A Dark Shadow;

Or, A Coming Vengeance

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued).

Clive and Quilton looked on for a moment or two; then, feeling that it would be useless to attempt to interfere, they turned away, and left Paradise Gardens to its usual condition of felicity.

At the opening of the larger street, and opposite one of the gin-palaces, Clive heard the strains of a violin. He started from the sad and bitter reverie which had held him, and saw Elisha fiddling away in the garish gaslight.

Elisha saw him, and, stopping his fiddling, shuffled up to him.

"Oh, is it you, sir?" he said. "I wanted to tell you, to thank you——"

Clive's hand fell upon the dwarf's shoulder, and stopped him; and turning to Quilton, he said:

"You can find your way home, Quilton, I suppose? Right! Good night!"

Quilton nodded, without an ounce of expression in his face, and walked off; and Clive turned to Elisha with a suppressed eagerness; for not until that moment did he realize how constantly the girl, Mina, had been in his mind, and how anxiously he wanted to hear more of her.

CHAPTER VII.

"You are a long way from home, Elisha," remarked Clive, as they walked along.

"Not so far as I sometimes get, sir," said Elisha. "It don't do to stick to one place; they get tired of the same tunes, and more tired of you. Why, even the swell players and singers have to go on tour sometimes," he added, with his sad, shy smile.

"That's so," assented Clive. He did not remind this humble musician of the pavement that his more fortunate brethren and sisters travelled first-class, and put up at palatial hotels, instead of tramping through the London streets to a second-floor back in Benson's Rents.

"I wanted to thank you, to tell you how—how surprised—regularly staggered—we were by the piano," said Elisha, with a flushed face and a tremulous voice. "But I didn't know where to find you; the man that brought the piano said he didn't know who'd sent it. If Tibby could have found out she'd have sent it back; as it was, there was a—a row, and I thought she'd have made 'em take it away in the van again."

Clive nodded. "Perhaps that's why I did not let them know who sent it; but I was afraid you'd guess. I hope you forgive me, don't think I've taken a liberty——"

Elisha shook his head. "No, sir; I knew it was meant in simple kindness—and so I told Tibby."

"And Miss Mina, was she—annoyed?" Clive could not help asking.

"No, sir; Mina was very quiet at first; and hasn't said much since; but she was pleased. It's a magnificent instrument," he went on, his eyes kindling with enthusiasm; "a beautiful tone, and a touch as kind as kind could be." He spoke as if the piano were alive and sensitive. "It was very good of you, sir, and I'm kind of overwhelmed—it's as if I couldn't thank you properly."

"That's all right," said Clive. "And has Miss Mina begun her lessons——?"

"Yes, sir, as soon as we'd got the piano in place. She was all eagerness, like a young hound straining at the leash. It was like a starving person going for a piece of bread. She was just wild for it. All she wanted was to thank you; and she'll be pleased to hear that I've met you; though she'd be more content and pacified if she could thank you herself, of course."

"You think she would?" said Clive hesitatingly. They had got into the Whitechapel Road by this time, and Clive hailed a solitary hansom. "If you are sure I shall not be intruding, I should like to come home with you."

He opened the door of the cab, but Elisha hesitated and looked frightened.

"It's a long way—a biggish fare—there's the 'buses——"

"I'd forgotten the 'buses for the moment," said Clive. "Never mind. Jump in—take care of your violin."

Elisha screwed himself into his corner, and looked about him with a nervous and fearful joy; he had never been in a hansom before, and only once in a four-wheeler—on his way to a hospital after an accident. He was so absorbed in the novelty and the luxury of this shabby, dilapidated vehicle that he started when Clive, who had been musing on the strange fate which seemed to throw his across the dwarf's path, said:

"Elisha, I want to ask you something. You won't mind, won't think I'm impertinently curious? I've noticed that Miss Mina talks much better than——" He paused. "She has been to school, of course."

"I know what you mean, sir. Yes; you've noticed that she speaks better than most girls, almost like a lady—if I may make so bold as to say so."

Clive nodded.

"I've noticed it myself, and I'm proud of it, of course. You see, it's this way: Mina's different to the other girls in the Rents, different even to Tibby, oh, very much so. I'm not saying anything against Tibby, you'll understand, Mr.——?"

