

IN GOLDEN BONDS.

CHAPTER XI.—(CONTINUED.)

The roses were in a cigar-box, and as long as they lasted they never smelt of anything but tobacco; but I began to think that perfume nicer than their own.

I was so happy that evening that I was glad when Mr. Rayner asked me to accompany his violin, and I was glad that he chose operatic selections again, for in the passionate and sweet music of *Don Giovanni* and *Il Trovatore* I could vent to my feelings. I felt that I had never appreciated the beautiful melodies so well, nor helped so efficiently to do justice to them as I did in accompanying Mr. Rayner that night. He was so pleased with my help that he begged me to go on, with "Just one more" and "Just one more," until long after Mrs. Rayner had gone to her room. I was nothing loath; I could have played until midnight. I did not say much in comment between the pieces, when Mr. Rayner asked, "How do you like that?" But I suppose it was easy to see by my face that I was enjoying the music intensely, for he had just nodded and smiled and seemed quite satisfied.

The clock had struck the half-hour after ten, which was quite late for the household, at the Alders, when we finished playing "*Vos che sapete*."

"And how do you like that?" asked Mr. Rayner as usual, only that this time he put down his violin, and drawing a chair close to my music-stool, ran his fingers over the keys of the piano, repeating the melody.

"Do you know the words?" "*Voi che sapete che cos'è amore*," he sang softly. "Do you know what that means?"

"Oh, yes!" said I, rather proud of showing off my small knowledge of Italian. "You who know what love is."

I drew my music-stool a little back, and listened while he sang it softly through. I had never known a love-song to touch me like that before. I could almost have cried out in answer, as I sat with my head turned away, listening, almost holding my breath, lest I should lose a sound. When he had finished, he turned round; I did not move or speak, and he jumped up, walked to the shutters, unbarred them, and threw open the window.

"I am suffocating. Oh for a Venetian balcony!" said he. "Come here, little woman."

I rose and obeyed. He threw a woollen antimacassar round my head and shoulders, and drew me to the window.

"Look up there, child, at the moon through the tree-tops. Wouldn't you like to be as Venice, listening by moonlight to those sweet songs in the very native land of the love they sing about?"

"I don't want to be anywhere but here, Mr. Rayner," said I, smiling up at the moon very happily.

"Why?"

But I could not tell Mr. Rayner why. "I would give the whole world to be at this moment with the women I love. I could make her understand there!"

I was struck by the passionate tenderness in his voice, and suddenly made up my mind to be very bold.

"Then why don't you take her there, Mr. Rayner?" I said earnestly.

As I spoke, smiling at him and speaking as gently as I could, though I felt terribly frightened at my boldness, his eyes seemed to grow darker, and his whole face lighted up in an extraordinary way. I saw my words had made an impression, so I went on eagerly, preening nervously the hand with which he was holding mine, for I was still afraid lest my audacity should offend him.

"Mr. Rayner, forgive me for speaking about this; but you spoke first, didn't you? I have so often wondered why you didn't take her away. It seems so hard that you, who want sympathy so much—you know you have often told me so—should have to live, as you say, a shut-up life, on account of the apathy of the woman to whom you are bound."

He seemed to drink in the words as if they contained an elixir; I could feel by his hand that he was actually trembling; and I grew more assured myself.

"Now, if you were to take her away, although you might have a difficulty at first persuading her to go, and force her, with the kind force you know how to use, to go among fresh faces and see fresh people, I believe she would come back to life again, and see how much better you are than other husbands, and love you just as much as ever. Oh, she couldn't help it; you are so kind and so good!"

Then my heart sank, for I saw I had gone too far. As I spoke, from passionately eager, he looked surprised, puzzled, and then his face clouded over with a cold frown that chilled me with fear and shame. I drew my hand out of his quickly, and stepped back into the room. He followed and took my hand again, and when I looked up, murmuring clumsy and incoherent apologies, his face was as composed and kind as usual; but I thought he looked rather sad.

