THE HEIR OF SANTLEIGH

OR THE STEWARD'S SON

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Where is your wife?"

Cyril's arms, which had been held out to take her to his heart, dropped to his side.

"Where—is—my—what?" he exclaimed, gazing in profound amazement at the lovely face, which, though flushed with indignation, still conveyed a hidden and suppressed tenderness.

"Your wife," Norah repeated, her lips quivering; "where is Becca? Oh, how can you——" she meant, "offer to take me in your arms," but said, instead, "how can you come to me?"

"Becca! Do you mean Becca South?" said Cyril, more and more amazed. "How on earth should I know? What have I to do with Becca South, or Becca any one else?"

Norah's breath came fast, and her eyes dilated.

"Oh, how can you answer me so?" she said, piteously. "I know everything! It is useless to try and deceive me. It is wicked—cruel and wicked. Why have you come here?" and the lovely eyes grew dangerously limpid.

Cyril put his hand to his head. No doubt at that moment he fancied he was dreaming, and that it was only a vision of Norah which stood before him, asking the most extraordinary of conundrums.

"Norah," he said, desperately, "Norah, I don't know what you mean. I'm in a whirl. What are you doing here? Why, I've not seen her since the night of that confounded ball at Ferndale——" He stopped suddenly, for Norah had swayed slightly, and with a low cry, sank into the chair.

He sprang to her, but she put her hand out to keep him off.

He called upon her name in a frenzy, and as her eyes closed, he looked around for the bell. Not seeing it, he did, perhaps, the wisest thing he could do—flung up the window and seizing a shell which "ornamented" the table, flung it at the window opposite.

Jack's head appeared promptly, with every expression of wrath upon his face.

"Come over at once!" shouted Cyril, and before Norah had succeeded in fighting off the fainting fit, Jack Wesley was in the room, looking amazedly from one to the other.

"Well," he said, "what has happened? Lady Norah, are you ill? Cyril, are you mad? What have you been saying to her?"

"It's what she has been saying to me!" retorted Cyril, half demented.

Jack Wesley pushed him aside, and brought a glass of water and gave it to her, and she opened her eyes and fixed them on him penitently, and then on Cyril, with an expression difficult to describe, but full of tenderness and hope, and a half-fearful joy.

"Are you better, Lady Norah?" said Jack. "Don't pay any attention to him, please. Keep away, Cyril. Now, tell me what is the matter."

Then Norah opened her lips and struggled for words.

"Ask him to tell me the—the truth," she said, brokenly. "I can bear anything but this uncertainty. Ask him to tell me if it is true that he is married to Becca South."

"There!" exclaimed Cyril; "that 's what she asked me before you came in. Tell her, Jack——"

"Hold your tongue," said Jack Wesley, whose acute brain was beginning to get the drift of things. "Are you married to the young person mentioned?"

"Am I? Oh, great goodness, I shall go mad," said Cyril. "Married to her! You know; she must know, that I am not; that I would not marry any one but—but one woman, if my life depended on it!"

If there had not been that awful tragedy behind it, the situation would have been almost farcical. But it was very serious to two of them, and Norah hid her face in her hands and began to cry.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she moaned, but with a cadence of joy and thanksgiving. "Oh, how—how wicked I have been!"

This brought Cpril on his knees beside her instantly, and he dragged her hands tenderly from her face and looked up at her, all his soul in his eyes.

"Norah, my darling, my darling!" he murmured, and a long string of passionate endearments. "What does it all mean? Why have you treated me so—so cruelly? Why did you not answer my letters? Why did you tell Jack"—Jack had discreetly gone to examine a picture on the wall, and kept his back turned upon the pair—"why did you tell Jack that you were no friend of mine, and—and let me believe that you wished to see no more of me? Oh, my darling, you have nearly broken my heart!"

"Mine is—is quite broken," whimpered Norah, her hands grasping his arm with little spasmodic pressures. "Oh, Cyril, I thought, I believed, that you had deserted me; that you were married."

"Deserted you! Married!" he repeated. "But why—why—why?"

"Because you went away with her—with Becca," said Norah, in a low voice.

"I went off with Becca—poor little Becca South!" he echoed. "Great Heaven! what made you think so?"

"They told me so at the station," said Norah, faintly; "and—you were with her that night of the ball, and I saw you—ah, I saw you give her the ring——"

Cyril uttered a groan of desperation.