As Elisha hesitated, Clive gave his name, but the cab had now reached one of the crowded thoroughfares, and in the rattle of the 'buses and carts Elisha only caught the Christian name.

"Tibby's as good a girl as there is, Mr. Clive; but she's not one for her books. She didn't take to schooling; there was rows between her and the teachers; most nigh every day; and she soon chucked it. Whereas Mina—well, Mina was all the other way. She was quite a scholard, and took to her books like a young duck takes to water. Never missed a day, she didn't; and not a cross word with the teachers. They was all fond of her, and proud of her, as you may say. They were anxious, she 'aving passed the standard—you know what I mean, sir?—for her to go on in the continuation classes, as they call 'em; but Mina, though she wanted to bad enough—I could see that—wouldn't hear of my spending more money on her schooling, and for all her gentle ways, she's as obstinate as other women when she's made up her mind, Mr. Clive."

"I see," said Clive. "She preferred to go out with you and earn some money."

"That's it, sir," assented Elisha; "and p'r'aps she was right. Of course we take a good deal more money when she's with me."

Clive took out his cigar-case. "Have a cigar, Elisha?" he said. "Yes do, please; I always enjoy a smoke better with company. Got a match?"

Elisha leant back and puffed at the cigar with nervous enjoyment, and Clive smoked in silence and profound cogitation for some time; then he said:

"See here, Elisha; I want to make a bargain with you."

The dwarf looked up with his big pathetic eyes.

"I'm afraid it'll be all on one side, sir," he said, shrewdly.

Clive laughed. "Well, it's this," he said. "I think I can get you some teaching to do, a pupil or two. If I can, you'd like to spend a part of the money in this extra schooling for Miss Mina?" The dwarf's face flushed with grateful appreciation of Clive's tact. If Clive had offered him money he would have refused it. "I share your belief in Miss Mina's future musical future," Clive went on quietly and in a matter-of-fact way; "and I think you'll agree with me that she would stand a better chance of succeeding if she were better educated, properly prepared for the position you would like her to rise to."

Elisha nodded eagerly. "That's it, sir!" he said. "It isn't the voice only; it's the style, the manner of saying her words, that will tell. A girl wants to speak and look like a lady, if she's going to be a concert singer——"

"That's what I meant," said Clive. "With so beautiful a voice as hers, so promising a one, she should have every chance——"

"And you're going to give it to her! Oh, sir——"

"Excuse me," said Clive, "you are going to give it to her, not I; don't forget that, Elisha. You won't find teaching the violin easy work by any means; and you'll earn all you'll get by it, for certain. Here we are, aren't we?" He stood on the pavement hesitatingly after he had paid the cabman. "I don't know whether to come in or not," he said more to himself than to the dwarf.

"I hope you will, sir," said Elisha. "It will ease Mina's heart to thank you. And Tibby will be out marketing," he added, naively; "she gets the things a bit cheaper if it's late, and Saturday 'specially."

"Well, then," assented Clive, but still hesitatingly.

As they went up the rickety stairs they heard the sound of the piano: five-finger exercises; and Elisha glanced at Clive with shy pride.

"She'd keep at it all day if I'd let her, sir," he remarked.

They entered the room, but Mina was so absorbed that she did not hear them; and Clive stood and looked at the slim, girlish figure, and the small head, with its dark silken hair, bent forward as if the whole body were in rhymth with the notes. Then, as Elisha said, "Mina!" she turned, at first with dreamy eyes that seemed scarcely to see them; but in a moment the eyes flashed, the pale face was suffused with color, and she sprang up and stood, one hand resting on the piano, the other pressed to her lips, as if to suppress a cry; her dark grey eyes fixed on Clive's with an inexpressible wonder at his presence, and a boundless gratitude.

"The gentleman—Mr. Clive—we met, and I thanked him, Mina," stammered Elisha; "but I told him you'd like to thank him yourself."

She did not move until Clive crossed the room, and held out his hand.

"I'm more than sufficiently thanked by the pleasure of seeing you playing, Miss Mina," he said. "I can hear how wonderfully you have got on——"

"Seems to come natural to her, sir," said Elisha. "It is so with some people. I 'ad a brother as played by ear; just let him hear a song or a piece of music once, and he'd sit down and play it, and play it correct, too. But I don't want Mina to play that way. I want her to be able to stick up a piece of music, and play it at sight."

