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Her Great Love;

Or, A Struggle For a Heart

CHAPTER XXXIV.—(Continued).

heard the news, Lady Pauline?" he entered the drawing-room. never been able to address her

he said. "It is terrible; and

Bobby, with a kind of are thinking that he has murder, and—and per- connection?"

nodded, and sighed.

Bobby, fervently. think he did. But we need that, Robert. I was thinking

drew a long breath. hear of it directly she gets

he said. if Lady Pauline. "That is in- will be better that she should

who's to tell her?" he de-

she said, with her usual She will bear it better coming than from strangers. I think be strong enough to-morrow, or, in the afternoon, please? for this morning whether she is to go to Walfield, but she want to go home."

yes," said Bobby. "That's she thinks of every one be- Father will want her, too, trouble again."

asked Lady Pauline. named.

Mershon has cut up rough. offended—I beg your pardon, he need for profane expres- he said. "But go on." unfortunate company, the you know."

but no matter." the guv'nor is indebted it's rather a large sum; lawyer, Mr Gilsby, has the guv'nor—well, demanding Father has given Mershon

sighed. your father to the best of Robert," she said. "I must Decima now. Come to-morrow, strong enough we will tell

the house and went home; he a quiet note—Prince's Mr- impossible for him under the and he bought the special the evening papers, and read of the shipwreck and "Lord conduct," and his heart with sorrow for the death of the he had admired and loved so

day he went to Berkeley Lady Pauline came to him with determined expression on her

much better," she said. "I have the question from all points and I have decided that she told as soon as possible. You now; but you will be care-

up to Decima's room. She up by pillows, and looked dead! But she smiled as the room, and wound her arms

well now, Bobby," she said, Anne thinks I shall be able a few days. How is father? thank you will pass your every dear?"

her, and so hid his face Lady Pauline stood on the bed, grave and self-

something to tell you, De- Are you sure you are hear it? It is sad and but we think it will come who love you, than in

from one to the other. she said. Then she sigh- please, Bobby."

getting, with many grew whiter and in her eyes. poor lady!" she breath- portrait. She was his

request they brought murder! murder! murder!" he said, thickly. on her elbow. Lord Gaunt!" They Murder! He could know that he could Who does he say? head is burning! do not believe it!" Lady Pauline; "I do not

thank you, auntie!" tell me—tell me thanks!" She put her and closed her eyes. it again. It was had been thinking days past.

with an energy Bobby and Lady Pauline. how Lord Gaunt, down with her hands for dropped them and Pauline to Bobby. Besides, would he have how can any one think deserted!

Bobby held his breath. Lady Pauline saturated a pocket handkerchief with eau de Cologne and bathed Decima's brow She waved it aside impatiently.

"I am not going to faint. I am quite strong. Where is Lord Gaunt? What does he say?"

Bobby held his breath.

"Lord Gaunt—D'ecie, dear, you'll be brave, won't you? Lady Pauline and I think you ought to hear it from us, not by chance and from a rangers."

"Yes—yes!" she broke in, with a moan "Tell me—tell me! It would be cruel to keep it from me. I—I want to know!"

"Gaunt went by the 'Pevensey Castle,' On the morning after—after the murder—"

"Yes," breathed Decima. "He said he was going to Africa! Well! Oh, tell me all! I can bear it, indeed I can"

"—And—and"—faltered Bobby—"the vessel was lost. It foundered off the coast of Africa—"

Decima raised herself and looked at him, with something in her eyes which Bobby will never forget while life lasts.

"And Gaunt—Give her some wine, Lady Pauline, brandy or—or something!" he broke off.

But Decima waved a refusal of the offered glass.

"Tell me—tell me everything!" she panted.

Bobby struggled with the choking feeling in his throat.

"Gaunt—and the captain remained on board after the rest had left, and—and—and Gaunt—"

Decima fell back on the pillows, and for a minute or two remained motionless and speechless; then she opened her eyes, and the hopeless misery and despair in them brought the tears to Lady Pauline's.

"And—and he is dead?" came from Decima's white lips.

Bobby bowed his head.

"Yes; I am afraid—they all think—he was lost. He—he behaved like a hero. I'll—I'll read the newspaper account to you, when you are able—"

"Now! now!" she said in a hollow whisper; and Bobby, as if he could not resist her, drew out the paper and read the account. Decima listened with fixed eyes and bated breath to the statement of one of the passengers who had left the wreck in the last boat.

"You see!" said Bobby, struggling with the choking in his throat. "He gave up his place in the boat to the man Jackson. He kept the passengers in order, and—and stood by the captain till—till—the last! Decie, it—it is just what Gaunt would do, isn't it?"