"Never mind, little one; you have not offended me by speaking your mind out; don't be afraid. But you don't know, you cannot guess—how should a child like you guess—how many or how deep a man's cares may be while he is obliged to bear a brave front to the world. I think you would be sorry for me if you knew them."

"I am sorry without knowing them," I said softly.

He bent down over me and looked into my eyes for a few moments. Then he raised his head, and laughed lightly.

"You are a fraud. Great gray eyes ought to be passionate, and yours are as cold as a lake on a still day. I believe you are an Undine! You have no soul."

"Oh, Mr. Rayner!" I said mournfully, and I turned slowly to the piano to put away the music.

"Never mind; I will do that," said he, in his usual tone. "I have kept you up long enough. Good night, Undine."

I was almost afraid he would again want to kiss me, and, after offending him once, I should not have dared to refuse. So I shook hands as hastily as I could, took my candle, and ran up-stairs. I was very angry with myself for having been cold and unsympathetic—I had not meant to be so at all.

But the fact was I had been thinking the whole evening of Mr. Laurence Reade.

CHAPTER XII.

I slackened my pace when I got to the top of the first flight of stairs, and walked softly

through the corridor where the nursery was, for fear of waking Mona; and, as I went slowly along the passage leading to the turret stairs, I began to think of what Mr. Rayner had called me, and wondered what he meant by saying I had no soul.

"It wasn't because I am not sorry for him, for he must have seen that I am," thought I. "I suppose I don't show my sympathy in the right way; but I could not very well say more about it without being disrespectful. And I must not forget that Mr. Rayner is not only much older than I, but also my employer."

And so I crept up the turret stairs with candle, and opened the door of my room.

It was a calm night, and I walked in very slowly, yet, as I entered, my candle went out suddenly, as if blown by a gust of wind; and I fancied I heard a slight sound as of a human breath blowing it. I stepped forward quickly, a little startled, and tried to peer into the darkness. But it was impossible to see, for my fire had gone out, the blinds were down and the curtains drawn, and not a ray of moonlight could get in. I stood for a few minutes, still frightened, in the middle of the room, and then cautiously made my way in the direction of the mantelpiece, where I kept my match-box. I made a slight noise as I passed my fingers over the different articles there, and, just at the moment that I knocked over a china ornament which fell into the fireplace, above the noise it made as it broke to pieces in the grate I heard a sound behind the screen which stood between the bed and the door, and, turning quickly, I was in time to see a figure come swiftly round it and disappear through the still open door. I could distinguish nothing; nevertheless, suppressing my inclination to scream, I rushed to the door and caught in the air at the figure I could no longer see; but I felt nothing.

Then I crept back into my room, shaking from head to foot, and hardly daring to move in this direction or that, for fear of encountering another dim figure. I closed the door behind me, sick with fear lest I should be shutting myself in with more unwelcome visitors; and, starting at the slight creaking that a board made here and there under my own feet, I again searched the mantel-piece for the match-box. My hands trembled so that it was a long time before I could be sure that it was not there; and then I turned and felt my way back to the table; and, after moving most of the things on it, I at last satisfied myself that it was not there either. Then I groped my way to one of the windows—I had not thought of that before—drew the curtains and pulled up the blind. The moon gave only a fitful light, being obscured every other minute by thin driving clouds, and it only served to make shadows in the room which were more fearful to me, in my nervous state, than darkness itself. I had one more search for the matches, but could not find them even now.

It was out of the question to undress by such weird moonlight, fancying dim shapes in every corner and noises behind me which ever way I turned; so I determined to conquer my fears and go down-stairs with my candle and get a light below. There were sure to be some matches in the kitchen, and I reflected that enough moonlight would come in over or through the shutters to let me see my way without making a noise.

So I groped my way down the back staircase, which I had never used before, got safely to the bottom, turned to my left, and felt for a door. The first opened into a big black cupboard where I left brooms, which I shut again quickly; the second was locked, but the key was in the door, and I softly turned it. This was indeed the kitchen; but the moment I found this out, and gave a sigh of relief, I heard on the floor a sound which I knew too well to be the rush of myriads of black beetles; and, as I would rather have faced a dozen dim human figures than have felt under my foot the "scrunch" of blackbeetle, I had to shut that door too as quickly as I had shut the other.

