

WRECKED. AN OCEAN ROMANCE.

CHAPTER VII.

There was a long silence. What indeed could Dick say? How could he nerve himself to banish the sole ray of happiness and comfort which now remained to him. He had long ceased to deceive himself, or to fancy that he could ever be more to Olive than a dear and valued friend; but, so long as she remained unmarried, he was her nearest and indeed her only relative and protector—the only one in all the world on whom she could rely for help and protection. And he was quite content with his place; but Olive married, with a husband and children, surrounded with nearer and dearer ties, was quite another person. Dick had faced many a temptation, fought many a battle with himself before, but never one that was half so hard as this. When Olive, wondering at his silence, looked up at last, she was startled by the expression of his pale, stern face and compressed lips.

"Dick, why don't you speak? Tell me what to do!" she cried imploringly.

Dick spoke at last, in a hoarse, unnatural voice—

"Nay, how can I tell you? You must choose for yourself—you know best what your heart tells you—whether you care for him still or not," he said.

"Care for him?"—and Olive looked up and spoke with sudden passion. "Oh, that is such a mean, poor, inadequate phrase to express what I feel!" she cried incoherently. "I love him, I tell you, as I never loved any one before—as I shall never love any one again. I sent him away from me once because I thought it was best for him, but I loved him all the time. I shall love him as long as life and memory last."

"Then tell him so," Dick said hoarsely. "Ask him to come back to you."

The color faded out of Olive's face, her eyes looked scared and frightened, and her very lips turned white.

"Tell him so," she repeated, in a low whisper—"ask him to come back to me? Oh, I cannot! He would think me bold—unwomanly!"

She dropped Dick's arm, and, walking to the window, stood looking out into the park, where the twilight was rapidly falling and the mist creeping up behind the trees. A servant entered and announced that the carriage was waiting, and was motioned impatiently away. Dick stood on the hearth-rug watching her with anxious, imploring eyes, but he did not speak. Far away through the silence came the sigh of the wind and the low moan of the surf breaking on the shore, and still Olive stood there with her hand clasped tightly over her heart, with her rich dress sweeping round her, and her diamond star flashing on her heaving breast.

"Dick, tell me, what can I say?"

Like an appealing cry the words rang through the room and roused all Dick's better nature. He came a few paces nearer and looked steadily at the passionate, tear-stained face.

"Shall I tell you what the Olive of the old days would have said, lass?" he began, steadying his voice resolutely—"the Olive who thought and cared naught about property, or what the world would say; the brave, true-hearted Olive, who would have gone through fire and water for her friends?"

"Yes, tell me!" Olive looked up eagerly, with a ray of hope in her face.

Dick hesitated a moment.

"Eh, but it's like taking the heart out of my breast and telling you to trample upon it!" he said, with an ineffable sadness in his voice. "But I would do more than that for you, Olive. Well, then, this is what I think the Olive of the old days would have said to the man she had loved and wronged—his voice, which had been very hoarse and broken at first, grew clearer every moment—"I made a mistake, and have found it out now. I sent you from me, and I wronged you sorely; but I loved you all the time. And now I have come to ask you to forgive me—to take me back to my old place in your heart—to give me my lost happiness back again."

There was an intensity of pain in Dick's voice which startled and vaguely troubled Olive; but she was too much occupied with her own grief to heed it much just then, though she thought and sighed over it sadly enough afterwards.

Alas, well might Dick look sad! Did not those words, and the light which flashed into Olive's face as she listened, seem like the death knell of his own happiness? The color flushed into Olive's face, and a smile of ineffable tenderness played on her parted lips, as, with a quick impulsive movement, she caught Dick's hand in hers, and laid her cheeks upon it, and kissed the rough brown palm.

"Yes, I will go to him—I will tell him what you say; and I will ask him to forgive me!" she cried. "And you, Dick, will take me to him, will you not, dear?"

It was the evening of the following day, and Angus Marriot was sitting alone in his lodging, laboriously practising writing with his left hand; the business which had detained him in Newcastle was almost finished, and on the next day he intended returning to London.

It was a very hot evening, and in the crowded street the heat was stifling and almost overpowering. The sun strained in through the faded moreen curtains and fell upon the shabby furniture, covered with dust and patched and worn with age and the ill-usage of former lodgers. Angus pushed his chair from the table, and glanced round the room with a sigh of disgust and weariness, then, walking to the window, looked outside into the street, and, soon wearying of that amuse-

ment, resumed his seat at the table, and took up his pen.