She opened her eyes upon him with a wild despair.

"Yes; it is like him," she said. "It is just what he would do. Oh—oh, how I wish I had been there! How I wish I had been the little child he kissed!"

"Decie!" murmured Lady Pauline. Decima turned upon her.

"Yes; I wish I had been there! I wish I had died with him!"

Then she closed her eyes and was silent for a moment or two—so long that Lady Pauline thought she had fainted, and went to a table for a restorative; but suddenly Decima opened her eyes and said, with feverish emphasis:

"He is not dead! I know it! He is not dead! If he were, I—I should feel it! No, he is not dead!"

Presently she asked them to leave her alone.

"You will try and bear your burden, dear?" said Lady Pauline, as she bent over her and kissed her. "We deemed it best to tell you; better that you should hear it from us who love you."

"Yes, yes," said Decima, with a sigh and a weary movement of the thin hand. "You were right to tell me, Aunt Pauline; but—but I want to think. I have not realized it yet. It is like one of the dreadful dreams that came to me when I was ill. I want to think—and—oh, if I could only cry! Aunt Pauline, my heart is broken! But I will try to bear my burden."

"Pray for strength, dear," whispered the good woman, but Decima shook her head.

"I can't pray," she said, miserably, and with no irreverence. "I could only pray to die—and that would be wicked."

"Yes, Decima. Life and death are in His hands," said Lady Pauline; and she and Bobby left the stricken girl alone.

Decima did not close her eyes; she could see the figure, which had been first and foremost in her life, with eyes wide open. And she went over all Lady Pauline and Bobby had told her of the murder and of Gaunt's life and Gaunt's death.

Not for an instant did the possibility of his guilt enter her mind. She knew him—the innermost heart and soul of the man—too well to permit of the faintest touch of doubt as to his innocence. Some other hand had done the deed—whose, mattered very little to Decima at that moment, for all her mind and heart were concentrated upon the fate of the man she had loved—and would love with all the strength of her woman's soul until death.

Not one minute detail of the shipwreck had escaped her, and she pictured Gaunt keeping order in the cabin, standing on the deck, with the child in his arms, giving up his place in the boat to that other man, and then waiting and watching with that calm self-possession, which was Gaunt's birthright, for the end.

And then thought this man, who had given his life for others, capable of murder!

It may have been wicked of him to make her—as he had not made her love him. It was wicked to ask her to go away with him, the husband of another woman; but was not some of the blame hers? And now nobly he had atoned!

She tried to picture him lying dead upon some wild shore, and a craving of his fate took possession of her.

"If I had only been there to see him!" broke from her trembling lips. "Oh, my love—my love! How shall I live without you; how shall I?"

The tears came at last to ease her aching heart, and they were running down her face unheeded when Lady Pauline came back to her.

She slept that night and dreamed. She saw Gaunt standing on the deck, watching the last boat leave the ship's side; one saw him with the child in his arms; but in every vision of him he was alive, and her imagination could not conceive of him as dead.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Three days afterward they took her down to The Woodbines. Lady Pauline went with her, and she bore the journey very well.

Her father received them in a kind of stupor.

"Dear, dear, now—how pale and ill she is!" he said to Lady Pauline. "I'm afraid she has been ill. There seems to be nothing but trouble. I don't know whether you know poor Lord Gaunt's—" He stopped and tugged at his hair in a bewildered way. "Most terrible ending! I—I cannot know the details, though Bobby, who appears to have been mixed up in the business in some extraordinary fashion which I can not understand, has been endeavoring to tell me. It is difficult to believe that a man in his position and culture can have been guilty of a peculiarly brutal murder! Mr. Mershon is convinced of his guilt—and the verdict of the coroner's inquest—" He stopped and looked about him helplessly. "And Mr. Mershon tells me—that Decima has broken off her engagement to him. Is that so?"

"Yes," said Lady Pauline.

Mr. Deane ruffled his hair again and edged to the door.

"I'm—I'm afraid Mr. Mershon feels it rather acutely. You—you know that there have been business relations between us?"

"Yes," said Lady Pauline in her direct way. "You have lost a great deal of money, have you not, Peter?"

"Yes-es; I'm afraid so. I scarcely know. I thought that the loss had been recouped or—or provided for in some way; but Robert tells me that—that it is not so, and that I am still liable."

"I may be able to help you," said Lady Pauline.

Bobby, who had entered the room in time to hear the last part of the conversation, shook his head gloomily.

