

# A LOCK OF RED HAIR.

## CHAPTER III—(CONTINUED.)

"No, indeed, I trust not," Edgar replied earnestly. "I think it is probable that the air here is a little too strong after the mild climate we have been in for the last few weeks. However, if she does not get better in a short time, I shall consult a doctor, and, if he says the place disagrees with her, we must move. It will be a pity to have to do so, as I am sure you will agree with me that the house is delightfully comfortable and cheerful; but of course her health is the most important consideration, I don't want to look at things gloomily, though, and I hope and believe that in a few weeks, especially now you have come, she will be all right again."

He spoke with so much feeling, and so differently from his usual flippant style, that Lucy was quite surprised, and wondered whether it was possible that she had been doing him an injustice. Certainly marriage seemed to have improved him wonderfully!

They had a pleasant drive; and Lucy delighted her companion with her genuine admiration of his rooms.

"Yes, they are beautiful creatures are they not? I cannot tell you what a pleasure they are to me. I am desperately fond of horses; but I have never been able to indulge my hobby for want of means; now I have a stable full, thanks to dear Sarah's generosity. Here we are at last!" he added brightly. "Welcome to Fernhurst!"

Lucy uttered an exclamation of pleasure at the first sight of the house. It was not particularly large, but it was very picturesque. The front was almost completely covered by bright-looking ivy and creepers, and each window was ablaze with flowers, the whole presenting the appearance of an enormous bouquet.

"What a delightful place!" cried Lucy impulsively. "It is quite a flowery bowler. I cannot imagine any one feeling dull here."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Edgar, helping her down from the phaeton. "Come in through the conservatory; we shall find Sarah in her particular snuggery, I expect. Let us give her a pleasant surprise."

After passing through the conservatory and a pretty bright hall, they came to a door which Richmond opened gently. For the first minute Lucy was dazzled by the sudden change from strong sunlight to what seemed to her to be complete darkness.

"Why, my dear," said Edgar cheerfully, his eyes evidently more accustomed to these quick transitions, "you are in darkness here!"

"Yes," replied a weary voice; "my head ached so, I was glad to get in here out of the glare."

"Well, you must let me throw a little light on the subject, or our friend here will be falling over all the furniture; take care, Miss Lucy!"

With this he pulled up a blind, and Mrs. Richmond, with a quick cry of pleasure, started off the sofa where she had been lying.

"Ah, Lucy, my dear, how glad I am to see you! I thought you could not be here for another half-hour. I did not intend receiving you in this gloomy way. Come up-stairs, and let me show you your room."

"We shall meet again at dinner-time," said Edgar. "I know you ladies will have plenty to tell each other, so I will keep out of the way until then."

Although Lucy was to a certain extent prepared by what she had heard from Edgar, she was startled and shocked to find, when they emerged into the full light, the great change a few weeks had effected in her friend's appearance. She was thin and worn, and had dark shadows under her eyes, which were anxious in expression. She had, too, a habit, which Lucy never remembered to have noticed before, of starting painfully at any unexpected noise. Her face, however, was not pale; but, on the contrary, slightly flushed. Lucy saw at once it would be wiser not to notice anything unusual in her appearance, so said, in an ordinary tone of interest, when they were settled in her friend's pretty room—

"I was sorry to hear, dear Mrs. Richmond, that you are not well; your husband seems to think the change of air may have been too sudden for you!"

"Yes, he thinks so; and pray Heaven it may be only that!" she answered excitedly, the flush deepening in her face.

"But you don't feel seriously ill, do you?" inquired Lucy anxiously.

"No, not in any way that I can explain; but I am uneasy and restless, and a cloud seems to have come over my happiness. I know it is perfectly unreasonable; I have everything a woman could have to make her enjoy life, and a devoted, kind husband."

"But can you assign no reason for this feeling of depression?" asked Lucy.

"Well, only one, and that I am almost ashamed to mention even to you. I would not have Edgar know it for the world; he would think he had such a foolish, weak-minded wife; and, besides, he would reproach himself."

"Please tell me what it is," urged Lucy. "I am sure you would feel easier if you had some one to whom you could mention it."

"Well," answered Mrs. Richmond, glancing round nervously. "Edgar let out quite unintentionally, the second day we were here, that this house was supposed to be haunted. We were in the garden, looking at the ivy and window flowers; and I said what a pretty bright place it

was. I was looking at all the conventional ideas of a haunted house, is it?" Directly he had spoken, I saw he had made a mistake, for he tried to change the subject at once; but I would not have it, and at last made him explain everything."