But the work was slow and tedious and he soon threw the pen aside, and rested his head on his hands. All at once a longing which was almost irresistible came over him for a breath of the salt sea wind which blew over the rocks at Holyrood—for a glimpse of Olive's bonny brown face! He had been terribly angry and disappointed at her letter of farewell; he could have staked his life on her faith and truth, he told himself; and he had written, in the first glow of his anger, an answer as cold and indifferent as Olive's own letter had been. But, with reflection, repentance had come, and he had determined on writing to Olive and entreating her to reconsider her decision. Then came his accident, and soon after he heard the news of Olive's heiress-ship, and pride forbade him to write and risk the chance of a second refusal. But the chance meeting with Dick Haythorne the day before had aroused all the old feeling in his heart. As he sat at the table, the vision of Olive's sweet sunny face seemed to rise with tantalizing distinctness before him. He leant back in his chair, closed his eyes wearily, and presently, tired out with the heat and fatigue, fell fast asleep and dreamed a happy dream, in which he was back at Holyrood, wandering about the rocks with Olive by his side.

There came a low knock at the door by-and-by, and he roused himself enough to answer sharply, and bid the servant—as he thought—enter. But he did not open his eyes or look up, till the soft rustle of a dress broke the silence. Then he raised himself, and, looking up with bewildered eyes, saw standing in the full blaze of the sunshine as he had seen her in his dream, Olive, in her blue serge dress, with her little red cap crowning her shining plaits of hair.

He gazed at her for a moment in silence. Was it the real Olive, or only a part of his dream? Should he wake up presently and find she had vanished? There she stood, the same Olive whom he had loved so well, as sweet and beautiful as ever, yet not quite the same. There was an added dignity, a certain patient sadness in the face before him, which the old Olive had never worn. He started up from his chair, with an exclamation of surprise.

"Olive, is it you, really?" he cried.

Olive stammered something, she scarcely knew what, in reply. She had lain awake half the night, fancying the meeting and planning what she should say and how she should best excuse and justify herself to Angus; but the careful little speech which she had prepared altogether deserted her now. Something in Angus's altered looks, in his bandaged useless hand, in the lines which pain and anxiety had written round his mouth, touched her keenly. She could only hold out her hands, with a mute appeal for pardon and reconciliation written on her quivering lips, her sweet tearful eyes.

"Angus, will you forgive me? I have been so unhappy," she faltered; and then, before he could answer, she was kneeling by his side, and her tears were falling thick and fast on the poor maimed hand.

"Oh, I never knew—I would have come to you long ago, if I had only known!" she cried passionately.

"Yes, I know; that is just like you, Olive," and Angus stroked her hair gently—"but you need not grieve so much for me, dear; I am getting used to it now, though it was a great trial at first; and I am getting quite clever; I shall soon be able to write very respectfully with my left hand," he went on cheerfully. "Look here!"

He took up the paper on which he had been writing from the table, and held it out for Olive's inspection. She tried to look; but the tears filled her eyes and blinded her, and she pushed it away impatiently. Angus looked at her quietly—hesitated a moment.

"Dick told you, I suppose," he said at last. "I can't tell you how delighted I was to see his brown face again yesterday. How vividly it brought back old times to me!"

With a great effort, Olive rallied her courage, and looked up into his face.

"Yes, he told me that, and more," she responded. "It is because of what he told me that I have found courage to come here to-day—to ask you to forgive me."

"I have nothing to forgive. You had a perfect right to change your mind," Angus returned coldly.

"But if I had never changed?" said Olive, with a great earnestness in her voice. "If I had loved you always, even when you were thinking most hardly of me—what then, Angus?"

"Then I am still more at a loss to understand your conduct," Angus answered. "But never mind now; I was hurt and indignant at the time, for I had trusted you implicitly; but I am quite reconciled to it now. I can see now that it was all for the best." He hesitated an instant, as he looked down at the still kneeling figure; his face changed, a look of unutterable love and yearning flashed into his blue eyes, and he bent his head and kissed the soft dark hair.

"There—I have forgiven you—we are friends again," he said lightly. "Get up, child; don't kneel there on that dusty carpet. You will spoil your dress."

He would have raised her; but Olive pushed his hand away.

"Not yet—not until I have tried to justify myself," she said gently. "Listen a moment, Angus. I loved you always—ever since the first day we met—but never more truly and sincerely than when I wrote the letter which said good-bye to you! I was very simple and unworshipfully in those days, dear, and I had accepted and returned your love gladly, and never dreamed that it might bring you harm; but, after you had gone, I learned—never mind who taught me—for An-

gus had looked up quickly—"how unwise it would be for you to marry an ignorant country girl who had neither money nor influence, who would be a hindrance instead of a help to you; and not only that, but I was told too that you had repented your choice, that not love but honor alone held you faithful to your vows; and so—I set you free."