The only thing left for me to do was to feel my way back to the staircase, go down the passage at the other side of it, which led past Mr. Rayner's study, and so into the hall, where I knew the exact position of the match-box which stood on the hall table.

My only fear now was that I might meet Mr. Rayner, in the event of his not having left the house yet to go to his room. If I met him, I should have to account for my presence wandering about the house at this time of night, and I felt that I was still too much discomposed by the fright I had received for his sharp eyes not to notice my pallor and my quaking hands; and then I should have to tell him what I had seen, and there would be a search and an explanation, and I should get some one into trouble. For my fears had not gone beyond thinking that it was Sarah or one of the other servants who—perhaps wishing to give me a fright, perhaps only all but caught in the untimely enjoyment of one of my easy-chairs—had escaped detection, had blown out my candle, hoping to slip out in the dark unheeded.

However, I got back safely to the bottom of the staircase without seeing or hearing anything, and I was creeping along the passage when I caught the first faint sound of voices. I stopped, then went on again softly, while the sounds became plainer, and I found that they proceeded from Mr. Rayner's study, the door of which I had to pass. I discovered by the thin thread of light it let out upon the passage that this door was ajar, at the same moment that I recognised Sarah's voice. She was speaking in a low sullen tone, and, as I drew nearer, I was arrested half against my will by words which seemed to apply to myself—"Against the stupid baby-face of a chit hardly out of the nursery herself. Governance indeed!"

"Is that all you have to say?" said Mr. Rayner very low, but in his coldest, most cutting tone.

"That's—that's all I have to say," said Sarah, with a choking sound in her voice.

The woman was evidently unhappy; I almost pitied her.

"Then the matter is easily settled. You can go."

"I can go! I go! Do you know what you're saying? Do you think you could replace me as easily as you can such as her?" said she, forgetting all respect due to her master, as her voice, still low, trembled with rage.

"That is my affair. You wished me to choose between the services of an unpaid governess and those of an overpaid servant. I have chosen."

"Overpaid! My services overpaid! My services can't be overpaid!" she hissed out.

"As long as you joined discretion to your undoubted good qualities, I paid you accordingly to that estimate. Now that you let yourself be swayed beyond all bounds of prudence by trifling feelings of jealousy and spite, like a foolish girl, your value runs down to that level. You are no longer a girl, Sarah, and your position is changed in many ways since then, in most for the better. If you cannot accept the changes quietly, you had better go."

"And you would let me go—for a new-comer!" said the woman passionately.

"I cannot think of sending away any member of my household for the caprice of any other member of it, however valuable a servant she may have been—"

"May have been—may have been! My work is not over yet, and, if I don't work for you, I'll work against you," she broke out in a fury. "I'll—"

"Not so fast, not so fast," said he slowly. "You will find that up-hill work when you have to deal with me, Sarah Gooch."

He spoke in the hard tone I had heard him use once or twice before—a tone which always made me shudder. Then his voice changed suddenly to a genial, almost caressing tone.

"Now do you think you will be able to get on without me as well as I can without you?"

There was a pause. Then I heard Sarah burst into sobs and low passionate cries for pity, for forgiveness.

"Why are you so hard? How can you have the heart to talk like that about my services, as if I was too old for anything but money-bargains? That chit, that Christie girl, that you put before me, will never serve you like I've done."

"The services of a governess are not the same as those of a servant. That is enough about Miss Christie, Sarah."

"Enough and welcome about the little flirt—a creature that keeps diamonds from one man in her desk, and wears round her neck a letter from another which she kisses on the sly? Oh, I've seen her, the little—"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Rayner, sharply. "And what if she does? It is no business of mine."