"I know! Yes, I gave her the ring. I once gave a child a stick of taffee, and Becca was no more than a child, a—a nothing to me. I gave her that ring because she had found it, and she was unhappy about that, among other things, and I thought it would console her——"

"And—and then you went away without a word——"

"Without a word? Why, Norah, I wrote to you; I sent you a letter by her; I couldn't help going. I wrote and explained it all. I begged and prayed you to send me a word—just one word. But you didn't. Nor did you when I wrote from Brittany, imploring you to tell me why you had cut me at the ball. Why didn't you write?"

"I never got the letters, either of them!" said Norah, the tears running slowly down her face, "and I thought—oh, Cyril, how could I help it?—that—that you wished to break off, that you had thought better of it, and——"

He puts his arms round her and strained her to him, and cut short her broken attempts at explanation.

"Thank God! Thank God!" he exclaimed. "And that is all! You are not angry with me for anything? You—you love me still, Norah?"

"I have always loved you!" she panted, under her breath.

Jack had transferred his attentions to another picture, and the lovers had forgotten him.

"And you did not know why I had gone to Brittany?"

"I didn't know you had gone there. I never received either letter," said Norah.

"Then—then where are they?" demanded Cyril, of no one in particular.

Norah shook her head. Possibly she did not care very much. She had got her lover again and all in a moment joy had come back to her heart with him. She held him with that clinging grasp which only a woman knows the secret of, as if she feared some one would come and take him from her again; and her lovely eyes, full of subtle worship and tenderness, looked into his eager ones.

"Where are they? And why did the people at the station tell you—— Why, by George! they must have mistaken the emigrant girl whose ticket I took for Becca," and in rapid sentences he told her of the incident.

"Oh, that was so like you, dear!" she murmured. "But—but it was cruel that you should be punished; I mean I——"

"Say both."

"That both should be punished because you were kind to a poor, lonely girl."

"Yes," he responded, with something of his own bright, light-hearted smile, "but it will be a lesson to me. I'll never help any woman under fifty again. But Norah, dearest, tell me—the letters—what became of them?"

Norah shook her head.

"I do not know; I cannot——" guess she was going to say, then stopped, as Guildford Berton crossed her mind.

"And—and what are you doing here? Are you alone?" asked Cyril, in the tone of one who has so many questions to ask that he doesn't know which to put first. "Not alone, dearest? There is someone with you?" He touched her black dress. "I have heard of—of your loss, dear. If I had only been with you! I am so sorry, Norah. I only heard of it five—ten minutes ago, from Jack here——"

Norah's eyes grew moist again, but she swept the tears away.

"Yes, I—I am alone," she said, looking down, and with a sudden sort of embarrassment, and she gently began to draw her hands away from him, reluctantly, clingingly.

"What is the matter?" he asked, quick to perceive that something was wrong. "What is it, dearest?"

At this juncture Jacked looked round.

"I think I have intruded long enough,' he said; "I'll take myself off. You can call if you want me. Don't break another window, Cyril."

Norah held out her hand to him.

"Will you not say that you forgive me, Mr. Wesley, for my rudeness to you that night?" she said, her big eyes turned on him so pleadingly that Jack's heart, which was of the very softest, melted in a moment.

"I'd forgive you more than that, Lady Norah," he said; "and I understand now that the sting was meant for our young friend here rather than for me; and he got it. If you had seen him when I told him—— But there," he said, quickly, "all that is part of the past misunderstanding, Lady Norah."

Norah looked up at him gravely.

"You are as good as Cyril said," she murmured, softly. "But—but you must not call me Lady Norah."

Jack stared at her.

"I—I beg your ladyship's pardon; Lady Arrowdale, I suppose I ought to have said."

"No," said Norah, "I am not Lady Anything, I am simply Norah Woodfern."

It was a day of surprises, but this statement, delivered in her calm, sweet voice, startled the two men pretty considerably. Cyril got hold of her hands again, and looked up at her almost in a fright. Goddesses do not lose their senses, or else he might have thought—

Jack was the first to speak.

"What do you say, Lady Norah?" he said, gravely, for he saw that something was coming.

"It is true," she replied, looking from one to the other. "I am not Lady Norah, the daughter of the Earl of Arrowdale, but the daughter of the countess' companion, Catherine." Her lips trembled, and she lowered her eyes. "I'll—I'll try and tell you," she went on, bravely. "You—you must neither of you speak until I have finished, for my head," and she put her beautiful hand to her forehead, "is whirling."