"It was a falsehood! Who told it to you?" Angus asked hotly. "Was it a woman?"

"Never mind who told me—let that pass," Olive answered quickly. "And now, you know all, Angus, will you forgive me, dear, or must I plead in vain?"

Angus touched her hair gently. "I forgive—we are friends again," he said shortly.

"Only friends?" Olive did not look up, her cheeks were flaming and there were hot tears of shame and disappointment in her eyes. She rose from her knees as she spoke, and stood with downcast eyes by his side. She looked so sweet and gentle in the midst of her grief that Angus only by an effort restrained himself from taking her into his arms and kissing the sweet tear-stained face.

"Don't tempt me, Olive! What more can we be now?" he muttered hoarsely. He turned from her as he spoke; but his agitated face and manner and the passionate glance of his blue eyes filled Olive's heart with a throbbing of intense delight. With a little caressing gesture, she slipped her hand through his arm, and hid her face against his shoulder.

"What? All that we were before, and more still, Angus!" she whispered. "Oh, if you knew how unhappy I have been, how empty my life has seemed since then! Dear, won't you listen to me? It is for my lifelong happiness I am pleading—the happiness I had thought was lost for ever," the girl cried passionately.

But still Angus was silent. He stood looking down into her face with an intense questioning gaze. Was it pity or love which prompted the confession? he wondered. He knew so well the strength and generosity of Olive's nature that it was no wonder that he asked the question, and he revolted against the idea of accepting a sacrifice which afterwards she might repent making. And she was rich and he was poor, though her wealth was scarcely the barrier to Angus which it would have been to many men. He cared for and thought very little about money, and Olive the heiress was not one whit more dear and precious in his sight than the old Olive had been.

He took both her hands in his, and looked down searchingly into her pleading face.

"Your happiness! Olive, answer me this question honestly. Is it of your happiness or mine you are thinking?" he asked very gravely.

Olive looked up with misty eyes. "Is it not the same thing?" she asked, in reply. "I think my happiness is bound up in yours, Angus."

And Angus, looking down into the quivering, half-smiling face, and reading with wondering delight the sweet love-light which flashed into the girl's eyes and transformed and beautified her, could not doubt any longer. He drew her closely to his breast and kissed her.

"Oh, my darling, how I have been wearying for you!" he whispered; and Olive clung to him in a silence which seemed too sweet to break.

Angus never knew of Mrs. Oakley's treachery. Olive kept her promise of secrecy faithfully; and, though Mrs. Oakley can rarely be induced to visit Angus in his Northern home, the two cousins are as good friends as ever.

"I am afraid you are making a poor bargain, love," Angus said to Olive by-and-by, as she sat by his side perched on the arm of his chair, with his useless hand held gently between her own. "I shall never do any good now! I used to think once that I might make a name which you would be proud to wear; but those hopes have faded now—since my accident."

"Never mind; they will bloom again," Olive cheerfully predicted.

"I fear not. It is very doubtful, so the doctors tell me, that I shall ever be able to use my hand much again."

"Never mind." There were blinding tears in Olive's eyes; but she bent her head over his hand, and the passionate drops fell unnoticed. "I am going to supply its place—to be your right hand now. I shall be, or try to be, at all events, what Milton's daughter was to her father. You don't think I shall make a very poor substitute for this, do you, dear?" she went on, touching his hand gently.

Angus smiled, and kissed her.

"I am only wondering what you can see in me—what I have done to deserve my good luck. Only I doubt whether I ought to accept such a sacrifice. The more I think of it the greater it seems! You have beauty, wealth—"

"Beauty? In your eyes, perhaps—in no other," Olive answered quickly; "wealth, which is only a burden and trouble to me—oh, you don't know how tired I get of all my grandeur sometimes, how I long for the old life!"

"When you used to run about barefooted on the sands." There was a tender look in Angus's blue eyes as he called to memory his first meeting with Olive. "Shall I ever forget the first time I saw you, I wonder? You wore a blue gown, and you had a red cap on your head. Why, I do believe—and he looked down at her dress critically—"it was the very gown you are wearing now! Am I not right?"

"Quite right. It is very old and shabby now; but I kept—I think I shall always keep it, for the sake of the memories it recalls," Olive answered very sweetly; "and I put it on to-day because I hoped it might bring back those mem-

ories to you as well, and I wanted you to think of me, my dear"—and the clear voice faltered and drooped—"not as the Squire's heiress, but only as the girl whose life you blessed and glorified with your love, who asks nothing else now but to devote that life to you."