Mrs. Richmond then repeated the same story Edgar had told at Eastville.

"At first," she continued, "I did not think much of it, as I have never been in the least superstitious; but, somehow or other, for the last week I have been getting more and more uneasy. I cannot account for it in any other way—every night I go to bed tired, but I cannot sleep, I am so nervous and excited. Edgar tries every means to cheer me up, and mixes me the most tempting summer drinks, for I am always thirsty; but nothing seems to do me any good. I hope, Lucy dear, you won't be angry with me for not having told you of this before you came down; but I could not bear the idea of writing anything that might make you stay away."

"It would have to be a very substantial ghost to keep me away," replied Lucy, laughing; "besides I have not the slightest faith in ghosts; but I must admit I should not like to encounter a smuggler unexpectedly, and I vote we thoroughly explore the cellars."

Mrs. Richmond beamed relieved at Lucy's cheerful manner, which, however, was not entirely genuine. On the subject of the ghost she really felt no apprehension; but she was anxious and worried about her friend. Hoping to distract her attention, she asked for news of their travels; and they sat and chatted pleasantly until it was time to dress for dinner.

All the evening Edgar devoted himself to their amusement, and was so kind and thoughtful to his ailing wife, that Lucy's heart quite warmed towards him, and she retired to rest feeling much puzzled and rather out of conceit for herself.

## CHAPTER IV.

The next morning Richmond and Lucy breakfasted alone, as his wife was not well enough to come down so early.

"It is a curious thing she is always so much worse in the morning, is it not?" he said anxiously.

"Perhaps it is a bad case of indigestion," suggested Lucy. "I have always heard dyspeptic people do feel worse in the morning, though, thank goodness, I know nothing of it from my own experience; everything agrees with me."

"And with me," he said; "but I should not wonder if you are right. I hope so, because there cannot be much difficulty in curing that. If she is not decidedly better in a day or two, I shall send for the doctor—it is miserable to see her suffer like this. It seems too bad, too, to have invited you to such a dull house," he continued kindly; "but I know you are too unselfish to require an apology, and I am sure your presence will do her more good than any number of doctors. Of course you wouldn't notice it, not having seen her lately; but I assure you she was more cheerful last night than she has been for a week."

"She must have been dismal indeed, poor thing!" thought Lucy.

After breakfast Edgar took her round the grounds, and showed her the stables and dog-kennels, in which she was as much interested as even he could have wished.

That done, they returned to the house that he might prepare an effervescent drink which his wife had every morning about this time, and again before going to bed.

"She enjoys it, and I think it must do good for her, don't you? It is so beautifully refreshing, and she always seems thirsty."

Five minutes afterwards she saw him go up stairs with a tumbler full of some delicious creaming liquid.

"It is awfully tantalizing," thought Lucy. "My walk has made me very hot. I wish he would offer me some; but he seems so absorbed in her wants, I expect he never thought of me."

In a minute or two she heard them coming down together, and hastened out to meet them. Mrs. Richmond looked about the same, though she said she felt a trifle better, and proposed that they all should go for a drive.

"Perhaps a blow by the sea would do me good. I am quite ashamed of being such a wet blanket, Lucy dear, you must try to make yourself as happy as you can in the circumstances, and you must go about with Edgar. I shall not be jealous—you may depend on that," she said, with a feeble smile.

"But we do not mean to rest until we make you well enough to go about with us," persisted Lucy. "We flatter ourselves we have diagnosed your case already; have we not, Mr. Richmond? And we intend to have a consultation with a brother medico in a day or two, if you are not better."

"I ought to get better soon," returned Mrs. Richmond, "with two such loving, cheerful companions."

"And so you will, my dear—rely upon that!" said her husband kindly.

They went for their drive, lunched at a little seaside village some miles off, and came back in time for dinner, passing the evening in the same quiet, dull manner.

"Upon my word," thought Lucy that night in her bedroom, "if this is going to be the usual style of thing, I must not myself some task to get through while I am here; I shall simply stagnate, if I go on in this aimless quiet way for two months; it must be something drastic for poor Edgar Richmond; really I cannot help pitying him, although he need not be a favorite of mine."