Cyril holding her hand, and Jack leaning against the window with his arms folded, she told the story and produced the certificates.

Cyril could scarcely keep silent until she had concluded, then he broke out:

"It is false, Norah! It is a pure invention concocted to suit some purpose of Guildford Berton's. He is a scoundrel."

"He is a scoundrel, without doubt, said the grave voice of Jack Wesley. "But I think his story is true."

"I don't believe——" broke in Cyril.

"In the first place," went on Jack, very quietly and gently, "he would not have dared to concoct it, much less to forge these copies. He is too clever for that! You see, a lawyer's clerk could satisfy himself as to their genuineness by just taking a journey to Plymouth and these other places, and examining the registers——"

"Which may have been tampered with," said Cyril.

Jack Wesley smiled.

"I am sorry to dispel a delusion which has been of vast service to novelists; you can't tamper with registers nowadays. They keep a correct copy at Somerset House."

Cyril's face fell.

"No! The story is true, and as Lady—I mean Miss Woodfern says, she is no longer——"

"Which doesn't matter in the slightest!" exclaimed Cyril, his face flushing. "As it happens, I have a story to tell——" He stopped suddenly to utter an exclamation of surprise and pain, for Jack had administered to him a decidedly sharp kick upon the ankle. "Eh? What?" Then, catching the expression of warning in Jack's eyes, he colored still more furiously, and changed the direction of his wards. "But I won't trouble you with that now, dearest. What if it is true, this—this revelation? It doesn't matter to you—nor me, Norah?"

"To me— no!" she smiled, through her tears.

"And as for men, I'm—yes, don't be angry, dearest!—I am glad! Do you remember our talk in the woods? Do you remember my saying that I wished you weren't a peer's daughter——"

"I remember every word," she answered, shyly, her eyes dwelling upon him with as much of worship in them as a woman ever permits her eyes to reveal.

"Well, then, I am happy now!" he said, brightly. "You see," and he laughed, "I'm so confoundedly proud——"

Jack Wesley, with his back turned to them, grinned.

"And I might now and then have thought that you had thrown yourself away, and that you regretted it, but now——"

"You can both revel in poverty together," remarked Jack, blandly.

"Ex-exactly," retorted Cyril, but with rather a guilty air; "we can face the world hand in hand, and——"

"Be happy ever afterwards," said Jack.

"Don't mind him, dearest," said Cyril. "It is only his way; you'll get used to it. And now for a bit of good news. We shan't be so very poor, after all. Thanks to Jack, here, who pretends to be a bear, but is really as soft—as soft——"

"As an imbecile," put in Jack, in a low voice.

"I've got enough work to last for—for——"

"Your life," growled Jack, knowing how very little more work would be done.

Cyril laughed.

"I can't get a word in," he said. "But no matter. And now, dearest——"

"And now what about Lady—I beg pardon—Miss Norah's dinner?" put in Jack. "Would it be very wicked if I suggest that the committee adjourn to Cyril's favorite restaurant?"

Cyril laughed.

"Jack is always thinking of his dinner," he said.

"Because he has nothing better to think of, and no one to think for him," said Jack, with a touch of gravity and—could it be?—envy.

Norah smiled at them both.

"I will do anything you wish," she said, so sweetly that Cyril had hard work to keep from kissing her straight before Jack.

When she left them to put on her outdoor things, Cyril exclaimed in a whisper:

"You stopped me in time, Jack! I was just going to tell her!"

"You were. And would have upset the whole bag of tricks just as they were arranging themselves nicely."

"But—but I shall have to tell her!" said Cyril, with a troubled frown.

Jack thrust his hands in his pockets, and screwed up his mouth.

"If you will take my advice, just for once, you will keep that bit of information until—well, until after you are married," he said. "Blurt out to her that you are the Earl of Arrowdale, and—well, you'll see what happens. Miss Norah 's as sweet—— Look here, lad; for some inscrutable reason Providence has seen fit to bestow upon you an angel in the guise of a woman—hold on a minute!—but angels have some pride, and if you tell her who and what you are, her pride may take alarm. Keep quiet for a little while longer, and thank heaven for its goodness to a young cub who doesn't deserve half such luck as to marry the best woman I have ever met!"

Cyril grasped his hand in silent consent as Norah entered the room.

