

AVENGED: CALM AFTER STORM.

CHAPTER VI.—(CONTINUED)

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sullenly. "I am practical man, madame, and it was of your practical needs I thought. I am willing to settle a sum of money upon you; I do not deny that you have been badly used; there is a debt between us!"

"There it, and Heaven will pay it!" the girl cries, with a sudden intensity of conviction that thrills and frightens him. "Let me pass, monsieur, and spare me this last of my many wrongs; you have not dragged me down so far that I can touch your money!"

He allows her to pass without another word; speech seems to forsake him, and round his heart there curdles a chill sick fear. Victory is his, a triumph absolute and complete; the routed enemy has abandoned the field without a hint of return; and yet, as he wipes the great drops of perspiration from his brow with a huge handkerchief, and stares stupidly at the green-baize door through which his adversary has vanished, he admits that such another victory would be tantamount to a defeat.

"*Mon Dieu, Isidore!* Why did you not tell me that your *belle Anglaise* was such a fury? Your life, *la-bas*, has been no couch of roses; thou art well out of that *galere*!"

Isidore smiles, a cold faint smile, but gives no verbal answer; his conscience is infinitesimal, and his nerves are steel-strung; but, while his father speaks of Cressida's temper he thinks of the one year they have spent together, of her unvarying patience, her unchanging gentleness, her childish love and trust; and, remembering this, he does not find it easy to answer.

"What will she do now? She has no money," the father goes on musingly. And Isidore answers with abrupt irritation—"None! We must seek her out tomorrow. I can bear no more to-day."

And with these words he turns on his heel and quits the office, leaving his father to follow or not at his pleasure.

In the meantime Cressida, with an odd stunned feeling, walks through the strange and busy streets, much as she might walk them in her sleep. She has suffered the cruellest wrong that woman can suffer. A wife and no wife—friendless, homeless, and all but penniless, she stands alone in a strange land. Yet she is conscious of no acute mental agony. Just now she only knows that something terrible has come to pass, and changed the whole complexion of her life. She is tired, for she has known no rest after the sea passage and double railway journey; she is faint, for no crumb has passed her lips since she left the English shore; but she is not conscious that sleep and food might save her reason, and keep her from that grief which she is slipping fast. Something within her urges her to move on and on, as though in some fashion she could outpace the cruel destiny that pursues her.

So hour after hour she walks on through the Paris streets, the hot asphalt blistering her feet, the sun pouring upon her aching head. Once or twice she pauses at the fountains on the Boulevards, and drinks thirstily of the sparkling water, while the passers-by stare curiously at the beautiful bewildered "lost" looking face. But no one speaks to her and she passes unheeding on her way.

Poor as she is, she might eat if she chose, for there are a few shillings in her pocket; but the hot fumes of the various confectioners' shops create only a deadly nausea within her, and she passes them quickly by with averted head.

At last, as the sun sinks lower and lower, and the evening shadows fall, she creeps wearily to one of the remotest bridges that span the narrow river, and rests her dazzled eyes by gazing at the cool dark stream.

"How placid it looks," she thinks, a little enviously—"how good it would be to lie quietly at rest there!"

She has no definite purpose in coming here. She no more thinks of suicide than does the little English terrier that licks the hot drooping hand, and stares with round wistful brown eyes into the fevered face, until he is called off by the two ladies who own him, one of whom looks back with a gleam of interest in her bright black eyes.

"Fido has good taste, grandmamma; I never saw a prettier face than that girl's, nor a more wretched one."

But the grandmother's sympathies are less on the surface, and she is more awake to the necessity of not wasting time. So she does not turn her head, only sighs a little wearily, and says with a wistful smile—"Poor girl! It is no grief that you can lighten, I am afraid. When you are of my age, Florence, you will learn that you must not look at all the misery around you, or your mind will be filled with pain-pictures only"—a piece of life-philosophy which pretty Florence Carmichael finds it hard indeed to accept, and of which Lady Gordon herself is destined to repent in the days to come.

"There is Frank!" the girl cries eagerly, as her bright eyes flash over the bridge and meet those of the young carman below. "Oh, grandmamma, do make haste, or we shall miss him!"

So, the prospect of pleasure banishing all sympathy with pain, the bright young girl passes on, and Cressida is once more alone with her fate.

It comes with fierce strides now; it stands pale and stern and menacing, above her, while, all unconscious of its presence, she rests in a nook of the old bridge, leans one hot temple on the cool stone parapet, and closes her tired eyes in the stillness that is half stupefaction and half sleep.