The next evening a slight commotion occurred, which, although it caused Lucy

a little surprise, she did not notice at the time; afterwards, when every trifling incident connected with her visit became of importance, it came back to her. Richmond brought her some beautiful jewelry, and she was very much pleased with it. "Yes, I really should," said Lucy; "it is just what I need."

"Well, then, Edgar will mix one for you, I am sure; won't you dear?"

He had been so attentively polite and attentive that they were not at all prepared for his showing a decided objection to do what they asked.

"Oh, really, I must ask Miss Lucy to excuse me to-night. You know I cannot undertake to provide unlimited iced drinks. You, dear, are privileged as an invalid."

Although this was rather unkind, he smiled so pleasantly while he spoke it was impossible to take offence.

"Let Lucy have mine to-night, if she would like to taste it."

A look of genuine alarm passed over his face as he interrupted hastily—

"Nonsense, my dear, don't be foolish! Of course Miss Lucy will not take what I have provided for you. To-morrow, I will make her one. I would have done so to-night; but the servants have gone to bed, and they only left materials enough for yours."

With that he left the room, slamming the door crossly.

"He must be in a very bad temper to do that," thought Lucy. "He knows how it upsets his wife, and he is generally wonderfully careful."

Mrs. Richmond however did not seem at all impressed with his irritability, and said, when they were alone—

"Now, Lucy, I mean you to have half of this, at any rate; if you don't take it, you will really make me most uncomfortable."

Lucy, seeing she was quite in earnest, and feeling a little piqued with Edgar, needed no further persuasion; and they shared the tumblerful together, and then said good-night.

On the following morning, when Lucy came down a little later than usual, she was astonished to find Mrs. Richmond seated at the breakfast table, decidedly a degree better.

"Why, my dear Lucy, how ill you look! What is the matter?"

"I don't know, I am sure: I did not sleep at all until about six o'clock this morning, and my head was so hot I did not know what to do with myself. It is so curious, because I have never had a bad night in my life before. This morning I fancy I must feel just like men do when they have taken too much to drink over night—dull and cold and heavy."

"How strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Richmond. "You describe my usual sensations exactly, only, oddly enough, this morning I am comparatively free from them. I should think something must have disagreed with you."

"Perhaps it was the effervescent drink?" suggested Lucy incautiously.

Edgar had been deeply immersed in letters, and had not spoken, except to say good-morning; but at this he put his papers down suddenly, and said, in a harsh voice—

"What effervescent drink?"

"Ah, you have let the cat out of the bag, Lucy!"

"What do you mean? Don't talk riddles!" he insisted his face growing pale.

"Dear Edgar there is nothing to annoy you in the matter; Lucy had half my drink last night, that was all. I insisted upon it."

"I am surprised you should have done so," he went on angrily, "when you knew I made it expressly for you, and meant you to drink it. You must have done it on purpose to irritate me."

"Oh, Edgar, how can you say such unkind things? I would not vex you for the world," said his wife showing a strong disposition to cry.

"Ah, well, dear, I spoke hastily," he said, recovering his temper; "you must both forgive me! I have had worrying letters this morning. I am afraid I shall have to go over to the Continent for a week or two, and I cannot bear the idea of leaving you until you are better, even in such good hands as Miss Lucy's. By-the-by, that decides me—we will have the doctor to-day, and hear what he says. Unless he is reassuring, I shall not go, although I really ought to do so, for my manager has been letting my business over there get into a very queer state. What do you say to driving over to Lutmouth and calling on Dr. Maurice? I hear he is a new man in these parts, and a very clever fellow."

"Don't you think that is decidedly the best thing to do?" said Lucy, appealingly, to Mrs. Richmond.

"Yes, perhaps it is; but I would prefer that he came to see me here; so do you go with Edgar; and, as I feel a little better this morning, I will go down and have a chat with Mrs. Mitchell, the house-keeper. If I had not reliable servants, I don't know what would have become of us, as I have not been able to look after anything. There is not one of mine however that I cannot trust implicitly. I have known the younger ones since they were children, and all of them were brought up on my father's estate; I believe they are really sincerely attached to me."

Directly the horses could be put to, Lucy and Edgar started; and the brisk investigating business soon dispelled all her uneasiness. They had to wait a few minutes in Dr. Maurice's little drawing room, the servant telling them he was busy among his poor patients.