I heard him rise hastily from his chair and walk across the room; and I fled past like a hare. Trembling and panting, I found my way to the hall table, took out of the box there half-a-dozen matches, and, except guiltily, miserably up-stairs. I had listened, as if chained to the spot, to their talk, and it was only now that I had fled for fear of discovery that I reflected on what a dishonourable thing I had done.

If he had come to the door, thrown it open, and seen me cowering with parted lips against the wall within a few feet of it, how Sarah would have triumphed in the justice of her hatred of a girl who could be guilty of such meanness! And how Mr. Rayner's own opinion of me would have sunk! He would have seen how wrong he was in considering the eavesdropping governess the superior to the devoted servant.

I cried with shame and remorse as I stumbled up the turret-stairs, shut myself in my room, and lighted my candle. I did not feel a bit frightened now; I forgot even to turn the key in the lock; this last adventure had swept away all remembrance of the previous one. When at last I began to think collectedly of what I had heard, I felt no longer any doubt, from what Sarah had said about the nature and extent of her services, that she was in reality the responsible guardian of Mrs. Rayner, and that, when she spoke of winking against her master if he sent her away, she meant to publish far and wide what he had so long and so carefully kept secret—the fact that he had a wife tottering on the verge of insanity. I did not wonder now so much as I had before at the depth of her jealousy of me. I saw how strong the woman's passions were and how deep was her devotion to her master, and I began to understand that it was hard for her to see so many little acts of consideration showered on a new comer which she, although her service had been so much longer and more painful, could not feel from her position expect. And I got up from the chair I had sat on, trying to forgive her, yet hoping she would go away all the same.

At I rose, I caught sight of my desk, which I suddenly saw had been moved. I might have done that myself in my search for the matches; but it flashed through my mind that Sarah had told Mr. Rayner that I kept the diamonds in my desk. But it was locked, and the keys were always in my pocket. However, I opened it and looked into the top compartment, where I kept Mr. Rayner's present. There it was in its case, looking just as usual. Then I opened the lower compartment, with the intention of reading through just once more, before I went to bed, those two notes I had had from Mr. Reade, one on that day and one on the day before, about the church-work. And the last one, the one that had come with the cigar-box on that day, was not there! A suspicion flashed through my mind which made my breath come fast—Sarah had taken it!

It was Sarah then whom I had surprised in my room that evening! She had managed by some means to open my desk, seen the pendant, and, having made a grievance against me of the fact that I had received letters from a gentleman, had taken the letter out and probably shown it to Mr. Rayner on some pretence of having "picked it up," to prove to him by the direction in a handwriting which he knew, that I was carrying on a clandestine correspondence with Mr. Laurence Reade. And I remembered that she had almsy taken the first note to Mr. Rayner. Well, if she had read both the notes—for they were lying together in my desk—she must have seen that they were of a very innocent kind; but how was Mr. Rayner, who had not read them, to know this? I was annoyed and disgusted beyond measure; I could have forgiven anything, even her meanness in playing spy while I looked at the note which I wore round my neck, but stealing my precious letter. I shed some more tears at the loss of it, wondering whether she would ever take the trouble to restore it, polluted as it would be by having been read by her unkind eyes.

Then I went to bed, very tired and very unhappy; and at last I fell asleep, with my hands clasping the note that Sarah could not get at, which I wore in a case round my neck. Perhaps the excitement and agitation of the evening had caused my sleep to be lighter than usual. At any rate, I was awakened by a very slight noise indeed, so

slight that I thought it must be the work of my nervous fancy; and my sleepy eyes were closing again, when I suddenly became conscious that there was a light in the room not that of the rising sun.

Fully awake now, and cold all over with this new fright, I saw by the flickering on the ceiling that the light must come from a candle behind the screen; I saw that it was being carried forward into the room, and then I closed my eyes and pretended to be asleep. My fingers were still clinging to the little case; but they were wet and clammy with horror. Was it Sarah? What was she going to do now? To put back my letter? I did not dare to look.