"Cressida!"

She lifts her heavy lids, and looks into Isidore St. Just's pale handsome face—unnaturally pale in the white moonlight;

but it does not frighten her now. For the moment she literally forgets the past, thinks she is waking from some hideous dream, and greets him with outstretched hands and a glad welcoming cry.

"Isidore, Isidore! I have dreamed so terribly—I thought—"

There she pauses, struck to the heart with a chill sense of reality, and gazes round her with wide unguished eyes. There burn the city lights and rise the palaces of modern Paris. There the dark river creeps beneath her feet. There stands her husband, with eyes like steel and cruel white lips. The marvellous illusion passes forever—it is all real, all true!

"Cressida"—she shrinks nearer and nearer to the parapet, farther and farther from the man who has sworn to cherish and protect her—a dumb horror in her eyes and on her parted lips. "Cressida, I have followed you all day, and tracked you down—at last. You shall listen to me, shall hear reason, shall accept my father's offer!"

He has been so accustomed to subdue the docile childlike girl that he pauses mechanically for her submission now. But there is no answer—only that dreadful dumb stare, that eloquent shrinking from his look and touch.

"Come with me, Cressida," he repeats, more gently. "All this is hard on you—terribly hard; but it is my father's will. I quarrelled with him, Cressida, two years ago; I was in debt—in trouble. I fled to England and earned my bread by teaching in a school; but the bread was dry and bitter, your England sad and dull. So, when it pleased my father to break our marriage and find me another bride, a *poitinaire* heiress, Cressida, who will replenish my coffers but never touch my heart, what could I do but submit?"

He finishes with an uneasy laugh; but still she does not speak. All words, weak or strong, are alike powerless to paint her pain or the infamy of his conduct.

"Cressida!"—he lays one hand upon her shoulder, and the stony calm is broken. She turns upon him with a tragic scorn and passion—"Do not speak to—do not touch me!" she rather gasps than says; but he holds her still, and says with some show of authority—"This is nonsense—high-flown, ridiculous, and dangerous! Do not struggle, Cressida; until some arrangement is made for your future you shall not wander out alone. Bah! What a child you are! Have you thought what will become of you—even where you sleep to-night?"

He puts the question half-earnestly, half in angry mockery, for the demon within him is roused by her opposition. And she? Only the angels who weep for human frailty and human pain, as they set down the sad and blotted records of our lives, know whether she gave it a willful and premeditated answer.

Isidore St. Just only knows that a smile like sudden sunlight bursting through a cloud breaks over the pale tortured face—that, repeating the one word "Where?" with a wild triumphant thrill in her voice, she breaks from him with sudden strength—and then—

There is a shrill sharp cry, a heavy splashing sound, the waters part and close, a long rippling line of light runs down the gray bosom of the river, and Isidore St. Just stands alone on the bridge, with the big drops of a mortal terror on his brow and the agony of the first murderer in his cold and selfish heart.

An hour afterwards he stands with leaden-hued face and chattering teeth in his father's study, and tells the tragic ending of the tale.

"I never dreamed of this; I thought she would join her friends in Australia," he says, almost piteously, and Monsieur St. Just shakes his gray head.

"It is terrible, of course, but almost for the best. She would not have submitted quietly. She would have joined no friends save those in Heaven, with whom she is happy now. Did no one see you together?"

"No one," Isidore answers gloomily. "We were alone on the bridge, and I came away at once."

"Good!" Monsieur St. Just's face clears wonderfully. "Courage, my son! Providence favours us, and all will be for the best!"

CHAPTER VII.

A pretty morning-room on the western side of a quaint old gray-stone house, a broad verandah overgrown with climbing roses, two chairs placed *à-a-vis* in the scented shadow, two ladies occupying them, and appearing exceedingly happy in each other's company.

Lady Gordon, a handsome, stately old lady, whose fine-featured, delicately-tinted face is beautiful still, despite her seventy years, sits upright in her lounging-chair, with a bit of fine embroidery in her ringed white fingers, while her companion watches her with pretty arched brows of admiration and wonder.

"Why, grandmamma, you are the most wonderful old lady in the world!" she says, composing herself into an attitude of boyish ease. "You are not a day older than you were two years ago, when I left you in Paris."