"No, he said. "It is too large a sum. I'm afraid we are up a tree, Lady Pauline. I've just been Mr. Mershon; he wants to see Decima. I told him that she wasn't fit, and—well, I hinted that it would n't be the least use his seeing her. Decie knows her own mind, and once it's made up—Ah, yes, it's all over between Mershon and her! And, well, I'm glad it is —though," he added, inaudibly, "there'll be the deuce to pay over these bills! But I don't seem able to think of anything but poor Gaunt!" he said, aloud. "I've just met Bright. He's terribly cut up; but somehow he can't bring himself to believe that Gaunt is dead. The next in succession is a cousin of Gaunt's. He is travelling abroad just now; but Belford & Lang have written to him. There's no end of excitement in the village. Gaunt was more popular than one would have thought; and some of the women cried when they talked to me about him. One could scarcely decline to believe him guilty of—of—They are all very sorry for Decie's illness. She's the Lady Bountiful of the village, you know."

Lady Pauline inclined her head.

"And—and it was she who egged Gaunt on to undertaking all the improvements, that have been made. Poor Gaunt!"

Bobby's eyes filled with tears as he turned from the room.

The next morning Decima came downstairs. She was very pale and thin, and very weak still, and she looked but the ghost of herself as she sat in a low chair by the fire.

"Are you sure you are strong enough to leave your room, Decima?" asked Lady Pauline; and Decima had turned her face to her with a shadowy smile.

"Yes, aunt. I—I want to take up my life again as—as if nothing had happened. They—father and Bobby—need me." Her voice broke for a moment. "I can not lie there and think; think any longer I want something to do, something that will help me to forget. But ah, no, no; I shall never forget!"

How could it be possible for her to forget the man who had loved her, and whom she had loved with all her heart and soul—or cease to remember with anguish that he had gone to his death with the charge of murder hanging over him.

In the afternoon, as she was standing at the window, looking sadly at the bare trees swaying in the wind, she saw Mr. Mershon open the gate and come up the path.

Her hand went to her heart, and she looked round as if for help. Lady Pauline had gone down to the village with Bobby. There was no one to help her. Well, it was a part of her burden, and she must carry it. She rang the bell.

"Tell Mr. Mershon I will see him," she said.

She did not go back to her chair, but stood by the window waiting, and the light was full upon her face as he entered. To him she looked more lovely than ever, with the sadness in the violet gray eyes and the ethereal pallor of the girlish face. His eyes fell before hers as she regarded him steadily, and his hand shook as he took the one she held out to him. For a moment he lost his presence of mind, and no word of the speech he had prepared would come. Then, with an effort, he mastered his emotion, and said, almost abruptly:

"You're better, Decima? I'm very glad; I—I wanted to see you. I've had an anxious time, and—and—You're sure you're better?" he broke off, raising his eyes for an instant to the white face.

"Yes," said Decima. "I'm sorry you should have been anxious, and—and I am glad you have come."

"Of course I should come the very first moment," he said. At sight of her all his passion revived, and he felt that he would move heaven and earth to keep her. "Of course they—Lady Pauline—told me, gave me your message, but I needn't say, Decima, that I didn't attach any importance to it. You—you very likely didn't know what you were saying when you sent me word that you wanted to break with me."

"Yes," said Decima; "I was quite conscious, Mr. Mershon."

Her voice was low, but its steadiness surprised even herself.

"You were?" he said, huskily. "Then—then I suppose you said what you did because you thought I should be annoyed, riled at your being mixed up with—with this affair of Lord Gaunt's? Of course, I it was very natural that I should want an explanation; that I should want to hear all about your visit to his rooms and—and what took place between you."

"Yes," said Decima, quite calmly; "it was your right. It is so no longer. But"—she went on as he opened his lips—"I will tell you, Mr. Mershon. I will tell you, because you will then see how—how impossible it was that I should have the fretful from sending you my message. I went to see Bobby—"

"I know," he said, eagerly.

—"And Lord Gaunt came in."

As she spoke his name her eyes closed for an instant, and her hand slid along the edge of the wall as if she were seeking some support.

"And you were together there," he said, nodding gloomily. "What—what passed between you? Don't tell me if you don't like. I'm content to let by-gones be by-gones, Decima."

"I will tell you," she said. Her lips were quivering, but she steadied them. "Lord Gaunt—told me that he loved me."

Mershon started, and his face went black.

"The villain!" he muttered.

Decima's face grew crimson, and her eyes flashed. She turned away as if she would not say another word; then suddenly she faced him again.

"He told me that he—loved me. And I" her voice broke for an instant, but she went on painfully—"I knew then that I had loved him for a long time. I shall love him while life lasts."