They went to the restaurant, and Cyril being, as Jack remarked, quite incapable of ordering a decent dinner under the circumstances, undertook the selection.

They were happy, these three, two of them ecstatically so, and the third—who read the paper a great deal, and pretended he could not hear their soft murmers—happy in their joy; and it came to Cyril as a sudden shock when, abruptly lowering the paper, Jack said, in a tone of earnest gravity, almost approaching solemnity:

"But where is this girl, Becca South?"

Cyril stared at him thoughtfully.

(To be continued).

PROGRESS OF CREMATION.

According to the British Medical Journal, the total number of cremations in Great Britain during the year 1905 was 600, as against 566 in 1904 and 475 in 1903. Whereas, however, in 1904 there were only nine crematories at work, in 1905 there were twelve. The cremations were dstributed among these as follows: Golder's Green, Hampstead, 252; Woking 95; Manchester, 100; Liverpool, 35; Glasgow, 35; Hull (Municipal), 15; Darlington, 4; Leicester (Corporation), 16; Birmingham, 22; Leeds (Municipal), 16; Ilford (City of London), 9; Bradford (Corporation), 1. The total number of cremations carried out at Woking from the date of its opening twenty years ago, to the end of 1905, is 2,748; those performed at Golder's Green number 635.

POPULAR HEARSES.

Hearses as equipages are used in Minnesota not only to carry people to the church, but to take them home again. The chief at the Yellow Medicine Indian Reserve goes to church every Sunday, proud as a peacock, lying in a hearse, looking out and bowing to his friends. The chief bought the hearse at a great price from a livery-stable man, who was glad to get the aged white elephant off his hands.

EARN CASH

In Your Leisure Time

If you could start at once in a business which would add a good round sum to your present earnings—WITHOUT INVESTING A DOLLAR—wouldn't you do it?

Well, we are willing to start you in a profitable business and we don't ask you to put up any kind of a dollar.

Our proposition is this: We will ship you the Chatham Incubator and Brooder, freight prepaid, and

You Pay No Cash Until After 1906 Harvest.

Poultry raising pays.

People who tell you that there is no money in raising chicks may have tried to make money in the business by using setting hens as hatchers, and they might as well have tried to locate a gold mine in the cabbage patch. The business of a hen is—to lay eggs. As a hatcher and brooder she is outclassed. That's the business of the Chatham Incubator and Brooder, and they do it perfectly and successfully.

The poultry business, properly conducted, pays far better than any other business for the amount of time and money invested.

Thousands of poultry-raisers—men and women all over Canada and the United States—have proved to their satisfaction that it is profitable to raise chicks with the

No. 1— 60 Eggs
No. 2—120 Eggs
No. 3—240 Eggs

CHATHAM INCUBATOR AND BROODER.

"Yours is the first incubator I have used, and I wish to state I had 52 chicks out of 52 eggs. This was my first lot; truly a 100 per cent. hatch. I am well pleased with my incubator and brooder. THOS. MCNAUGHTON, Chilliwack, B.C."

"My first hatch came off. I got 170 fine chicks from 190 eggs. Who can beat that for the first trial, and so early in the spring. I am well pleased with incubator, and if I could not get another money could not buy it from me. Every farmer should have a No. 3 Chatham Incubator.—F. W. RAMSAY, Dunnville, Ont."

"The incubator you furnished me works exceedingly well. It is easily operated, and only needs about 10 minutes attention every day. R. MCGUFFIN, MOOSE JAW, Assa."

The Chatham Incubator and Brooder is honestly constructed. There is no humbug about it. Every inch of material is thoroughly tested, the machine is built on right principles, the insulation is perfect, thermometer reliable, and the workmanship the best.

The Chatham Incubator and Brooder is simple as well as scientific in construction—a woman or girl can operate the machine in their leisure moments.

You pay us no cash until after 1906 harvest.

Send us your name and address on a post card to-day.

We can supply you quickly from our distributing warehouses at Calgary, Brandon, Regina, Winnipeg, New Westminster, B.C., Montreal, Halifax, Chatham. Address all correspondence to Chatham. 314

The Manson Campbell Co., Limited

Dept. 35, CHATHAM, CANADA

Factories at CHATHAM, ONT., and DETROIT.

Let us quote you prices on a good Fanning Mill or good Farm Scale.