I lay there listening so intently that I could hear, or fancy I heard, each soft step taken by the intruder. Then they stopped; and from the effect of the flickering light through my closed eyelids I guessed that the candle was being raised to throw its light on my face. Still I had self-command enough to lie quite still and to imitate the long drawn breathing of a sleeping person. But then my heart seemed to stand still, for I felt the light coming nearer, and I heard the faint sound of a moving figure growing plainer, until the light was flashed within a foot of my face. I could not have moved then. I was half paralysed. Then I noticed a faint sickly smile that I did not know, and a hand was laid very softly upon the bed-clothes.

Still I did not move, I had formed a sort of plan in those deadly two minutes, which seemed like two hours, when the light was coming nearer and nearer to my face. The hand crept softly up, and slipped under the bed-clothes close to my chin, till it touched my fingers clutching the little leather case. I tried to disengage them; but my grasp on my treasure was like grim death. Then the hand was softly withdrawn, I heard the drawing of a cork, I smelt the faint smell more strongly, and a handkerchief wet with some sickening, suffocating stuff was thrown lightly over my face.

Then I started up with a shriek as loud and piercing as my lungs could give, tore the handkerchief from my face, and confronted Sarah, who drew back, her dark face livid with anger, but without uttering a sound. In her hand she held a little bottle. I tried with a spring to dash it from her grasp; but she was too quick for me, and, with a step back against the screen, she held it out of my reach. Then the screen fell down with a loud crash. My attention was distracted from the woman to it for one moment, and in that moment she made another spring at my neck. But then there was a sound outside which had as many terrors for her as her own hard voice had for me. It was Mr. Rayner, calling sharply and sternly—

"Sarah, come out here!"

She started; then her face grew sullen and defiant, and she stood like a rock before me. Again Mr. Rayner called.

"Sarah, do you hear me? Come here!"

And, as if a spell had been cast upon her which it was vain for her to fight against, she went slowly out of the room, and I was left alone.

I sprang from the bed, locked the door, and fell down against it in the dark and cold in a passion of hysterical sobs that I could not restrain. Then they died away, and I felt my limbs grow numb and stiff; but I had not power to move, and I thought I must be dying.

Then I heard a fall at the bottom of the stairs and a woman's cry, and immediately after a voice outside roused me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Handshaking Art.

President Arthur is said to have suffered so much from the prevalent custom of shaking hands that he has made the subject a study and has reduced it to a fine art. This art is simple in plan and surprising in effect, but inoffensive. When the President sees a man coming at him for the usual salutation he stands impassive, with his hands at his sides, until his friend reaches him. Then the President, by a quick movement, seizes the extended hand, shakes it, and drops it before the handshaker is fairly aware what has happened. By this dexterity the President escapes having his hands wrung until the bones crack—a process which, repeated several hundred times a day is naturally painful.

President Arthur's plan of handshaking will doubtless be copied without credit by some other public men, but not generally. The most of them have larger hands than the President, and have not so much to fear a squeeze. For others the method is not cordial enough. Mr. Blaine, though he has a medium-sized hand, prevents its being squeezed by seizing his friend's hand in both his own, and is thus enabled to do what he chooses with it. President Garfield used to have the habit, also practiced by some others, of taking his friend's hand lightly, adroitly giving him a slap on the back, and then withdrawing his hand before the victim had recovered from his surprise. As no visitor ever dared to slap back, this plan seemed to work very well indeed. It indicated sufficient cordiality, saved the President's hand, and at the same time the exercise of slapping kept him in good health.

Mike Cuddihie and his wife, living not far from Denver, Colorado, had a small girl in their family adopted from the Catholic Orphan Home, of that city. The girl recently died suddenly and mysteriously, and it was afterwards believed that her death came about from cruelties inflicted by Cuddihie and his wife. They were arrested and found guilty of murder, but a band of masked men overpowered the sheriff, took his prisoners away and hanged them both. It is said to have been the first case of a woman having been lynched in the State.

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MYSTERIOUS!

The Terrible Undertow that is Sweeping Away so Many—What Well-known Canadians Have to Say.