There were no tears in her eyes, and they met his furious gaze unflinchingly, almost as if she did not see him, or had forgotten his presence.

"And you can tell me this!" he stammered, huskily. "You can confess that you love a man who was married, already—a man who has committed a dastardly murder?"

(To be continued.)

SHOULD GOLD TURN TO DROSS

How Would Financiers Revise the Monetary Situation.

The interesting problem was raised by one of the French reviews recently, what would happen if gold were produced in such enormous quantities as to sink in value to the level of the baser metals. The three contingencies discussed were the extraction of gold from sea water, which was dismissed as too expensive to be attainable; the increase from existing mines, which would be negligible from the sensational standpoint of the argument; and the probability of the production of gold by chemical means.

It was the third means of production which was treated as seriously as the nature of the subject permitted, and it was declared that in relying upon the recent progress of experimental physics and of chemical synthesis, the possibility of the transmutation of the metals could no longer be considered a simple chimera and might become a reality of to-morrow or the day after to-morrow.

All these experiments, however, rest ultimately upon gold. If gold became dross, it would be necessary either to find a substitute metal possessing similar qualities, or to reorganize the existing monetary systems of the commercial nations. The latter is not beyond the reach of sane discussion and of definite proposals. Its essential defect would lie in the absence of power to enforce international agreements in case of financial weakness offered strong inducements for their violation.

The romantic dream of the sudden dethronement of gold from its place as the standard metal would be controlled, to begin with, by the cost of the processes of production of artificial gold. The mere discovery that gold could be produced by chemical processes would not solve the problem. Unless it could be produced in large quantities at a cost materially below the cost of quartz-mining in South Africa, the new process would remain only an interesting toy.

MONUMENTS TO POTATOES.

Several German Towns Have Thus Glorified the Vegetable.

There are monuments to human beings, to animals, and, in one case known to the writer, to a lifeboat, but it has been reserved to Germany to rear monuments to the potato.

At Offenberg, in Germany, a private donor has erected a really beautiful monument in honor of the potato. The upper part is a statue of Sir Francis Drake, who is alleged to have introduced the plant into Europe. This, and the pedestal also, is draped with garlands of the potato plant, with full-grown tubers. On one side of the pedestal is Drake's name, on another side is an inscription in praise of the potato, on another the name of the donor is given.

Nor is this the only German town having a monument to the glorification of the potato. The town of Mutz has a similar statue to Drake and the potato, and in several of the small towns of the empire there are similar monuments.

The funny thing about these statues to Drake in association with the introduction of the potato is that Drake had no more to do with the matter than you have. According to popular belief the introducer of the potato was Sir Wilter Raleigh. Raleigh heard of such a plant from his people whom he had sent out to colonize America, and he had some sent to him in Ireland, where he is alleged to have caused them to be planted. Such, at least, is the generally accepted version of the introduction of the potato, although we know that Raleigh had as little to do with the matter as Drake, for Raleigh found the potato already growing in Ireland, where it had been introduced by the Spaniards before his time.

But whether Raleigh or the Spaniards are the introducers of the potato we now stand little chance of knowing; of one thing, however, we do know, and that is that Drake had nothing to do with it. Yet Germany has erected statues to Drake and the potato.

The Cavalry Cop.

"My papa is a mounted policeman," said small Eric to a visitor.

"Is that better than being a walking policeman?" asked the visitor.

"Course it is," replied Eric. "If there is trouble he can get away quicker."

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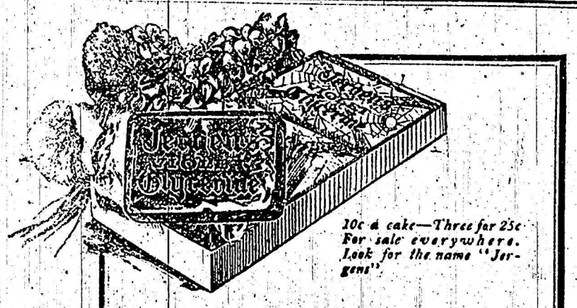

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HOME

Homemade Salted Nuts.

Salted nuts are always acceptable as a part of the refreshment of afternoon and evening entertainments, and as an adjunct to the simple home dinner as well as to the formal one.

They are expensive when they are bought ready salted, and unless they are bought of a reliable caterer they sometimes taste stale. They can be made easily, inexpensively and well made at home.

