

# IN GOLDEN BONDS.

CHAPTER XX—CONTINUED.

"So soon? Why it is a century off! I shall be gray-headed if we wait another week. I am not sure where we shall stay; but tomorrow night I will bring you an address that you can always write to. It is that of a friend of mine—I forget the number of the street, but you shall have it; and I shall be sure to get your letters. Now, if anything happens to alarm you, or you are ill, or anything, you are to write at once, and I will return to Goldham without delay. And, my darling—"

We were interrupted by the sound of a carriage coming up the drive; it was Dr. Lowe's brougham returning from the house. I went to the carriage-window, and he told me that Haidee was suffering at present only from a bad feverish cold, but that we must be careful with her, for it might turn to something worse, and he should call again to see her in the morning. He said that the child's chest was weak, that the damp place was the worst thing for her, and that he should like to see her parents to advise them to take her away to some drier climate, as soon as she was well enough to be moved.

"Mind, she mustn't be moved yet," said he. "She is very well where she is—nice warm room, high out of the damp. But the lower part of the house strikes like a vault."

"What would he say if he could go into the left wing?" I thought to myself.

"There was only a silly little servant up there with the child. She says that is your room."

"Yes, Dr. Lowe."

"And is it true that Mrs. Rayner sleeps on the ground floor?"

"Yes, quite true."

"Well, then, you may think yourself lucky, young lady. For, if I lived in that house, I should let the people I wanted to get rid of sleep at the bottom, and keep the top for myself."

"Mrs. Rayner will have the ground-floor of the left wing to herself."

"Ah, well, there is no accounting for tastes; and, if Mrs. Rayner has a fancy for building her sepulchre, why, there is nobody very eager to prevent her, I dare say!" said he drily.

The doctor was an old bachelor, famed for his rudeness as much as for his skill. Mr. Rayner did not like him, I knew; and on that account I had had at first some doubts about sending for him; but, as he was well known to be by far the best doctor in Beaconsburg, I had resolved to risk it. Now I began to repent having done so.

"Is that young Reade? Is that you Laurence?" said the doctor peering out of the carriage-window into the deep shadows of the trees behind me.

Laurence came forward.

"Yes, Dr. Lowe."

"Oh, ah! Come to inquire about the sick child, I suppose?"

"No, Dr. Lowe. I drove back from Beaconsburg with my father and this lady, after calling upon you, and I am saying good-bye to her, as I am going abroad and shall not see her again until a few days before she becomes my wife," said he, in a low voice, but very proudly, with his hand on my shoulder.

"Wife, eh?"—incredulously.

"But it is a secret."

"Oh, ah, of course!"—knowingly. "So this is the Miss Christie I've heard so much about!" And he deliberately put on his spectacles and stared at me in the faint moonlight. "Well, she wouldn't have turned the heads of the men when I was young."

We both laughed at the old man's rudeness.

"I have no doubt heads were harder to turn then, Dr. Lowe," said Laurence drily.

"Well, take care some one else doesn't turn her's while you are away!" said the doctor glaring at him ferociously; and he told the coachman to drive on, and drew up the window sharply.

This last hit struck poor Laurence as an evil omen; and when I told him that I must go in now, and that I should see him again on the morrow, he flung his arms around me in such distress that I did not know what to say to comfort him.

"See what clever Dr. Lowe thinks of your Mr. Rayner, Violet," said he, looking anxiously into my eyes. "Now listen, my darling. Don't trust him, don't trust anybody while I am away, and don't believe what anybody may tell you about me. What would you do if they showed you the certificate of my marriage to another woman, Violet?"

"Oh, Laurence, you are not going away to be married, are you?"

"No, child, no; and, if any one tells you so, you will know it is a lie. And, if you get no letters, and they tell you I am dead—"

"Oh, Laurence, don't."

"Why, that will be a lie too! I shall be alive and single all the next six weeks, and at the end of that time I shall come back and marry you; and, if you want me, I shall come back before my own darling! Good-bye, good-bye!"