Mina looked from one to the other with breathless eagerness; then her eyes rested on Clive's.

"Do you think I ever shall?" she asked.

"Yes; I think you will; I am sure you will," he said confidently.

She drew a long breath. "Yes; I will!" she murmured almost inaudibly. "Why did you send it?" she asked after a pause.

Elisha laid down his violin, and, in doing so, had caught sight of his hands, and he went into the next room to wash them.

By this direct question Clive was somewhat embarrassed; but more so by the steadfast gaze of the great childish eyes.

"I meant it as a little remembrance of our adventure the other night," he said. "You weren't angry—offended?"

"No," she said. Then, after a moment, her eyes fell, and as she raised them again there was a faint doubt, trouble in them. "Ought I to have been?"

"No, I don't think you ought," he returned with a quietness and gravity that reassured her. "Let me put it this way: if you were me, and you had sent me something that I wanted very badly and could not get, would you have expected me to be angry, offended?"

She shook her head at this piece of sophistry.

"But—but I told you about the piano; it was as if—as if I had asked for it," she said in a low voice, the trouble more plainly showing in her eyes and the quiver of her lips.

"Nothing was further from your thoughts, I know," he said, earnestly.

But she was not satisfied; and she stood, her hands—once again Clive noticed how long and slender they were—working nervously.

"I did not think—I was so glad, so pleased—it was as if it had come from the skies—that I did not think that I—I ought not to have it."

"If the sight of me has made you unhappy about it, I'm sorry I came," he said. There was silence for a moment; then a way out of the difficulty occurred to him. "See here, Miss Mina——"

She raised her head quickly, and the color rushed to her face.

"Why do you call me Miss Mina, as if—as if I were a young lady?" she asked half-resentfully.

Clive drew up a chair and sat down; he knew that she would sit, and she did so.

"If I were so impolite as to call you 'Mina,' you would have to call me 'Clive'—and you wouldn't like to do that," he said laughingly.

"No," she faltered, her brows bent.

"Then why should you think yourself better mannered than I am?"

She sighed as if she knew herself vanquished by his argument, but was not satisfied.

"I sing in the streets for my living; I'm not a young lady," she said.

"Excuse me; I don't agree with you. But we won't argue it. I was going to make a proposal."

She looked at him with a shy suspicion at the corners of her delicate lips, and kept her eyes on him.

"If you'd rather not accept my little memento of the other night, you shall have your way, and pay me for the piano."

Her eyes and lips opened, and she stared at him.

"Pay you! Why, you know I couldn't. It must have cost a great deal of money. Elisha says that it is one of the grandest and most beautiful pianos he ever heard, and Elisha knows."

"Quite so," said Clive. "Well, when you are a great singer, earning so many pounds for a couple of songs, you shall pay me for the piano—five-and-twenty pounds. Is that a bargain?"

She drew a long breath, and her face paled.

"Do you think I shall ever sing well enough to—to earn enough to pay for it? Do you? Ah, don't say 'Yes' just to please—just to deceive me!" Her hands gripped each other, and she held her breath for a moment, her eyes searching him as if to wring the truth from them; then she went on, in a lower voice, "I don't know why you are so kind—I don't understand. Nobody, even rich people—you are very rich, I suppose?"

Clive was about to declare laughingly that he was anything but a Crocsus; but he bethought him that his modest income would seem an enormous one to her, and contented himself with a non-committal shrug of the shoulders.

"Other people don't give away pianos," she said.

"You forget our bargain. I'm not giving you this——"

Elisha came back with clean hands, and moved to the piano.

"I'll ask you to hear Mina sing to it, sir," he said, nervously. "It gives her voice a better chance than the violin does."

He put a hassock on the chair, lifted himself up, and began the prelude to one of Hope Temple's simple melodies; but, strangely enough, the girl—a street singer—seemed shy and reluctant; the color came and went in her face, and her lips quivered with timidity; but Elisha struck the chords again, and looked up at her with faint surprise and interrogation, and she began. Her voice shook for a moment or two; then, like all true artists, she forgot her audience, and the notes rose clearly but with infinite softness. It was a pathetic little song, and deeply moved Clive, whose love for music amounted to a passion. He did not watch the girl's face, pale now, and spiritual with the artistic afflatus, but sat with downcast eyes and compressed lips.

