STRONGER THAN DEATH

OR

A RANSOMED LIFE

CHAPTER XIX.

Next morning Ardel broke impetuously into Trevor's room.

"Have you heard the news. Harry? Wickham has gone off like a shot; left by the morning train. I never was more surprised in my life when my man brought me this note with my coffee: 'Called away in urgent haste.—E. Wickham.' Not much in that it's shorter than a wire. Haven't the least notion where he's off to. Thought perhaps you might know when he'd be back-"

"Never!"

"Never! Then in the devil's name what has become of him?"

He's gone to America for good. Perhaps I should not say that—he has gone for life. Don't look so startled, Vivian. I'll tell you all about it at some time, but for the present I want you to take my word that Wickham was a thoroughly bad lot, and we are all well rid of him."

"Of course I'll take your word for anything, old man. Never cared particularly for Wickham myself. But he was so set upon Lucy that I thought it only fair to give him his chance. By Jove! though, I'm amazed he could make up his mind to leave her like that."

"He could not help himself. Lucy has had a narrow escape of the man, but she has escaped, thank God. Don't let us talk or think of him any more. He has passed out of our lives for ever."

Then after a pause, "There is something else I want to say to you, if you will hear me out patiently, but it is horribly hard to say."

"Then don't. I'll take it for granted."

"I must." Trevor could hardly force the words out. "A horrible, guilty secret must be told, though I can hardly expect you will believe me. I cannot hope you will forgive me."

"Don't talk rot," said Ardel brusquely. "You must be drunk or mad to talk like that. You have been such a friend to me, Harry, as no man ever had before. If I got back something of my manhood after that awful seizure, I owe it to you—wholly to you. That time I took the poison you pulled me out of the jaws of death. But that's nothing You've been as patient with me as a mother with her baby. You've helped me in a thousand ways. You're a clever chap, and I'm a dull one. But I'm not dull enough to forget all I owe you while I've life to remember it. So don't go on raving any more like a decent fellow, or I'll send for the doctor."

"I'm not raving, I'm speaking the plain, sober truth. I've wronged you as no man ever wronged another in this world before."

Ardel tried to laugh one of his great good-humoured laughs, but he broke down in the middle of it, frightened in spite of himself by the earnestness of the other's face and voice.

"By Jove! you look as if you had a ghost story to tell."

"I have a ghost story to tell, a true ghost story, a strange ghost story; too strange I'm afraid to be believed in spite of its truth. Will you listen to it?"

"Fire away! only if it is anything bad about yourself, don't expect me to believe it."

Again there was a long pause. The two men sat close together at the window, with the grey dawn on their faces. Ardel listened, flushed, curious, excited, while Trevor, with low, forced utterance at first, told the strange story of a stolen life. His voice grew firmer as he proceeded. Throughout there was that in its tone that compelled belief.

Ardel listened to the end, patiently, without word or sign, except the whitening of his face, held silent by amazement. The morning wore on; the grey dawn blushed into vivid rose color in the east. But those two men, speaking and hearing strange things, took no account of time. The whole world was ablaze with sunshine which flooded the silent room when the narrative closed at last.

Ardel broke the silence. "Well," he said quietly, "is that all?"

Then Trevor looked in his face for the first time since he began his story.

"Is it possible for you to forgive me?"

"Right away. I don't see myself there is very much to forgive after all. I'm bewildered about the business yet. The whole thing seems like a fairy tale, and I'm not sure whether I'm myself or somebody else. No! you need not sat a word more. I believe it right through. I cannot help believing it. You make yourself out as bad as you can in the story. But even on your own showing, the life you borrowed was a life you had just saved. I don't know I've had altogether the worst of the bargain. I've had a good time; life has been very pleasant to me, and you've worked hard to make it pleasant. It's a comfort, I must confess, to know that my mind never really broke down, and that I don't remember things because they never happened to me. Even yet I can hardly get my head clear. Don't look so ghastly about, it Harry; I'm a bit dazed, that's all. I'll get used to the notion after a little while, I daresay."

"You are not angry?"

"Not a little bit. You gave me more than you took from me by a great deal."

"You are contented then; happy as you are?"

"Quite."

Trevor's face fell.

"Yet——" Ardel added slowly.

"Yes!" broke in Trevor very eagerly.

"Oh! there is no use of talking or thinking of that; I'm perfectly content. Don't worry yourself any more about me. Let this be our secret. To the rest of the world things can go on as before."

But he sighed regretfully in spite of himself.

The other was quick to notice it. "Speak out frankly to me what is in your mind," he cried earnestly. "Would you have your youth back again?"