He kissed me again and again, then tore himself from my arms, and dashed away without daring even to look up at me again, and, tearful and trembling, I turned to go back to the house. But Laurence's terrible excitement had communicated itself to me, and I staggered down the drive, hardly able to see where I was going; and, when I had got to the bottom, with only the lawn at the side and the gravel-space in front between me and the house, I stopped for a moment, and clung to a birch-tree for support while I dried my eyes before presenting myself at the front door. I had told Jane to come down and open it for me when she heard me ring; and I hoped with all my heart it would be she, and that that horrid Sarah would not have taken it into her head to sit up, for I did not want her to see my tear-stained face.

But, just as I was going to leave the shelter of the trees and cross the gravel-space to the portico, I stopped, for I saw in the gloom a figure making its way across the lawn towards the back of the house. It was coming from the path among the trees which led to the stable. I strained my eyes, but there was a cloud passing before the moon, and I could only see that it was a man, and that he was carrying what looked like a small trunk; and it seemed heavy.

Who could it be at this time of night? For it was now between eleven and twelve o'clock. Was it Tom Parkes paying a late visit to Sarah, knowing the master was away? Or was it the mysterious servant Gordon, thinking Mr. Rayner was at home? Or was it a burglar? But then a burglar, I argued to myself, would hardly be likely to carry things to the house he was going to rob, but rather to take things away; and the trunk he was carrying seemed to be heavy already. He had disappeared behind the back of the house by this time, and, as I was curious to know what would happen next, I waited, trembling, creeping in among the trees, and in a few minutes had the satisfaction of seeing him reappear, followed by Sarah. And, the cloud having passed over the face of the moon, I saw that it was indeed Tom Parkes; and then I would have given the world to know what he had brought her.

The impression which Sarah's talk with the stranger in the plantation had given me of Tom's desperate wickedness had faded a good deal from my mind by this time; but this strange sight revived it. What if Tom—placid, stolid-looking, honest-faced Tom, as I had once thought him—were in reality a thief? And what if Sarah, in her master's absence, had been persuaded by him to keep stolen property? There had been something stealthy in his manner of sneaking across the lawn in the shadow with his burden which had suggested this thought; but, on the other hand, was it not much more probable that he had been turned off at Denham Court, and had brought some of his own personal property, intending to take up his abode at the Alders for a few days, in the master's absence? The all-powerful Sarah might even dare that, relying upon her power to make herself unpleasant for the rest of the household to keep her secret.

They disappeared up the stable path, and I took the opportunity to dart across the gravel-space to the front door and ring as gently as I could. Jane came down in a few minutes, very sleepy, and let me in.

"Sarah's been asking where you were, miss, and, as I let the doctor in, I told her you came back with him. I guessed as you'd come back safe, miss, when the doctor said as how a young gentleman was with you," said Jane, with elaborate archness.

I told her to go to bed as fast as she could; and, when I had followed her up-stairs and seen her into the nursery, I went softly to the head of the kitchen stairs, and, as I heard no sound and saw no light, I slipped down with my candle. The side-door by which Sarah and Mr. Rayner used to go to and from the stables was ajar, and just inside was a small old brown portmanteau. I did not dare to go all the way down to inspect it closely, as I own I should have liked to do; but in the view I got of it, as I held my candle over my head and peered at it curiously, it struck me that I had seen it before somewhere. Then I turned and fled guiltily up-stairs to my room. Haidee was sleeping and looked less feverish than when I went away. Jane had built up the fire carefully, so that it might keep in all night, and placed the drink the doctor had ordered on a little table beside the child. Her bed had been placed at the right-hand side of the fireplace, facing the door, and my screen had been put round the back to shut out all draught from the windows. I was very tired, and the moment I laid my head on the pillow I fell soundly asleep, and did not wake until the morning.

Haidee was already awake, and undoubtedly better.

"How did you sleep, darling?" said I, sitting on the bed and kissing her.

"Oh, beautifully, Miss Christie! I hardly ever woke up once, and when I did I watched the beautiful fire; I could just see it when I lay with my head so. It was so nice and warm up here. I wish mamma was up here; I should like to be up here always. I think I should have nice dreams up here, not like the ones I have down-stairs."

