevor felt the button prod him sharply in the side.

"One for Ardel," the umpire cried as they dropped their swords' points and Lucy smiled and Jeannette pouted. They had changed sides again.

The next bout was longer, but it ended the same fashion, with a touch on Trevor's sword arm. Then his chance came. He parried a straight thrust of Ardel's so closely that the point ripped his jersey at the side as it went by.

Before Ardel could get back to guard, quick as light Trevor's lunge followed the parade. His right hand dropped to his hip; his arm and body went forward together, his whole weight and strength behind the thrust. The button caught Ardel on the right breast and the flexible steel bent with the insistent impetus behind it. Then suddenly the foil snapped within an inch of the point, and the jagged end went on. It passed within the fastening of the mask and raised the skin of Ardel's throat; a shade closer had been instant death.

Trevor recovered his broken sword instinctively—dazed by the narrow escape of his friend; incapable of speech. Wickham rushed forward with pale face. The women shrieked as a few drops of blood trickled from Ardel's throat with widening crimson stain on his white jersey.

Only Ardel himself was cool. He touched the broken skin at his neck with his finger tips. "It's all right," he cried cheerily, "only a pin scratch. Get yourself another foil, Trevor. I mean to pay you out for that."

But Trevor flung the broken weapon from him furiously. He was trembling all over and faint from reaction. "Thank God, thank God!" he muttered under his breath; then suddenly he burst out crying like an hysterical girl.

In an instant Ardel was full of surprise and sympathy.

"Don't worry, old man. It was the purest chance. It could not happen again in a thousand years. It was a miracle that one of the foils should go like that. Well, we won't fence any more if you don't care to, and I'll sit down patiently under defeat. Only don't take it like that, Harry; don't look as if you had seen a ghost, or as if you were a ghost yourself. If the sword had gone clean through you instead of only scratching my skin, you could not look more ghastly."

"Nothing at all, Miss Ray," he continued, turning to Lucy; for the girls in their fright had come fluttering down to the floor of the gymnasium. "It might have been an accident and it wasn't; that's all. There is a Providence in the fall of the sparrow, you know. I'm the sparrow this time, though I'm afraid I don't quite look the part. I'll just give those two male Miss Mollys a nip of brandy and they will be all right. Kindly get to your perch, ladies, and we'll be with you in ten minutes. It's only a scratch, really, Miss Boydell, and a small scratch at that. See, it has stopped bleeding already."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Harry Trevor's thoughts were still in a tumult when the party separated anh he got back to his own room. The suddenness of the danger, the narrowness of the escape, still stunned him with the thought of what might have been. Wild vague hopes had been for the past few days taking form in his heart, and that little scrap of jagged steel came so near ending all. At the back of his mind there was some other thought—a fear or a suspicion—which he could not catch firmly or see clearly, and which troubled him the more for its vagueness. He still paced the room restlessly, backwards and forwards, when suddenly, as he passed the window, a glint of white in the woods caught his eyes, and stayed his footsteps.

Love's eyes are quick and sure. In a second he guessed what the gleam meant—in a second more he knew. from his window, through a long arched vista of trees, he could see where two paths crossed deep in the woods. Even as he looked, Lucy and Colonel Wickham came distinct into the sunlight for a moment, passing from shade to shade along the leafy pathway. They walked slowly, and talked earnestly as they went, Wickham's tall figure bending towards his companion. Trevor started at the sight, and drew his breath in sharply, like one in pain, stifling a groan, and at the instant the illusive thought that had baffled him so long took clear form in his brain, shaping itself from various hints and memories to a horrible suspicion.

He left his room and went straight to the gymnasium. With curious distinctness he remembered the corner into which he had flung the broken foil. It was no longer there. His suspense deepened. The broken fragment from the top—had it also disappeared? It would seem so. He searched the floor carefully, the close clean bare matting making the search easy, but it was quite in vain. Just on the point of giving over in despair, by mere accident he caught sight of what he sought. The foil button with the inch of thin steel attached had been jerked by the pressure that snapped it into the air, and caught as it fell between a pair of boxing gloves that hung by the wall. Trevor could just reach where it stuck. One look was enough. His suspicion hardened into grim certainty. At the fractured point the steel had been cut almost clean through by a sharp edged file.