"Sit straight in your chair Florence, and do not talk nonsense!" the grandmother answers, looking with affectionately disapproving eyes at the slender little figure that rises itself so audaciously on the arm of the chair, the small shining head with short jetty curls bent eagerly forward, the little ringed hands clasped on the crossed knee, the small alighted foot, with its gleaming buckle and cardinal stocking fully displayed. Miss Carmichael looks all black and gold and vivid carnation bloom, so audaciously daring creature, whom Lady Gordon severely

taste condemns while in her heart she dearly loves her.

"Well, but really, grandmamma," the girl persists, "you do seem changed somehow! Frank noticed it as well as I. You look as though you had found something."

"I have found a great new happiness," Lady Gordon said gently and her slender fingers tremble a little over their delicate work.

"You mean Cressida! She is very beautiful, is she not, grandmamma? Her face is perfect, in line and color; but she looks so very, very sad. Is she anything like aunt Rosamond?"

"Very," replies Lady Gordon, with sudden emphasis; "so like that when I saw her first I thought—"

She pauses, a faint tinge of colour rising in the fair old cheek that is almost as smooth as her grandchild's, then goes on a little absently—"But there is one difference—Rosamond's eyes were blue, hers, as you know, are an exquisite brown, like your mother's!"

"And Frank's are like her mother's, I suppose," the girl finishes, with a little tinkling laugh that is like a peal of silver bells. "Papa is always lamenting that I did not inherit the Gordon eyes instead of his own little black ones."

The brilliant orbs she maligns sparkle anew with the words; and Lady Gordon ignores the mock-modesty, and answers with perfect tranquillity—"You would have little cause to complain, Florence, if you took after your father in every respect. Sir Robert Carmichael was one of the handsomest young men I ever saw."

"And will be the handsomest old one, as you will admit when you see him—the handsomest and dearest and best—that is to say, he was," the young lady adds, catching herself up with considerable vivacity—"now he is a tyrant! I do not think it is good for the father of a family to be made governor of a lot of wretched abject niggers. It gives him such autocratic ideas."

Lady Gordon smiles as she notes the petulant pout of the red lips, the angry sparkle of the bright dark eyes. It is rather the face of a spoiled child thwarted for the first time than that of a reckless and rebellious young woman. But, all the same, that shrewd watcher is glad to remember how many miles of sea and land now stretch between Sir Robert Carmichael's daughter and the lover of whom Sir Robert Carmichael so strongly disapproves.

She has not seen very much of Florence, for two years she has not seen her at all; and she is but vaguely acquainted with the story that is evidently in the girl's mind. All she knows is that Sir Robert Carmichael, her son-in-law and the governor of an important South African province, has written to her in hot haste, telling her that Florence was fretting after a most undesirable lover, that he was sending her to England in her grandmother's charge, and trusted her grandmother would, for a time at least, receive her.

She has just been six weeks at Gordon Cross, as Lady Gordon's pretty dowry-house is called, and in that space of time she has contrived to win her old place in the stately old lady's heart. Her old place but no more, at she laughingly complains; for, though the dowager is gentler and more expansive in manner than when, as a school-girl of sixteen, Florence parted from her in Paris, the pent-up tenderness of years is not lavished upon her.

"I declare it is not fair!" she cries, catching at a creamy rose that dangles just within her reach, and tearing its fragrant satiny leaves remorselessly to bits. "You care twice as much for cousin Cressida as you do for me, and you have not known her half as long!"

Lady Gordon neither denies the imputation nor answers her grandchild's smile; she looks away from her across the sunlit lawn, as she answers gravely—"There were no arrears of love due to you, Florence. I never quarrelled with your mother."

"And you did with aunt Rose?" Miss Carmichael says quickly. "Oh, grandmamma, do tell me the story; it is like a romance!"

Lady Gordon hesitates a second; then she says with a little tremulous smile—"Very well, child; if you can sit still so long you shall hear the story, though I do not think you will find it particularly interesting, and there is much that pains me to tell. It is the history of a foolish love and a runaway marriage, Florence."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The British Coinage System.

During last year the coins struck by the British mint were of no less than thirty-four different kinds. In addition to the different pieces used in the United Kingdom, the authorities were called upon to provide silver cents for Hong Kong, silver and bronze cents for Canada, bronze plasters for Cyprus, nickel pence and farthings for Jamaica, bronze farthings for Malta, bronze cents for Mauritius, and silver and bronze coins for other colonies. Among the curious coins struck were silver pennies and half-pennies for the special use of the queen. They comprise her "Maundy money," and are given to the poor of the parish to which she belongs on Easter Monday of each year. The coinage of "Maundy money" is of very ancient origin. Last year it comprised 250 sterling worth of two-pennies, 289 of four-pennies, and 268 of pennies.