And she closed her eyes, as if to shut out the thought of something.

"You shall stay up here till you are quite well again, darling," said I, inwardly resolving to beg that she might sleep in my room permanently.

"Miss Christie you know you dream sometimes with your eyes wide open, just as if you were awake? I dreamt a dream like that last night."

"That was because you were ill, darling. When they are ill they dream like that."

"Do they—quite plain, like as if it was all quite real?"

"Yes; sometimes they think they see people and talk to people."

"That was like my dream. I dreamt it was while I was looking at the fire the door there opened quite gently and softly, just as if it moved quite of itself, and then I saw papa's face, and he had in his hand some thing red and sparkling; and just when the door came quite wide open, I thought I sat up in bed, and he looked at me. And then the door seemed to shut quite softly again, and I didn't hear anything—and that was all."

"That wasn't really a dream, darling. It was just a fancy because you were ill."

"Not a dream! Papa didn't really come, did he?"

"Oh, no, darling! Papa is away in London. See, the door is locked."

And I got up off the bed and went to the door, and showed her that it was so. Haidee leant back thoughtfully.

"Dreams are very strange things, I think. And to dream of nice things is just as good as if they really happened. And to dream of horrid things—cries and moans and things—is dreadful!"—and she shuddered.

"You sha'n't dream of anything dreadful while you are up here with me, darling," said I, soothing the little delicate fanciful creature, and wondering whether some of the cries she spoke of had not been real, and not only dreams.

For I was beginning since last night, when I had witnessed her real feeling about her child, to be very sorry for Mrs. Rayner, and to wonder whether I could not draw nearer to her in some way through Haidee, and, through understanding her better, learn to sympathize with her still more. Her misery had seemed so real, and, on the other hand, I had never seen her so utterly broken down and helpless. When once the mask of cold self-control which she usually wore had disappeared, she seemed such a weak thing that it appeared scarcely possible that she could have such a force of obstinacy in her as Mr. Rayner had described her to possess. Mad or sane, I should never be

afraid of her again. I only felt utterly sorry for her; and anxious to let her know how much I longed in some way to cheer her dull life. Why was she so reticent to her husband? What if I, being a woman, and having now established, through my care of her child, some claim on her gratitude, could win my way to her heart altogether, persuade her to leave Goldham for a time, and meet Mr. Rayner on his return with the triumphant news that at last his wife was ready to break through her apathy and come back into the world of men again? The thought made my heart beat faster, and I longed to begin my delicate work at once.

But I was disappointed. I had all my meals by myself that day, except tea, which I had up-stairs with Haidee, for Sarah said Mrs. Rayner was too unwell to leave her room. When we had finished tea, I still sat up-stairs by my pupil's bedside, and my high spirits at the thought of Laurence's expected visit infected her, and she laughed and chattered to me in a fashion very unusual with her. At last I heard the front-door bell ring, and my heart seemed to stand still with joyful anticipation. But no one came up-stairs to fetch me, and, after a few minutes' breathless waiting, I ran down-stairs, unable to bear the suspense any longer. I met Sarah in the hall.

"Who was that, Sarah?" asked I, too much excited to think of a decent subterfuge.

"Only one of Gregson's boys asking for Mr. Rayner, miss."

Strange that Gregson's boy should come to the front door, thought I. I could not go up-stairs again. It was half-past six; and at half-past seven I was to be at my "nest," if Laurence had not come before. I thought that hour would never end. It seemed to me to be getting very dark too. When the hands of the schoolroom clock pointed to twenty minutes past, I put on my shawl, and had opened the window to go out, when Sarah came in.

"If you please, miss, would you mind helping me with the store-list?" Mrs. Rayner is too ill to do it, and it has to be posted to-morrow morning."

"Oh, Sarah, won't it do in—half an hour?" said I breathlessly.

"Mrs. Rayner will want me then, miss. It won't take you more than five minutes."