Then the whole truth broke upon him like a flash of lightning, stunning and blinding him. The mysterious poisoning from which he had saved Ardel three years ago; the startling gun accident three days before—he knew what both meant now. Wickham was plainly resolved, at any cost, by any means, to rid himself of his rival—his favored rival—as he believed, in the love that was the fierce dominating passion of his life. In heart he was a murderer—a cunning and cowardly murderer. Trevor had a quick throb of joy to remember how, almost from the first, he disliked the man, and how dislike had grown with better knowledge. The cold cruel treachery appalled him. How strange, he thought, that this same man—this murderer—should once have been wrongfully charged with murder. But that charge was surely false. None knew better than Trevor the strength of the proof on which Wickham's innocence rested. Innocent, he had been in deadly peril of his life; now, trebly guilty, he was quite safe. The proofs of his guilt, conclusive to Trevor, were worthless to the world, mere intangible suspicion. He could brazen out the charge defiantly. There was no place for shame or fear to take hold of such a man. Vivian Ardel still stood within his danger; at any moment the fourth and fatal blow might fall.

What was to be done? what was to be done? The mere thought of Ardel's death filled Trevor with terror; he could not think clearly. The walls of his room seemed to close him in and stifle him. He caught up his hat and escaped down the avenue into the wood.

Gradually his agitation worked itself out in rapid exercise, and his course again lay clearly before him. What he had resolved on must still be done. It was hard, it was humiliating to the bitterest dregs of shame, but the hope of winning Lucy lay bright beyond the pain and shame. In a day or two, if all went well, he might claim her as his own, to hold and guard against the world. Then let Wickham do his worst—he would take the danger of that guardianship.

His reverie was broken in upon by meeting suddenly, face to face, at a sharp curve of the walk, the man on whom his thoughts were centred—Wickham—radiant with triumphant happiness.

Trevor's face lowered ominously at sight of him.

But the sun shone full in Wickham's eyes and for a moment he could distinguish only a vague outline. In that moment Trevor's self control came back.

"Halloa! my boy, is it you?" cried Wickham jauntily; "out for a walk all alone? Could you not coax Miss Boydell to come with you? How did you leave poor Ardel? none the worse for his fright, I hope. I would ask you to congratulate me, Harry," he added in a graver tone, "but it is a secret for the present."

So saying he went by gaily, whirling his cane and cutting the leaves from the overhanging branches on either hand as he walked. Half a dozen paces he stopped suddenly and called back to Trevor.

"I wish you'd turn back with me, if you don't mind; I want a word with you." But when Trevor walked back by his side, he had nothing special to say. Their talk, as they walked, turned—Trevor turned it designedly—on the incident in the gymnasium. But his companion was not troubled in the least. He spoke of Ardel with easy contempt, and that kind of pity one might feel for a hurt animal.

"It was a close thing for both of you, my boy," he said. "There would have been an inquest, of course, and all that kind of thing. But all's well that ends well, and this business has ended well—very well indeed." His thoughts were evidently elsewhere; he was almost incoherent in his exultation.

At the top of the long stone steps Ardel was waiting for them, and Wickham, still brimming over with good humor, passed ifto the house with the man whose life he had three times attempted.

(To be continued.)

Standard Cure for Itching Piles.

When Doctors and Surgeons, Medicines and Operations Fail, You Can be Cured by

Dr. Chase's Ointment.

There is always some standard by which the merits of an article are measured. Among ointments the standard is Dr. Chase's. If a dealer tries to sell you any other kind he tries to clinch his argument by saying "This is as good as Dr. Chase's."

Don't be satisfied with substitutes or imitations, for Dr. Chase's Ointment is the only positive and guaranteed cure for every form of piles.