"A beautiful instrument, sir," said Elisha; but the exquisite melody of the young voice was ringing in Clive's ears.

"Yes," he said, "it's all right. But Miss Mina must not sing in the open air again. It is too delicate a voice for so fierce an ordeal."

Elisha nodded a quick concurrence. "You hear, Mina?" he said, as if they had been arguing the question. "It is far bitter to wait until you can get a show at a concert; there's more money in it, isn't there, Mr. Clive? It's what I've been telling you."

"Far better," assented Clive emphatically. "And you'll be able to pay me all the sooner, Miss Mina." She flushed, and her eyes rested on him with mute appeal. "And now I must not stay any longer."

He held out his hand, and she put hers into it. He felt the slender hand shake and quiver with the flutter, the warmth, of an imprisoned bird; then she withdrew it quickly, as if she were suddenly conscious that it was trembling, and turned away.

Clive went down the stairs and into the street; the sweet voice was still ringing in his ears; he felt confused by an emotion which he could not understand, much less name to himself; and he stood for a moment outside the door as if in deep thought.

The little cul-de-sac was almost crowded with women and girls coming from their marketing at the costers' barrows; and they jolted against him with their baskets of fish and meat and vegetables. Some of the women had children hanging on to their skirts, and one of the mites stumbled and fell close to Clive's feet. He picked it up, and held it at arm's length as it yelled lugubriously.

"I don't think you're hurt," he said in a confidential tone, and with the smile which, when it shines in a man's eyes, children find irresistible. "A big little girl like you doesn't cry, you know. What?"

The child stopped its yell, and taking its dirty fist from its eyes stared down at him in amazement, and still waiting for the accustomed smacking. The mother also stared.

"Troublesome little toad!" she shouted. "I'll give you something, Emily Mord.—No, o' course, she ain't hurt; she's allers tumbling and fallin' abart;" she added to Clive, as she snatched the child from him and commenced to shake it.

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," said Clive in his persuasive way. "She couldn't help it; I saw how it happened. All good kiddies who are worth anything tumble about, don't they, Emily Mord?" He slipped something into the woman's hand. "Buy her a doll, and they'll learn together to keep their feet, you'll see. Good night."

As he turned away, the woman stopping the traffic to stare at him in open-eyed wonder, he ran against some one, and a voice cried sharply:

"Now, stupid! Where's your dawg?"

Clive recognized the voice, and looked down with a smile and a nod at the quaint little figure of Tibby.

(To be continued.)

How to Remove Speck From Eye.

The quickest and safest way of removing a particle from the eye is described by Hugh Wrigley, of Philadelphia, in a letter to Popular Mechanics. He says that when working at an emery wheel a spec of steel flew into his eye, whereupon a fellow workman felt along the lapels of his coat until he found a protruding horsehair. This he pulled forth and formed it into a loop by folding it double. The eyelid was turned back over a pencil; the speck of steel was found and removed by drawing the loop of horsehair over it. This is painless and cannot injure the most sensitive eye.

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On the Farm

Loafing Acres.

In travelling over the country I see fields that are claimed to be worth from $50 to $100 per acre, with a pile of stones lying here and there and several scrawny, half-dead trees standing about over this land and perhaps with a swale running across, writes Mr. R. B. Bushing.

Have you any such on your farm that are not yielding a profit, perhaps scarcely paying taxes?

These acres are loafing and, what is worse, not only loafing, but costing the farmer hard-earned money every time he sends a man into the fields to work. Time wasted in turning around obstructions is very great and time is money these days.

With the modern machinery that we want to use and to cultivate and harvest our produce, a man must have a clean sweep across the land if he is after the greatest profit.

Only a few dollars would remove these worthless piles of stone and those old, half-dead trees which are just in the way. Then the land would be available for use.

By putting in an underdrain a worthless swail may be transformed into a fertile field. Stones and trees are all right in their places, but the best place for the stones is in making a dam at the lower end of some low place to help catch the wash, and the best place for the trees is in a clump by themselves or very near the fence and not scattered all over an otherwise profitable field.