I followed her out of the room, suppressing my impatience as well as I could. But the task did not really seem to take long. In what appeared to be about a quarter of an hour I was free, and I dashed into the garden, through the plantation, towards my "nest."

I had not looked at the clock again, but surely it was very dark for half-past seven! Yet Laurence was not there! And, as I stood wondering whether something was wrong, I heard the church-clock strike eight. What awful mistake had I made? Was he gone? Should I really not see him again? A bit of paper half hidden in the grass, not on my seat, but under it, caught my eye. It was a leaf torn from a pocket-book. On it was scrawled in pencil, in Laurence's handwriting—

"Good-bye, my darling! Remember what I prophesied last night, and if no other warning will serve you, take this one. I called at the Alders at seven, and was told by Sarah that you were tired out with watching by Haidee, and were asleep. I come here to-night, and you are not here. I know it's a trick, and I know who is at the bottom of it. When I left you last night, there were two men in a cart outside the stable-gate of the Alders. If anything happens, write to me at the following address." Then followed the address, and the scrawl ended with—"I have spoken to Mrs. Manners. Good-bye, my darling! Take care of yourself for the next six weeks, and you shall never need to take care of yourself again."

"Your devotedly loving  
"LAURENCE."

I kissed the note, thrust it into the front of my frock, and fled into the house and into the schoolroom. Sarah was just turning away from the mantelpiece; and by the clock it was just four minutes past eight.

How the time had flown between my leaving the schoolroom with Sarah and my going into the garden!

## CHAPTER XXI.

I sat down by the table as soon as Sarah had left the schoolroom, and rested my head in my hands. I did not want to cry, though a few tears trickled down between my fingers at the thought that I should not see Laurence again before he went away; but I wanted to put the events of the evening together and find out what they meant. There was only one conclusion to come to; Sarah had deliberately prevented my meeting him. The ring I had heard had been Laurence's; and, after sending him away by means of a falsehood, she had had another ready for me when I asked who it was. "Gregson's boy!" I had thought it strange at the time that the carpenter's son should come to the front door, and now I felt sure that he had not been there at all.

I looked again at Laurence's note. He had called at the house at seven, he said. Now I distinctly remember that, after I had heard the bell ring and met Sarah, I came into the schoolroom and found by the clock that it was half-past six. I had sat there until twenty minutes past seven, and during that time there had been no other ring at the hall door. And I had noticed how dark it was getting; then, just as I was opening the window to go out, Sarah had come in and asked me to help her with the store-list, and I had been free in a very short time; yet on my arrival at my "nest," the church clock had struck eight.

Sarah must have put the schoolroom clock back.

I had found her just now turning from the mantelpiece, and I could not doubt that, her object being gained, she had been putting the clock right again. This malicious persecution frightened me. Was I safe in the same house with a woman who would take so much trouble merely to prevent my having a last interview with my lover? There had been a matter-of-fact deliberateness in the way she had answered me about the bell and asked me to do the list which had the effect of alarming me still more than the savage manner in which she used to look at and speak to me when she was jealous of some new proof of the consideration with which I was treated at the Alders. This was Wednesday, and Mr. Rayner would probably not be back before

Saturday. What new proof of animosity would she manage to give me in these three days? That she would not let this opportunity of showing her rooted dislike to me go by I felt sure. I remembered how earnestly she had begged to stay, and wondered whether the wish for a chance of playing me some unkind trick had had anything to do with it; for Sarah was not likely to have forgiven me for having been the cause of her threatened dismissal. It was of no use to speculate upon what she might do, if she grew too intolerable, I could telegraph to Mr. Rayner, and he would find some means of bringing her to reason.