Ardel started to his feet, eager, excited, at the very thought of it. "But could you do this thing, Harry?"

"I believe I can. I'm almost sure I can. I tried last night with Wickham, and found the old power is as strong as ever in me. There may be a risk, of course—are you willing to face it?"

"I'd risk death a thousand times for the mere chance. Cannot you see youth means hope and love to me? It means the right to woo Jeannette and win her if I can. But," with sudden remorse, "it will be very rough on you. My gain is your loss."

"I'm more eager for the change than you can be."

"But what tempts you?"

"A brighter hope, a greater love than yours. Forgive me; every man thinks his own prize best, and mine is more than life to me."

"But when must I?"

"Now, if you are ready."

The answer was a smile and a nod.

"Then draw your chair closer, Vivian. It's the last time, I hope, I shall call you by that name; closer still; there in the full light. Now look me full in the face, and give your will over to mine."

Again there was silence in the sunlit room, while thought and sensation ebbed slowly away from them, and sleep profound and unconscious as death, came upon both.

CHAPTER XX.

"Oh! how you startled me," cried Jeannette, looking up beamingly from the book in which she had been absorbed. "So it's you—is it?"

"Yes, it's me. Am I in the way?"

She looked at him in quick surprise. She had never heard that tone in his voice before.

It was Harry Trevor undoubtedly. The boyish figure, the handsome young face, blue-eyed, and flaxen haired. But there was a youthful eagerness and exhilaration in the face that was quite new to it.

The bright black eyes of the girl opened wide as she gazed at him, and the red lips parted slightly showed a gleaming thread of white between.

"I thought it was Dr. Ardel; "then with a mocking smile that made her eyes dance and her cheeks dimple, "She is not here, Harry. She has just gone out for a walk in the demesne."

"Who is she?"

"Who is she?" mockingly. "Lucy, of course. Do your think I'm quite blind?"

For answer he seated himself quietly beside her in the deep cosily-cushioned couch of the great drawing-room, which looked out through a wide arched window on the green world.

But the surprise in her eyes made him nervous. He picked up from her lap the book she had been reading.

"Oh! I'm glad you took my advice. Isn't it ripping poetry! It carries you along like a horse's gallop."

"Your advice, Harry! Why you never spoke to me about it, never! You wouldn't look the same side of the library as Scott."

"Wouldn't I, by Jove! I think there is no one to match him. Don't you remember only yesterday I was saying to you——?"

He stopped and whistled, a long low whistle of perplexity.

Again she looked at him hard, in utter bewilderment.

"Why, silly boy, you never spoke to me once yesterday; you were better engaged."

Though they had grown up as children together it was the first time she ever spoke to him or thought of him as a "boy."

"You know you had eyes only for——"

"That's nonsense, Jen."

He turned to the title page of the book.

"Why, it's my copy of the 'Lady of the Lake'; the copy I gave you!"

"You gave me! Dr. Ardel gave it to me. There is his name."

"Well!—am not I——?"

"Are not you Dr. Ardel?—is that what you were going to say!"

"Would you like me better if I were?"

"I don't know. He's livelier than you are—generally."

"I'll be livelier too for the future, if that pleases you," he said, edging a little nearer to her on the couch.

"You are a little too lively now, sir. Let that cushion stay just where it is—between us." But there was surprise, rather than displeasure in her voice, and he was encouraged to bide his time.

Presently they fell into a pleasant talk, easy, lively, unconstrained, such talk as she had often had with Dr. Ardel, but with Harry Trevor, never before.

She was still perplexed by the vague change in him, and ever and again under the long lashes she stole a look—half puzzled, half admiring—at the gay young face, that for the first time beamed upon her with overflowing love.

The blue eyes caught the black in one of those stealthy glances. She blushed and her voice faltered. His young blood took fire with love's longing. But he could find no words to say what he wanted to say.

"I wish I could tell you what I think about you, Jen."

"Try it, if it amases you."

"I'll get Scott to help me."

Again he picked up the prettily bound volume of the "Lady of the Lake," and turned the pages and read,—

"And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care;
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind;
Her kindness and her worth to spy
You need but gaze in Ellen's eye."

"That's why I like the 'Lady of the Lake,'" he said, "Ellen always reminded me of——"

"Of whom?" with a mocking challenge in her eyes.

"Of some one," he answered timidly. "Did you read it? Do you like it, Jen?"

"No, I don't. I have no patience with your Ellen, to fall in love with a walking gentleman when there was a real man like Roderick Dhu to be had."