IN MERRY OLD ENGLAND

NEWS BY MAIL ABOUT JOHN BULL AND HIS PEOPLE.

Occurrences in the Land That Reigns Supreme in the Commercial World.

It is said of King Edward that he has a clearer voice than any member of the House of Commons.

One of the rare eggs of the Great Auk was sold by auction in London on the 17th inst. for 200 guineas.

In the United Kingdom there are about 30,000,000 Protestants, 6,500,000 Roman Catholics, 10,000 Jews and 50,000 unclassified.

During 1905 the Royal Mint issued £6,500,000 in sovereigns and half-sovereigns, £510,491 in silver coins, and £170,325 in bronze.

The accumulation of gold is something marvellous. To-day the stock of gold alone in the banks of Britain and France is about £150,000,000.

It has been proposed by the municipal council in Liverpool to inflict a fine of two pounds on couples found kissing each other in a public place.

Lord Windsor will take the title of ninth Earl of Plymouth, that Earldom, which has been in abeyance since 1843, having been formerly held by his family.

Mr. W. W. Astor, the millionaire, is building a Tudor village and Italian garden, and constructing a fifty acre lake at Hever Castle, his residence in Kent.

This Christmas holly and mistletoe will be heavily loaded with berries, consequently an unusually large demand may be expected to arise for both these favorites.

It is now certain that the selection of Queen Victoria's correspondence from 1837 to 1861 will run to three volumes. They may be expected about this time next year.

The other day a poor woman complained to a London magistrate of the conduct of her husband in refusing to advance her the money with which to summon him. Some men are so unreasonable.

An appeal is made to Americans for funds to restore the tower of Purleigh church, and hang a peal of bells in it. This is the church of which the Rev. Lawrence Washington, ancestor of George Washington, was rector from 1632 to 1643.

Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co., Elswick-on-Tyne, have, since 1852, launched 113 war vessels, 402 passenger and cargo steamers, 83 petroleum steamers, 82 ice-breakers, dredges, etc., and 93 paddle steamers—a total of 773 vessels of 1,145,390 tons and 1,205,440 horse-power.

The late Mr. John Feeney, proprietor of the Birmingham Daily Post, bequeathed sums amounting to £89,000 towards various institutions and objects connected with Birmingham and district. A sum of £50,000 is left to Birmingham Art Gallery, and £20,000 to the University of Birmingham..

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman becomes Prime Minister at an age exceeded only by one premier of modern times—Lord Palmerston, who was 71 when he attained the leading place in the Government. Disraeli comes next. He was 64 when he became Prime Minister for the first time. Gladstone was 59, Lord Salisbury 55, Mr. Balfour 54, and Lord Rosebery 46.

WORLD'S LARGEST LINER.

Now Under Construction at Queen's Island, Belfast.

Another shipping record is being established by Messrs. Harland & Wolff, of Belfast. The White Star liner Adriatic, now under construction at the Queen's Island, will have a tonnage of 25,000 and a length of 710½ feet, a breadth of 75 feet, and a depth of 50 feet. She will be the largest vessel in the world.

The record was previously held by the Baltic, also built for the White Star Line by Messrs. Harland & Wolff. She has a tonnage of 23,876, 1,124 tons less than the new vessel, which she exceeds in length, however, by 15 feet. The nearest approach in size to these vessels is the Amerika—23,000 tons, belonging to the Hamburg-American, but with their new vessel the White Star will again be well ahead of all rivals.

The following lable gives the tonnage of the world's largest vessels:—

	Tons.
Adriatic (White Star) building ..	25,000
Baltic (White Star)	23,876
Amerika (German)	23,000
Cedric (White Star)	21,000
Celtic (White Star)	20,904
Minnesota (United States)	20,716
Carmania (Cunard)	20,000
Kaiser Wilhelm II. (Germany) ..	20,000
Caronia (Cunard)	19,594
Oceanic (White Star)	17,274
Deutschland (Germany)	16,502
La Provence (France)	15,000
Kronprinz Wilhelm (Germany) ..	14,800
Campania (Cunard)	12,950

When the young husband reached home he opened the parcel he was carrying and displayed a number of placards, some of which read, "For Show," and others, "For Use." "There!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "I flatter myself that I have at last solved the problem." "Solved the problem!" his wife repeated; "what in the world do you intend to do with those cards?" "I am going to give them to you," he replied, "so that you can put them on the various sofa cushions about the house."