For the imperial coinage alone forty-one million pieces were struck. The value of the sovereigns and half-sovereigns included in this reached £2,286,513 sterling, of which the value of 286,433, and of the bronze 269,346. The value of the silver coined into half-crowns and shillings is al-

most exactly alike. The amount of profit made by the government is considerable. It amounted last year to £37,700 sterling. During the previous year a much larger business was transacted by the mint, and the profits amounted to £135,713 sterling. Since 1873 the profits of the national mint have amounted to £399,550 sterling.

The directors of the mint make no suggestions about giving up the ancient system of coinage and substituting one that would be much more convenient to the people. The Canadians saw how easy it was to compute the money used in the United States, and adopted the same system of currency many years ago. But little knowledge is required to compute money when the coins increase in value in a ten-fold ratio. The decimal system of coinage results in a great saving of time, and prevents many mistakes. The money used in the United States and Canada is the most easy to compute of any in the world, while that of England is the most difficult. It seems strange that so enlightened a nation as the English should cling to a barbarous system of coinage, and should have a different sort of currency in every colony.

There is represented to be a total of 247,720 miles of telephone work in America, already.

An exchange says the tin-bearing area in New South Wales is estimated at nearly 8,500 square miles, but at the present time the New England district yields the most of the tin produced.

As American vines appear to be proof against the ravages of phylloxera in the wine-producing countries of Europe, the Italian Government has taken measures to encourage the growth of these vines by the people of Italy.

Writers in the London *Lancet* call attention to the great value of hot-water applications to the head in fainting or syncope. They say also that a prompt use of it, applied to the forehead with cloths, will very often avert such attacks.

A German engineer is reported to have made an important discovery in aeronautics, by which he is enabled to condense or expand the gas in a balloon. The agent he employs is compressed carbonic acid, with the help of which, he says, he is able to ascend or descend at pleasure.

The importance of wholesome potable water for cities is shown in Vienna. Since the introduction into that city of water drawn from the Styrian Alps a constant and very considerable decrease has been observed in stomach and intestinal troubles and cases of typhus fever have become rare.

A cheaper light than Edison's has been invented by Prof. T. S. C. Lowe, of Norristown, Pa. It is not electric, a lighted jet of cheap fuel gas coming in contact with a spiral of metal, the composition of which has not been made public. It is said a light of twenty-candle power will cost the consumer one-quarter of a cent an hour.

Out steel nails appear destined to supersede the ordinary common iron cut nail as completely as the modern pointed screw nail has the old-fashioned blunt screw nail. The cost of the steel cut is not much more than that of the iron cut nails and in quality and finish they are fully equal to the best hand-made nails. It is surprising that they are not more generally known to wood-workers.

In British men-of-war experiments have been made with a view to diminish the rolling, by the fitting of lateral water tanks to the hull. With the motion of the ship the water flows in the direction in which the ship rolls, but the vessel partly recovers itself before the water has gone from one side to the other. Results show that with the tanks half full the rolling is diminished about 27 per cent.

A New York paper has arrayed a number of scientific facts showing that plants flourish much better under the electric and other lights than under the alternating influence of light and darkness. Diurnal repose is not necessary for the life of plants. A series of experiments is proposed whereby our Department of Agriculture may determine the conditions under which the electric light might be advantageously and economically employed in forcing the growth of garden and hothouse plants.

A sympathetic ink for writing on postal cards is simply diluted sulphuric acid—one part by measure of acid to seven of water. When the ink is applied the card will at first show roughened traces of the writing, but after drying these disappear and the writing is as invisible as though done with water. Of course, only a gold pen or a quill should be used with this acid ink. If it is desired to avoid the suspicion of sympathetic ink having been employed, the card may be written upon across the first writing with tincture of iodine, which will entirely fade out when heat is applied to develop the sympathetic ink.

The gift of the Emperor of Russia to the Empress on Easter morning was an egg of gold. Upon opening it the yolk of an egg is disclosed, made of gold of a different color from the shell. In this yolk is a little hen, containing a diminutive imperial crown of diamonds, and set in the crown is a round ruby of unsurpassed beauty.

There is considerable barbed fence in Maricopa County, Arizona, and the vast flocks of wild ducks which frequent the valley often fly low, and striking the barbed fence, become impaled thereon. It is said that tons of ducks are gathered daily by the boys from the fences and sent to market.