"I wish I was like Roderick Dhu!"

She looked at him and broke into a peal of laughter, voice and eyes brimming over with merriment.

"You'd look too killing, Harry, in kilt and claymore," she began.

But the sheepish appeal for pity in his face checked her.

"Oh! you foolish boy," she went on, the rebellious laughter still dimpling her rosy cheeks, but with kindness shining in her eyes. "I don't want to tease you, but you provoke me to it. You are not yourself at all this morning."

A sudden seriousness fell on him. "No Jen," he said, "I'm not myself: not the self you knew all your life as Harry Trevor. A change has come to me; more strange than anything you could dream of. Can I hope you will not like me less, but more, for the change?"

"I don't know. You give me a shiver when you talk in that mysterious way."

"It's the last time I'll talk mystery to you, Jen. I'm not given that way as a rule. I should dearly like to talk something else if I dared."

"But what is the wonderful secret of yours, Harry?" she whispered, coming a little closer to him.

"I have sworn to tell it to only one person in the world."

"And she is——?:'

"She is to be my wife. Oh, Jen, don't you know, can't you see, how I love you? I have loved you ever so long, but I never dared to speak till now because—— Will you try to love me a wee bit in return?"

"I don't know," she said very softly and slowly, "I'm afraid not, but—" the black eyes thrilled him with a sudden glance—"I'm dying to know that secret-"

At that he would have caught her to him, but the lissom figure slipped illusive from his clasp, and his arms held the empty air.

Yet there was hope and love in the bright look she threw at him as she fled.

Her book lay open on the sofa, and he deliberately crossed out the name "Vivian Ardel," and wrote "Harry Trevor" on the title-page.

(To be continued.)

Kidneys and Liver Affected by Colds

Backache and Pains in the Legs the Common Symptoms—Cure Comes with the Use of

Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills

Exposure to damp, cold weather is a frequent cause of kidney disease. Sitting in a draught so as to chill the feet and legs is frequently enough to bring on congestion of the liver.

Colds settle on the liver and kidneys as well as the lungs. The results are diseases of the most dreadfully painful and fatal sort.

As yet there has never been discovered a preparation equal to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills as a prompt and thorough cure for derangements of these great filtering organs.

Pains in the back, headache, urinary disorders, biliousness, liver complaint, dyspepsia and constipation soon disappear when Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are used.

Mr. Arthur Walden, Ferryville, Carleton County, N.B., writes: "My wife was a great sufferer from kidney diseases for several years. She was troubled with pains in the small of the back and in the side, was gradually losing flesh and growing weaker. She got into a very bad state, suffered dreadful pains and her ankles would swell up so that we were afraid of dropsy. We had a book of Dr. Chase's in the house, and, reading about Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, decided to try them. Relief soon came with this treatment. My wife has been entirely cured, and says she would not be without Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills for ten times the price."

"I am using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food myself, and it is building me up wonderfully."

Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, one pill a dose, 25c a box, 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.

A WOMAN'S FACE.

PLAINLY INDICATES THE CONDITION OF HER HEALTH.

How to Obtain Bright Eyes, Rosy Cheeks and the Elastic Step of Perfect Health.

"A woman's face," said a well known physician, "is a mirror which reflects unfailing the condition of her health. One can tell at a glance if she is well or not and usually one can tell what the trouble is. It so often happens that instead of bright eyes, rosy cheeks and an elastic step, there are dull eyes, pale, sallow or a greenish complexion, and a languidness of step that bespeaks disease and perhaps an early death if the right treatment is not resorted to. The whole trouble lies with the blood, and until it is enriched and invigorated there will be no release from suffering and disease. Unquestionably the greatest of all blood-renewers is Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Good blood means health, vigor, life and beauty, and the one way to make your blood good is to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Out of many cases which illustrate the truth of this may be cited that of Miss Amanda Damphousse, Ste Anne de la Perade, Que., who says "For more than six months I suffered greatly from weakness, bordering almost on nervous prostration. I suffered from headaches, palpitation of the heart, and pains in all my limbs. I had no energy, no appetite no color, and my nights were frequently sleepless. At different times I consulted three doctors, but none of them seemed able to cure me. A friend strongly urged me to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and I finally followed her advice. With the use of the first box my health began to improve, and five boxes completely restored me. I now have a good appetite, headaches and pains have disappeared, and I never felt better in my life than I do now. If I am ever sick again you may be sure that Dr Williams' Pink Pills will be my only doctor."