Peanuts are appetizing and so much less expensive than almonds that it is a wonder they are not more often substituted for almonds. To salt them buy unroasted peanuts—which can easily be purchased from any street vendor of peanuts. Shell them and remove the inside skins by letting them stand for a few minutes in boiling water, after which the skins may be removed easily between the thumb and forefinger. Leave them in the hot water only long enough to wilt or cook the nuts.

There are several ways of browning the nuts. One way is to put two teaspoonfuls of olive oil—it must be of good quality—in a pan and roll the nuts in it. Then put them in a brisk oven and leave them there until they are brown.

Another way is to put a tablespoonful of oil in the bottom of a chafing dish, turn the heat full on and drop in enough nuts at a time to cover the bottom of the pan. Keep the nuts moving over the flame until they have turned a delicate brown.

Almonds shelled and blanched, and pecans, carefully cracked but not blanched, can be salted in the same manner as peanuts.

When they are brown turn them in a paper and sprinkle them with salt. Let them cool before taking them from the paper, which absorbs the superfluous oil and makes them pleasanter to handle.

Creole Secrets for Soup.

Here are some rules that the old Creole cooks give for soup making—and if you have ever been in Louisiana you know that their soup is worth emulating:

To get the most goodness out of a soup bone it should be fractured every inch of its length. The soup should never stop cooking from the time it is put on the stove until it is done, although it should at no time boil furiously.

Once the soup is started cooking, no water should be added, as this spoils the flavor.

The soup bone should be put into cold water and no salt should be added till the soup is done, as the salt steps the flow of the juices.

The soup should cook from five to seven hours at least.

All spices used in the soup should be put in whole—that is, whole black and white peppers, cloves, bay leaves, cloves of garlic, etc.

One quart of water should be allowed for every pound of meat and bone, to begin with. This is a rule of the Creoles, but they make rich soup. It weaker soup is to be made, or if vegetables as well as meat are used in the stock, the amount of water can be increased.

Hints for the Home.

Common soap, rubbed on the hinges of a creaking door will do away with the trouble.

Fasten a pincushion to the top of the sewing machine arm and whole minutes will be saved.

A hot water platter is a boon to the housewife whose men folks are frequently late for dinner.

The business man's lunch of a glass of milk and a piece of apple pie is really a well-chosen meal.

Add a pinch of borax to the rising water of handkerchiefs, if you would have them a little stiff.

Baked apples are delicious with their cores filled with orange marmalade or chopped nuts and sugar.

Irons will heat more quickly and stay hot longer if a cake tin or other cover is turned upside down over them.

An ordinary piece of mince pie is said to be the equal in food value to a piece of beef, a slice of bread and a potato.

A faded carpet can be brightened and cleaned by rubbing with warm water and ammonia, with a little borax in it.

The dessert that fails in its appeal to the palate is a wasted tempt, for desserts are eaten for pleasure, not hunger.

Wet the kitchen stove while cold with a cloth dipped in kerosene oil; then apply the blacking. The stove will keep clean much longer.

"All odors end here" is the inflexible rule of charcoal. If the charcoal is made red-hot and then cooled before using, its virtues are increased.

Borax is the best hair brush cleaner. Add a teaspoonful of borax and a tablespoonful of soda to the water in which the hairbrush is to be washed.

A change the children will appreciate is the baking of mincemeat in tart shape. Simply line patty pans with the pastry and then fill them, covering the top.

Tomato sauce is peculiarly good with baked beans. Cold baked beans covered with tomato sauce and baked in the oven till the whole is brown, is also a savory luncheon dish.

A fruit jelly—apples, bananas and pineapple chopped and put into a foundation of gelatine, strawberry juice and hot water—makes a delicious salad, served on lettuce leaves.

It is an excellent idea to have a guest chest in the guest room. It should contain emergency things—a nightgown, a bathrobe, slippers, soap, wash cloths, even a brand new toothbrush.

When hot cloths are needed constantly in time of sickness, keep a colander full of them over a kettle half full of boiling water. Keep the kettle covered on the back of the range.

Colored goods should be ironed while damp and upon the wrong side. Delicate colors should not be subjected to a hot iron, because this fades them quite as much as hanging on the line in the sun.

A good luncheon dish is made of the macaroni and stewed tomatoes left from the night before. Heat them over again together and serve, or pour into a baking dish, cover with bread crumbs and bake till brown.

Unexplored Territory.

"I made a lucky discovery today," said the first physician.

"What so?"

"Yes, I discovered a patient that has never been operated on for anything."

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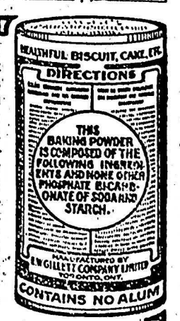

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