Rev. Wm. Thomas, Brownsville, Ont., writes: "As a man of seventy years I am grateful to God and to Dr. Chase's Ointment for a cure of piles which has caused me endless annoyance and much misery. The itching and burning was almost beyond endurance, but Dr. Chase's Ointment brought quick relief, and as the trouble has not returned, I have reason to believe that the cure is lasting."

Mr. Duncan MacVicar, Caledonia Mines, N. S., writes:—"For a number of years I have been troubled with bleeding and protruding piles, which only afford me temporary relief. Sometimes I would be laid off from work for weeks. One day last winter one of your books came into my hands, and after reading the testimonials of Mr. Donald MacLean of Tarbot Vale, N.S., and Rev. S. A. Duprau of Belleville, Ont., I decided to give Dr. Chase's Ointment a trial. After using two boxes of this ointment I found myself completely cured. What I suffered from that awful disease would fill a big book. You are at liberty to publish this, as it may be the means of convincing some poor sufferer, such as I was, that there is a cure for piles. To all sufferers from piles in any form I would recommend Dr. Chase's Ointment as the only cure."

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.

CURED OF ASTHMA.

THE REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE OF A NOVA SCOTIA MAN.

He Had Suffered for Years and Often had to Sit Night After Night at an Open Window Gasping for Breath.

Mr. Thomas Johnson is well known in the vicinity of Hemford, N.S., He has taught school in Lunenburg county for more than thirteen years, and his reputation as a teacher is deservedly high. It is known that Mr. Johnson has been a severe sufferer from asthma, and as he has found a cure for the trouble, a reporter thought the facts of his case would prove interesting to similar sufferers. "One evening," said Mr. Johnson, "while lighting my pipe I inhaled the sulphur from the match. The fumes appeared to penetrate every portion of my lungs, and nearly strangled me. It was more than an hour before I recovered from the effects of this mishap, and I believe that that was the starting point of the trouble that has made my life so frequently miserable since. At all events a few days later I had my first attack of asthma. Following this the attacks became more and more frequent, sometimes continuing for a week or more at a time. When these attacks came on I dare not lie down, and many a long, cold winter night I have passed at an open window gasping for breath. I was treated by two of the best doctors in the country, but derived no benefit. Then I began trying the remedies usually advertised as a cure for this trouble, but with no better results. I was continually growing worse and life was becoming a burden. About a year ago my wife was using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and was deriving so much benefit from them that one day she said to me, 'Why don't you try these pills, they might do you good, and they certainly can't do you harm.' To please my wife I began taking the pills, but only occasionally at first, but inside of a few weeks I felt that I was improving in many ways. Then I began to use the pills in earnest, and soon found that breathing was becoming easier, the spasms came less frequently, and I could go about out of doors without danger of bringing the trouble on as was formerly the case. I took twelve boxes of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills in all, and after the improvement began every box added to it until all signs of the trouble had disappeared, and I have not since had any recurrence of it. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have saved me from a life of misery, and I am glad to make this public acknowledgment."

The above strong evidence proves that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are not an ordinary medicine and that they cure when other medicines fail. Every pill makes new, rich, red blood, and thus enables the system to resist the inroads of disease and works a cure. Only the genuine pills can do this, however, and the purchaser should see that the full name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," is printed on the wrapper around every box. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for $2.50, by writing direct to the Dr. William's Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

GUILLOTINE IN SWEDEN.

Who would have supposed during the Reign of Terror that a day would come when the guillotine would be used for a laudable purpose? Yet this has just happened in Sweden, for a guillotine has been erected on the market place at Gothenburg, where it is used daily for the purpose of decapitating chickens, ducks and other domestic animals. The local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is responsible for this novel step. Animals, it claims, may legitimately be used as food, but there is no reason why they should suffer while dying, and the surest way to avoid such suffering is to employ a guillotine as an instrument of death.

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 permanantly cures Catarrh and Hay Fever. Blower free. All dealers, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Buffalo.