If you have any disease like anaemia, indigestion, heart palpitation neuralgia, rheumatism, or any of the other host of troubles caused by bad blood, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will surely cure you. Be careful to get the genuine, with the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," printed on the wrapper around the box. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for $2.50 by writing to the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

IT ANSWERED WELL.

Wife (with solicitude of tone)—"I must be very lonesome sitting all by yourself at night, balancing your books?"

Husband (tenderly)—"It is, my darling."

Wife—"I have been thinking about it for some time, and now I have got a pleasant surprise for you."

Husband—"A pleasant surprise?"

Wife—"Yes, dearest. I sent for mother yesterday, and I expect her this evening. I mean to have her stay with us a long time. She will take care of the house at night and look to the children, and I can go down and sit in the office with you while you work."

Husband—"The dickens—that is to say, I couldn't think of you going to town."

Wife—"It's my duty, dearest. I ought to have thought of it before but it never came to my mind till yesterday. Oh, John, forgive me for not thinking of your comfort sooner But I will go and sit with you to-night."

Husband—"To-night! Why, I—I—the fact is I got through with my books last night."

Wife—"You did? How delightful And so you can now stay at home every evening. I'm so glad!"

And the delightful wife ran off to make preparations for the reception of her mother, while the husband with sombre brow, sat looking at the picture of a card party, with one member absent, in the glowing grate

EXERCISES WHEN HE SLEEPS

Curious Habits of the Leader of the Irish Bar.

Stephen Ronan, K.C., who may be regarded as the leader of the Chancery bar in Ireland, who was one of the counsel for The Times in the Parnell Commission, together with the present Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Atkinson, is one of the most interesting of men. Among his friends his peculiar methods of work have earned for him a certain notoriety. His day is divided as follows:

On leaving the courts, which close at 4 in Ireland, he hies home and gets into an old hat and a suit of old clothes, time-honored but comfortable. A huge, black, weather-beaten pipe completes his equipment, and after some light refreshment he buries himself in briefs and legal tomes till 6, when he takes a short walk. From 6.30 till 7.30 work is continued, the evil-looking briar still very much in evidence, and then dinner brings about a temporary deverce from both.

After dinner (generally a careful meal owing to refractory digestive organs) the pipe once more, and a possible caller; and then bed and sleep till midnight. Awaking punctually at the witching hour, he dons an ancient waterproof, and a rakish-looking soft hat, and starts perambulating round the square in which he lives, smoking the trusty briar till 3 a. m.

He then returns home and reads till 6, at which hour he makes it a rigorous rule to be in bed. He sleeps till 10, makes a hasty toilet, gulps down his breakfast, and hires a cab—he has not been known to walk to the courts for years. Then he is ready for work at 11, when the judge sits. Surely an extraordinary day! His vacation is generally devoted to yachting, of which he is an ardent devotee.

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

OKLAHOMA HOTEL RULES.

Gents goin' to bed with their boots on will be charged extra.

Three wraps at the door means there is murder in the house and you must get up.

Please write your name on the wall-paper so we know you've been here.

The other leg of the chair is in the closet if you need it.

If the hole where that pane of glass is out is too much for you, you'll find a pair of pants back of the door to stuff in.

The shooting of a pistol is no cause for any alarm.

If you're too cold, put the oilcloth over your head.

Caroseen lamps extra; candles free, but they mustn't burn all night.

Don't tare off the wall-paper to light your pipe with. Enuff of dat already.

Guests will not take out them bricks in the mattress.

If it rains through the whole overhead you'll find an umbrella under the bed.

The rats won't hurt you if they do chase each other across your face.

Two men in a room must put up with one chair.

Please don't empty the sawdust out of the pillars.

If there's no towel handy use a piece of the carpet.

WHEN BABY CRIES.

When a baby cries almost continually it is a certain sign that there is something the matter with its stomach or bowels, and the mother should at once give it a dose of Baby's Own Tablets, which sweeten the sour little stomach, promote digestion and gently relax the bowels. Mrs. Fred McIntosh, Wabigoon Ont., who has had experience writes: "When my little boy was two months old he began to cry and kept it up almost continually day and night for several weeks. I gave him medicine, but it did not seem to ease him a bit. I had not at this time used Baby's Own Tablets, but the poor little fellow was suffering so much that I sent for a box. He obtained ease almost from the first dose, and in a few days was quite well. Since then he has grown splendidly, and is a bright, laughing, good-natured baby. I hold the Tablets in the highest regard and cheerfully recommend them to all mothers.

This is the verdict of all mothers who have used the Tablets. They are good for children of all ages and always cure all their minor ailments. Sold by medicine dealers or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing The Dr Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.