It is a very common thing to see large strips of land that are not in shape to be cultivated; loafing in weeds and brush between fields, simply because the farmer has not the ambition to fence them in.

If you have such land that cannot be put under cultivation with profit it should be fenced and turned into pasture, or if you desire to grow trees, and, of course, you should grow some, set out a useful variety, but be sure not to allow the land to loaf away your profit by growing absolutely worthless weeds and brush.

It is a shame to have land under cultivation and continue to work it while it is so thin that it will not produce anything worth while.

Farm land is just like a bank. You can draw checks on it if you have a deposit of fertility, but unless there is a deposit there can be no checking.

It is sad to see a farmer plow, sow, cultivate, harvest and thresh half a crop from a field when with the same amount of labor he could have prevented his fields from loafing by supplying the amount of plant food needed to grow a full crop.

We can look about and see those who are doing things right. Why not take a lesson from them?

Look around this summer and see if there is not something that is loafing; if not, very good, but if there is, you must clean it up if you ever expect to have a full crop and make the most profit from the land. The successful farmer does not allow his land to loaf.

Destroying Weeds.

A good system of rotation that includes cultivated crops offers the best means of combating the common weeds; but its success is almost entirely dependent upon the manner and persistency with which the soil is cultivated. To insure reasonable success, the disk and harrow should be used frequently while the weeds are still small, and the crops while growing should be given frequent cultivation. Fortunately, the same tillage operations that are used in putting the soil in a condition to receive and conserve rainfall, to prepare the seed bed and to liberate plant foot, are likewise useful in combating weeds.

It Pays to Save the Manure.

Nitrogen is worth at least eight cents a pound. A horse will produce fifteen tons of manure and litter a year, containing more than 130 pounds of nitrogen. At eight cents a pound, the value of that manure is $10.40. It pays to save it. Experiments have shown that liquid and solid manures when kept together deteriorate much more rapidly. Also, the more compact the manure is stored away from the weather, the least loss will result. Here is a hint for progressive farmers. Our farmers need this nitrogen, and when it represents at least $10 a horse, one can afford to take a little better care of manure.

Sober, Yet Is Alcoholic.

Liverpool (England) physicians are interested in a case of a travelling salesman who shows every sign of alcoholic poisoning, although a teetotaler. His illness is ascribed to excessive drinking of beef tea and other meat extracts, and physicians believe this indicates that nitrogeneous stimulants have an effect on the system similar to that of alcohol.

THE JEANNE D'ARC OF PEACE

BULGARIAN GIRL BRINGS OUT HORRORS OF WAR.

She Began the Mission as the Result of a Miraculous Vision.

Irina Schischmanoff, an impassioned Bulgarian girl of four and twenty, is the Jeanne d'Arc of peace. She is touring Russia as a lecturer in the cause of human fraternity, and she hopes later to visit West Europe and Canada, writes a St. Petersburg correspondent. She is preaching the horrors of war as she has seen them on Thracian battlefields. Everywhere she meets with unexampled success. Moscow high school girls got so enthusiastic that they formed a Universal Peace League, each member of which vowed to marry no man who has been a soldier or approves of war. The Jeanne d'Arc of peace, who is creating this tremendous effect, is a simple, unpretending little person, and, like the first Jeanne d'Arc, she ascribes her miraculous success to a divine call and to the intervention of Providence.

Irina Schischmanoff is the only daughter of an illiterate farmer of Tirnovo. She has had no chances in life except what she made for herself. Her father wanted her to stay at home and plough the rye-fields, but Irina rebelled. When aged thirteen she made alone for Phillipoppolis, where there is good girls' schooling, and set hard to work. She had then no notion of turning out a peace prophet. Her "call" came later when the Russo-Japanese ware broke out. Irina was then sixteen, and from that day on she has never forgotten that she is called to serve the cause of peace.

How "Call" Came.