TYPHOID FEVER IN AUTUMN.

Reasons Why it Exists and How to Prevent It.

The question is often propounded, "Why is typhoid fever most prevalent in autumn?" It might just as well be asked, "Why does typhoid fever prevail at all?" since the answer is much the same in both cases: namefy, because the measures employed to prevent typhoid are inefficient, neglected or ignored.

Improper disposal of sewage lies at the root of the matter, for although all sewage may not contain typhoid germs, it is possible that it may contain them at any time. Thus it is safest to regard all sewage as contaminated with typhoid germs.

If sewage is allowed to contaminate the water-supply or food it is but a question of time when typhoid germs will reach the stomach through the water-supply or food.

The germs of typhoid, like the seeds of other vegetable organisms often prove more vigorous when transplanted to a new soil. This was illustrated in the various camps established during the war. While no soldiers evidently ill with typhoid fever were received in them, men suffering from attacks so mild that they did not appear ill brought the infection. By not regarding all sewage as capable of conveying infection and by omitting disinfection of all waste materials, the conditions of camp life furnished abundant means for the contamination of drinking water and of food, and typhoid of a virulent type became alarmingly frequent.

No doubt many cases of typhoid fever are contracted in country districts, especially by those who leave the city in the summer.

If all sewage were promptly disinfected typhoid fever would become extinct. This is most difficult except where, by a system of perfect piping, it is possible to carry the waste directly into the sea. In inland cities and in country districts there is still need for the introduction of improved methods of sewage.

In country districts and towns where no plumbing is employed but where sewage is deposited in open wells, vaults or drains, typhoid fever is a constant menace. In such cases the antiseptic value of wood ashes may be utilized. Coal ashes may likewise be used, but the effects are not so markedly germicidal.

The germs of typhoid are also killed by prolonged exposure to direct sunlight, but in a watery medium they sink into the soil; and in soil of certain kinds they may remain unexposed to the sun, and in a state capable of transmitting infection for years.

Killing the germs of this disease by some simple process of antisepsis would prevent the infection of water with this disease. Until this is generally done, boiling all water of which there is any quest,on is essential to healthfulness and peace of mind.—Youths' Companion.

POLICIES FROM THE SLOT.

Latest Insurance Office in an Automatic Machine.

It will shortly be possible to obtain an accident insurance policy by means of a penny-in-the-slot automatic machine, says an English exchange. The machine is fraud-proof, and has the appearance of a clock in the glass case. When the penny is dropped into the slot and a handle drawn forward, a sharpened pencil drops out and an opening is disclosed, upon which the customer signs his name. The handle is then pushed back, the space closes, an insurance policy is issued, and against the signature inside the machine is printed the date and exact time of issue.

If the purchaser meets with an accident within seven days of the issue of the policy, he applies to the Law Accident Insurance, and if his name is on the register he receives a weekly allowance for five weeks. Anyone will be able to insure up to the amount of his weekly wage—each penny invested providing 10s. per week.

Attached to each policy are four coupons, and on presentation of these to tradesmen in the neighborhood of the machine a discount of one penny in the shilling on all goods bought up to four shillings will be allowed. It is proposed to place these machines in factories, warehouses, and mills, where large numbers of workpeople are employed.

THE FIRST BABY.

What joy there is in the home when the first baby comes, and yet to the young and inexperienced mother who has to care for it there is no other period of her life so trying. In the little ills that are certain to come the inexperienced mother scarcely knows what to do. To the young mother—to all mothers—Baby's Own Tablets are a real blessing. They promptly cure such troubles as constipation, colic, sour stomach, diarrhoea and simple fevers. They break up colds, destroy worms, allay the irritation accompanying the cutting of teeth and prevent more serious ills. These Tablets are sold under a guarantee to contain no opiate, nor any other of the harmful drugs always found in the so-called "soothing" medicines. They are good for all children from the new born babe to the well grown child. If you do not find the Tablets at your medicine dealers send 25 cents to The Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., and a box will be mailed you post paid.