I turned to Laurence's note to divert my thoughts from her, and wondered why, in those few hurried lines to me, he had thought it worth while to mention that he saw two men in a cart outside the stable gate when he left me on the previous night. What meaning could the incident have to him? It had one to me, certainly; but then it was because I had seen Tom Parkes bring in the little portmanteau, and then return across the lawn with Sarah. The mention of this cart revived my curiosity regarding the past night's adventure. I could make nothing of it myself; but I thought I would write to Laurence and tell him what I had seen; and, if he knew anything more, my information might lead him to an explanation of the whole occurrence. I was still staring at the note when Sarah came in again, this time to bring me my candle, an office she seldom undertook. I saw a look of disappointment and alarm come over her face as her quick eyes fell on my note, and when I got up-stairs I took the precaution to learn the address I was to write to by heart before enclosing this farewell note with Laurence's first, which I still wore around my neck.

The next morning I received a letter from Mr. Rayner. He had been to the Gaiety Theatre on the very night of his arrival in town, and sent me a crumpled programme of the performance, with some comments which did not interest me very much, as I had not seen any of the actors and actresses he mentioned, having been only once to the theatre in my life. I laughed to myself at Laurence's fancy that he had seen Mr. Rayner in the dress of a navy at the station that night. The letter, which had been written at four o'clock on Wednesday, said further that he was going that evening to the Criterion Theatre, where he hoped to be better entertained. He said he had written to Mrs. Rayner, and sent his love to Haidee by her, but that he enclosed a second portion to me to give her, as she was not well. Then he gave me a message to deliver which I would much rather not have been entrusted with, and at breakfast I said to Sarah—

"Mr. Rayner has sent a message to you in a letter I have just received from him. He says: 'Tell Sarah not to forget the work she has to do in my absence.'"

As I looked up after reading this out to her, I saw that her face had turned quite livid; the old hatred of me gleamed in her eyes, and I wished Mr. Rayner had written to her himself, instead of making me deliver a message which appeared so distasteful to her.

She said, "Very well, miss;" and I wondered what work it was.

I spent most of the day by Haidee's bedside. I did not see Mrs. Rayner, for she appeared neither at breakfast nor at dinner, and to my inquiries Sarah gave the same answer as before—that she was not well enough to leave her room. She could not even see any one either, Sarah said, when I asked if I might read to her; and I was obliged to see my hopes of gaining her sympathy fade away, and to recognise the fact that either she would not or Sarah would not allow me a chance of breaking down the barrier of reserve between us. I could let her see that I had not forgotten her, though; and, seized by a happy thought, I went in search of an old knife and a basket and went into the garden to gather some flowers.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon; the leaves and grass were still wet, for it had been raining hard all the morning, and the mist was rising already from the marsh. There were scarcely any flowers left now, but by wandering into remote nooks of the garden, and by stepping in among the plants and spying out every blossom hidden under the leaves, I managed at last to collect enough for a very fair October bouquet. I took them into the house, and it suddenly occurred to me that they would make a better display in a large wire-covered vase that stood on a whatnot in the drawing-room. So I ran in there, with my frock still tucked up, the garden-knife in one dirty hand and my basket of flowers in my arm. I had my hand still on the handle of the door, when I saw there was a gentleman, standing at the window, looking out into the garden. I slipped back hastily, hoping to escape before he could catch sight of me; but he turned, crossed the room quickly, and stopped me.

"Miss Christie!"

It was Mr. Carruthers.

"They told me you were out," Sarah's work, thought I.

"No; I was only in the garden."

There was no help for my appearance now, so I quietly took the pin out of my frock and let it down while he went on talking.

"I am very, very glad to see you. You are looking very well. I am afraid," said he, still holding my hand, "you have not been missing any of us much."

"Well, you see I had known the people there only two days," said I seriously.

"The people there!" As if I cared how little you missed 'the people there!' When I say you had not been missing any of us, I mean you have not been missing me."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## A Shark Eleven Yards Long.

A shark was captured at Tabago recently by Senor Valerio Lopez which measured 10 metres 40 centimetres in length. It was taken with a harpoon, and when dragged on shore it caused the greatest excitement among the villagers. An animal eleven yards in length would not be a pleasant fellow to tackle either on land or shore, particularly when, as in this case, as an informant states, "although it has no teeth, its mouth is large enough to hold a horse." The amateur photographer of the *Vetor Pisani* photographed the animal, and obtained a good picture of it, with its jaws half open and a full-grown boy standing upright in its mouth.—*Panama Star and Herald.*

## A CAPTAIN SAVED.

How a Member of Her Majesty's Service Escaped Destruction—His Graphic Account.