"He attends to them every morning, gratis, for two hours, sir, and he never allows himself to be called away, except

for an accident or for a case of emergency. He will have finished in five minutes, though; and perhaps you and the young lady will sit down and look at the newspapers until he comes."

"I must be an odd fellow, and I shall follow, to run the risk of losing good new patients while he attends to a lot of poor fellows who are not worth the girl's hair left them."

"Yes, it certainly is unusual, but it sounds as if he might be a thoroughly nice man; I feel sure I shall like him; and his room is delightful, isn't it? Everything is so refined and pretty. I wonder whether he is married?" speculated Lucy. "You would fancy a woman's hand had been at work here, wouldn't you?" she continued, walking about. "Ah, here are all Calder's books! I am so fond of them; she not you?"

"No, I cannot say I see anything to make a fuss about, in them. Some of his horses are well drawn; but his dogs are horrid mongrels."

"But that is just the pleasure of them," argued Lucy; "they are all so beautifully ugly."

"Well, I do not believe you would find any one who really understood the points of a horse or dog care for them," said Edgar conclusively. He certainly had no sense of humor.

They were in the midst of this discussion when Doctor Maurice walked in. He was a gentlemanly, fair, clever-looking young man, not at all learnedly professional in aspect. He apologized politely for keeping them waiting, and inquired in what way he could serve them. After hearing something of the nature of the case, he promised to be at Fernhurst early in the afternoon; and Edgar and Lucy took their leave.

"What do you think of him?" asked Edgar. "Not a particularly impressive-looking person, is he?"

"I don't know about that," replied Lucy. "I think he is decidedly handsome, and there is something about his manner that inspires me with great confidence."

"Upon my word, Miss Lucy, you seem to be rather fished by our young friend!" said Edgar, laughing.

"Oh, dear no, nothing of the sort!" protested Lucy, with unnecessary eagerness, feeling in her dismay that she was blushing in a most suspicious manner.

Edgar only chuckled in response; and they hardly broke the silence again during their drive home.

Directly they finished their lunch, Doctor Maurice was announced, and Richmond and Lucy left him with his patient. In about a quarter of an hour he re-admitted them.

"Well, doctor, what do you think you will be able to do for my wife?" inquired Edgar anxiously.

"Everything, I hope," he answered, smiling kindly. "Mrs. Richmond is suffering from a severe attack of nervous indigestion—not at all an uncommon complaint—and I quite expect in a week or two she will be all right again. I will write a prescription, and I have been giving your wife some directions about diet. In the first place, she must not have any more iced effervescent drinks; I believe really and truly they are responsible for most of the mischief in this case."

"How responsible—what do you mean?" asked Edgar in a low constrained voice.

His tone was so peculiar that it attracted Lucy's attention; she was again astonished to see his face agitated and pale.

"How strangely sensitive he is on this subject!" she thought. "What can be the meaning of it?"

A slight expression of surprise at this impolite manner appeared on Doctor Maurice's face, and he continued in a more dictatorial style—

"I mean that in any case where there is a disposition to a flow of blood to the head, often a symptom of nervous dyspepsia, it is inadvisable to take any iced beverages, as they distinctly increase the tendency. I think they are unwholesome things at any time, but more especially so at night; altogether, your wife's taking them has been a gigantic mistake."

"But surely a very natural one!" muttered Edgar aulkily.

"Oh, yes, natural enough!" rejoined the Doctor. "It is astonishing how ignorant the most highly-educated people are of the simplest rules of medicine."

"But my husband does know something of medicine," put in Mrs. Richmond, anxious to restore Edgar's equanimity. "He studied for the profession when he was quite a young man."

"Well, my dear, I don't think you need mention that now; it only makes me appear a greater fool."

"Dear me," thought the Doctor, "he does not seem quite so devoted and tender as I heard he was!" With considerable tact, he took no notice of Edgar's ill-humor and went on—"I should advise your having a little claret with your lunch and dinner, and a small quantity of brandy and water the last thing before settling to sleep. Take the spirit up to your rooms with you. In case you should still feel no disposition to sleep and be troubled with any of the faintest feelings you mention, in about three hours you may take a further wineglassful of spirit and water. In these delicate cases of sleeplessness a little stimulant is almost necessary to prevent the wear and tear of strength. I hope and think however," he went on cheerfully, "that the change of diet and my medicine will very quickly restore you to health."

(To be continued.)