It is an unquestionable fact that thousands of people are to-day enduring the most intense torture or are afflicted by the most unaccountable symptoms for which they can assign no reason whatever. They have frequent headaches; are strangely languid; have a ravenous appetite one day and none whatever the next, and feel dull pains in various parts of the body, but they imagine it is only a cold or some passing minor disorder. Indeed, few people realize the presence of grave and serious dangers until they are upon them. The following experiences of well-known people in the Province are timely and valuable.

Rev. William J. Henderson, pastor of the Methodist-Episcopal church of Prescott, Ontario, says: "For a number of years and until recently, I had been gradually, but steadily, declining in health. I was subject to severe pains in various parts of my body, shortness of breath, palpitation of the heart, and a distressing, hacking cough. I consulted physicians, one of whom informed me that I had been 'carrying too many pounds of steam.' Another stated that I was on the eve of a general constitutional 'break-up'; another pronounced me as being far gone in liver complaint, and feeling that the last one had hit it, I commenced a course of his treatment, without, however, any benefit. Feeling that I was going down hill very fast, I grew somewhat despondent, and finally resigned myself to an early death. At this juncture I resolved to try Warner's Safe Cure, and I may say that I felt almost immediate relief, and now I am nearly as well as I ever was in my whole life. My cough has disappeared entirely and I seldom feel any of my old symptoms. I have always been somewhat disposed to prejudice against proprietary medicines, but I feel it to be an act of justice to make this statement for the good of others."

John Evans, residing at 139 King street, London, says: "For two years I have been troubled with gravel in my kidneys and have suffered untold agony. The passage of the gravel from the kidneys into the bladder threw me into paroxysms of pain and completely broke me down. Upon the recommendation of a friend I began the use of Warner's Safe Cure, which seemed to dissolve the gravel and it passed from me in the form of dust. I recommend Warner's Safe Cure to everybody who is suffering at all as I have suffered."

Mrs. M. Lemon, residing at 5 1/2 Victoria avenue, Hamilton, says: "For ten years I have suffered from female complaints and liver disease. I have consulted all the prominent doctors in Hamilton, but none were able to cure me. Six months out of every year I was laid up in bed from nervous prostration and debility, and frequently while working about the house I would faint and remain unconscious for more than half an hour. Hearing of Warner's Safe Cure, I began its use and am now in good health. All previous troubles have left me. It has worked wonders in my case and I can recommend it to all the ladies in the country."

Mr. Chas. M. Syme, foreman in W. H. Smith's saw factory, St. Catharines, said: "Five years ago I began to be afflicted with most distressing troubles which increased in violence until I was compelled to remain in bed. My symptoms were terrible and I kept getting worse and worse all the while. The doctors could not agree as to the nature of my disease and I finally lost all hopes of ever getting well. Learning of some cases similar to my own that had been helped by Warner's Safe Cure, I began its use and commenced to improve from the first day, and I am happy to say that I am now as sound as a dollar and can do a day's work without it hurting me."

Doctor Samuel T. Rodley, of Chatham, says: "I have seen Warner's Safe Cure used very extensively and have heard of the most gratifying results. I am convinced that it is an unequalled medicine for disorders of the kidneys and urinary organs, and I can freely recommend it."

Mr. A. J. McBlain, clerk of Crawford House, Windsor, says: "For several years I was afflicted with kidney difficulty and did not know what it was to be free from excruciating pains, which at times were so bad that I could neither stand nor remove my clothes. At that time I was conductor on the Denver and Rio Grande railroad, and no doubt the constant jolting aggravated the disease. Noticing an advertisement of Warner's Safe Cure, I procured the medicine and from the first it acted like magic, and it has completely and permanently cured me. I cannot too highly recommend it, as I know what it has done for me."

The above statements are from men of unquestionable veracity, and such as merit the greatest consideration. No one who is suffering from any form of physical disorder can afford to neglect even the slightest symptoms, which can be so readily controlled if taken in time, and which are so dangerous if permitted to continue.

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