(Hamilton, Ont., Spectator.)

Some little commotion was occasioned several months ago regarding the experience of a gentleman well known in this city, and at the time the matter was a subject of general conversation. In order to ascertain all the facts bearing upon the matter, a representative of this paper was dispatched yesterday to interview the gentleman in question with the following result:

Captain W. H. Nicholls, formerly in Her Majesty's service, is a man well advanced in years, who has evidently seen much of the world. Endowed by nature with a strong constitution, he was enabled to endure hardships under which many men would have succumbed. Through all privation and exposure he preserved his constitution unimpaired. A number of years ago, however, he began to feel a strange undermining of his life. He noticed that he had less energy than formerly, that his appetite was uncertain and changing, that he was unaccountably weary at certain times and correspondingly energetic at others; that his head pained him, first in front and then at the base of the brain, and that his heart was unusually irregular in its action. All these troubles he attributed to some passing disorder and gave them little attention, but they seemed to increase in violence continually. To the writer he said:

"I never for a moment thought these things amounted to anything serious and I gave them little, if any, thought; but I felt myself growing weaker all the while and could in no way account for it."

"Did you take no steps to check these symptoms?"

"Very little, if any. I thought they were only temporary in their nature and would soon pass away. But they did not pass away and kept increasing. Finally, one day, after more than a year had passed, I noticed that my feet and ankles were beginning to swell and that my face under the eyes appeared puffy. This indication increased until my body began to fill with water, and finally swelled to enormous proportions. I was afflicted with acute rheumatic pains and was fearful at times that it would attack my heart. I consulted one of our most prominent physicians and he gave me no hope of ever recovering. He said that I might live several months, but my condition was such that neither myself nor any of my family had the slightest hope of my recovery. In this condition a number of months passed by, during which time I had to sit constantly in an easy chair, not being able to lie down, lest I should choke to death. The slight pains I had at first experienced increased to the most terrible agonies. My thirst was intense and a good portion of the time I was wholly unconscious. When I did recover my senses I suffered so severely that my cries could be heard for nearly a mile. No one can have any idea of the agony I endured. I was unable to eat or even swallow fluids. My strength entirely deserted me and I was so exhausted that I prayed day and night for death. The doctors could not relieve me and I was left in a condition to die and that, too of Bright's disease of the kidneys in its most terrible form. I think I should have died had I not learned of a gentleman who had suffered very much as I had, and I resolved to pursue the same course of treatment which entirely cured him. I accordingly began and at once I felt a change for the better going on in my system. In the course of a week the swelling had gone from my abdomen and diminished all over my body and I felt like another man. I continued the treatment and am happy to say that I was entirely cured through the wonderful, almost miraculous power of Warner's Safe Cure, which I consider the most valuable discovery of modern times."

"And you feel apparently well now?"

"Yes, indeed. I am in good health, eat heartily, and both the doctors and my friends are greatly surprised and gratified at my remarkable restoration, after I was virtually in the grave. My daughter, who has been terribly troubled with a pain in her back caused by kidney trouble has also been cured by means of this same great remedy and my family and myself have constituted ourselves a kind of missionary society for supplying the poor of our neighborhood with the remedy which has been so invaluable to us."

As the writer was returning home he reflected upon the statements of the noble old man with whom he had conversed, and was impressed not only with the truth of his assertions, but also with the sincerity of all his acts. And he could not but wish that the thousands who are suffering with minor troubles which become so serious unless taken in time might know of Captain Nicholls's experience and the manner in which he was saved. And that is the cause of this article.

Cutting the Gordon Knot—Sending Gen. Gordon to the Sou'can.

The Weather Prophet looks for spring this month. The wise man looks for a blood purifier that will not injure his system; he can find what he wants in Dr. Carson's Stomach Bitters, the greatest of all blood purifiers. In large bottles at 50 cents.

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