Edgar's face happened to be possessed of the constitution of a horse; it by no means follows that his physician is justified in treating him like an ass.

## LAUGHLETS.

A railroad strike—A collision.

Halling cabs is a common thing in the raining pitchforks.

The English policy in Egypt—Prophecy and quick returns.

A chancery case is one in which justice has an even chance.

Yes, Elfrida, all things must fade, except the railroad fare, which must be paid.

Joking on facts will frequently offend closer friends than beer and French brandy.

"What is the dollar of the daddies asks some one. It is, briefly, what the daddies exist on.

No man who possesses any legal talents will ever "take the Will, for the Dead."

We propose that the phrase "money no objection" be amended to read "money no objection."

A poet sings: "The jocund spring is here." Yes; we never saw a more jocund spring than this is.

Degrees of comparison in marrying money: Positive, Cupid; comparative, stupid; superlative, cupidity.

Why is it so difficult for a professional beggar to seek some more reputable livelihood? Because he's a mendicant.

"Only a match box," remarked Edgar at the theatre the other night, referring to the seats where the young lovers sat.

The following is a somewhat equivocal testimonial to the virtues of a patent medicine: "This is to certify that I have taken two bottles of Dr. Blank's hair mixture, and find it all I desire."

True diplomacy is the art of hiding your money where your wife cannot find it, and then to lie in bed pretending to be asleep as you watch her go through your clothes in an unproductive hunt.

According to a florist's magazine, "Jacks are becoming cheap." This may be true, but we know men who would have been willing to pay \$10 for one put with the two already in their hands.

"Sir," said an exasperated Irish judge to a witness who refused to answer the questions put to him—"Sir, this is a contempt of court!" "I know it, my lord, but I was endeavoring to conceal it," was the irresistible reply.

Ducks are said to have colder feet than any other animal. We little thought when we were courting our present wife and slinging such taffy as "Ducky darling" at her that our figure of speech would prove such a stern, cold reality.

A Brooklyn man said to his Presbyterian pastor, "I am going to the Methodist church after this." "Ah, and so?" asked the minister. "Well, if I don't get your shoes made at my shop, I won't get my preaching done at your church."

Little Bertha was presented with a parasol, which pleased her so much that she exclaimed: "Oh, I will carry it my life!" "What will you do with the day that you are married?" "I'll give it to my children," unhesitatingly replied Bertha.

## Humors of War.

It is one of the contrasts of war that matter how serious the surrounding circumstances, the bravest of the soldiers will fire off their jokes.

During a battle before Richmond, a regiment was ordered to charge a battery which was doing its full execution. The colonel swung his sword and shouted,—

"Men, we are ordered to take that battery, and we must do it!"

"S-s-say, c-c-colonel," stammered a giant, "w-wouldn't it be a g-g-good plan to t-t-take up a c-c-collection and buy the pesky thing? I'll p-p-pay my share."

The men burst into peals of laughter, and it was with difficulty that the colonel could so control himself as to utter "Forward! march! charge!" and the funny sergeant was one of the first in charge that followed.

One day, during a furious cannonade, a solid shot tore a large hole in the ground near where a regiment of infantry was lying down.

"Lightning never strikes twice in the same place!" shouted a soldier, as he sprang into the hole. In a moment another shot, striking the ground a few feet in advance, covered him with dirt.

"But it comes very near it!" he said, as he scrambled back to his place in the ranks.

At Gettysburg, Gen. Lee stood on Seminary Ridge to watch the result of Pickett's famous charge. A little to his left Colonel Longstreet's veterans was leaning over a broken wheel of a gun carriage, eating tobacco.

As Lee saw the brave Virginians rise above the Federal breastworks, his face flushed with pride. A moment later he saw them swept back and knew that the charge had failed. He turned pale, and the veteran, anxious to console with his beloved chief, looked up into his face and drawled out,—

"General, we've bit off more'n we can chew!"

At the battle of Fredericksburg a Colonel led a company of skirmishers to capture a large brick house in which sharpshooters had taken refuge.

scribing the capture, he said: "I leads my men around de corner, orders dem to charge dot 'ouse, but shood proke und rundt away like a shoop."

"I fornt dem agint, und said, 'tanks dot 'ouse.' But dey rundt away like some shoop."

"Once more I finds dem, und I plans out your brains 'eas you charge 'ouse.' Udd dey shood rundt out street und into dot 'ouse like fun, you!"