Mlle. Schischmanoff describes how the "call" came. "I was sitting," she recalls, "in my bedroom just after sunset when it suddenly grew pitch dark. This frightened me, and I took it as a precursor of fainting fits, such as I have sometimes had. But a sudden wind blew through the window, and instead of feeling faint I felt extraordinarily awake, and with all my senses concentrated, it seems, on one thing. Soon afterwards in the darkness of the room an irregular white background formed, and on this I saw what must have been a battlefield. All I could make out were occasional heaps of dead and dying men, and many hills, from which I guessed that I was looking at a fortress-battlefield, which may have been Port Arthur. A moment later I heard a droning sound; a blue cross rose over one of the hills, and a hand above the cross beckoned to me imperatively. The droning sound ceased, and I heard the words "Voina protiv Voina" (Bulgarian for "War against War"). Next moment the battlefield faded, the white background grew grey, the room became lighter, and I found myself sitting again in the after-sunset twilight."

Irina took this vision as a summons from Heaven to make war upon war. The chance of obeying the summons seemed remote, as Irina was a penniless student, and she had no money, and none of the political and military knowledge necessary for a peace campaign. Brooding on the vision, she completed her studies at Phillipoppolis, and next went to Berne, where she studied further. She got the degree of doctor of philosophy and of medicine. When she returned to her Tirnovo home, she found war with Turkey brewing. Hoping at last to fit herself for war against war, she joined the Bulgarian forces as a nursing sister.

Attended to Wounded.

The Jeanne d'Arc of peace found herself first with the army of Ivanoff before Adrianople and next with the army of Adrianople which marched on Tchataldja. She dressed hundreds of wounded from the Adrianople trenches, and hundreds more who were wounded during the first abortive assaults on Tchataldja. This experience of real war confirmed her passion for peace. She describes how at one time she desired peace so strongly that she was willing even to forego part of the Bulgarian success. "After the second batch of wounded came from Adrianople I had another 'call.' I felt impelled to rush to the front; to dash in between the combatant armies and plead for peace. And I vowed that as soon as I was freed from my nursing work I would travel all over the earth, and fulfil the commandment to make war upon war."

Irina Schischmanoff is now in Russia. She has lectured in forty-two towns (in Moscow and St. Petersburg several times), and she claims that she has brought home the horrors of war to a hundred thousand persons. Her success in evoking enthusiasm is due to her passion and warmth, but still more so to her analytical skill in bringing before audiences the sufferings of combatants and of their friends which war entails. A favorite method is to describe the lot of a single soldier and of his family. "The story of Stoilo Pozdneff" is known all over Russia. Stoilo Pozdneff is the schoolmaster of Kizil Agatch, a Turco-Bulgarian frontier village, who leaves a wife and four children to fight with Radko Dmitriyeff at Kirk Kilisse. With tears in her eyes and trembling voice, Mlle. Schischmanoff describes Pozdneff's feelings; his first conflict between patriotism and love; and the final vision that comes of his family as he falls to a Turkish shrapnel bullet. After this follow minute analyses of the feelings of all Pozdneff's relatives down to the youngest child, "who began to cry because all the others cried, and then began to laugh, remarking, 'If father is dead they will have to send him home. What will he bring me?'" Stories like this, all told in dry, realistic form with no rhetoric and no conscious art, move Irina's audiences to tears.

Is Finding Followers.

Irina is finding followers among leaders of Russian thought. Among these is Prof. P. N. Miliukoff, the "Cadet" leader, who was once professor at Sophia University. She was invited to Grand Duke Constantine's villa at Strelina to give a private lecture on her experiences. Grand Duke Constantine called her the most effective peace propagandist he had ever heard. It was he who on hearing of her "call," named her "the Jeanne d'Arc of Peace." The rich Kieff sugar refiner Gvodieff offered her $10,000 in order that she might help the peace movement with pamphlets and books; but Irina rejected the money, saying "only the voice of the sufferer can drive war from the world." Minister of the Interior Malakoff is the only Russian of note who regards with suspicion the peace propaganda. He refused to help Irina when her lecture was forbidden by the police master of Tula. Elsewhere Irina has met with no trouble, despite the prejudice of Russian bureaucrats that the cause of peace is someway tied up with the cause of revolution.

Irina started in Russia because she talks Russian fluently, but she is also able to lecture in German and French. When she goes to England and Canada she will use French. She knows no English. For the next decade, she says, she will lecture uninterruptedly. "By then," she says, "who knows but by a miracle as wonderful as my 'call,' war will be driven from the world."

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