Angus did not answer; his heart was too full for words; but he bent his head and kissed the clasped white hands which rested on his arm; and, as Olive looked up into his face and read the unutterable love and reverence in his blue eyes, she felt indeed as if the full fruition of her hopes was at hand.

But no one thought of Dick, waiting patiently outside in the crowded street.

It was the evening before Olive's wedding-day, a golden August evening, with an opal-tinted sky and sea. Olive had come down to the shore with Dick, to take a last good-bye look at the familiar scene. The two cousins were standing on the rocks watching the sun set behind the sea. Olive had been very silent for some time. She stood by Dick's side, with her hand on his arm, and a thoughtful, far-away look in her eyes. How could she be anything but thoughtful, standing as she did on the threshold of a new life, where untried joys and sorrows, unknown trials and responsibilities awaited her.

Dick was silent too. He had something to say to Olive which he knew would grieve her deeply, and he had brought her down to the beach on purpose that he might say it alone; but he hesitated how to begin.

"Won't you come with us?" Olive had said to Angus, who had been present when Dick made his request.

But Angus, after a quick intent look into Dick's face, had quietly declined; and so once more, for the last time, the cousins took their evening walk together.

Olive broke the silence at last. "How quiet we both are! I think the sunset always makes one thoughtful, don't you, Dick? And it seems so odd to think that to-morrow—she hesitated and colored brightly—"I shall be so far away. It will be winter, and the days cold and dark, before you and I see each other again."

"Perhaps it may be longer than that," remarked Dick slowly.

"Oh, no, it won't! Angus has promised to bring me home for Christmas," said Olive, with a decisive shake of her head.

"Many things may happen before Christmas. See here, Olive"—and Dick rallied his courage desperately. "I may as well tell you at once, and get it over. I am going to Australia next month."

"Australia!"—and Olive's voice was full of shocked surprise. "Oh, Dick, surely you are jesting! You don't mean it really?"

"Ay, I do. And it is no new thing, lass; I have often thought of going—now that the ice was broken, Dick went on steadily enough. "I am getting tired of Holyrood; I should have been off long ago, if it had not been for you. And now that you don't want me any longer"—and for a moment the strong voice quivered a little—"I can go at once."

"But I do want you!" Olive cried piteously. "Dick, don't go—stay with me! I shall miss you so much!"

"You won't miss me long. Besides, I have quite decided," Dick answered firmly. "I took my passage in the *Oriental* last week. There—don't look so grieved, lass—and he patted her cheek caressingly—"and don't try to persuade me to alter my mind. Can't you understand? I must go—I can't stay here now!"

For the first time a faint suspicion of the truth broke over Olive's mind. She gave a quick frightened look into Dick's face, the color flushed into her cheeks, and her heart throbbed wildly; but it was a long time before she spoke again, and then there was an inexpressible sadness in her voice.

"You know best. But, Dick, you are only going for a time? You will come back to me some day? Promise!"

Was it a foreshadowing of the future which made Dick hesitate, which brought that solemn, awed look into his eyes?

"Yes, I will come back some day," he answered slowly, "if Heaven so wills! I will come back and settle down in your cottage again, with old Margery for my housekeeper. I don't think I could fancy living in any house but that; so, even if you let the cottage to another tenant, Olive, during my absence, you must promise to turn them out when I come home!"

"It shall never have another tenant but you!" Olive cried. "Old Margery shall live there and keep it in order; and, when you come home, whether it be months, or weeks, or years, it will be ready waiting for you."

Dick smiled, but did not answer.

And the ship sailed, and Dick in it—sailed with a fair wind and favourable weather, amid the good wishes of all. And day by day Olive, in common with many another anxious one, looked for news of its safe arrival, and looked, alas, in vain. The weeks passed, and doubt deepened into anxiety, and anxiety into fear; and tidings came of a great storm which had broken over the Pacific and strewn the ocean with wrecks; and still no tidings came of the missing ship.

But still Olive hopes and waits. Dick will come back to her some day, she says; and so the cottage is kept swept and garnished, and Dick's books are dusted, and his fishing-nets hang over the little fence, and even his pipe lies on the table, ready for the owner's hand. It is Olive's will that this should be so. Nothing must be touched, nothing altered, till Dick returns. But the months and the years go by, and still Dick does not come.

THE END.

"Well," said an Irish attorney, "if it plaze the court, if I am wrong in this, I have another point that is equally conclusive."

FUN-BEAMS.

Professor (reading)—"Ento Mephisto!" (Turning to Mr. C., who has just come in). "Good morning." (General collapse.)

"Remember the porter," said the hotel highwayman to the parting guest. "I shall," said the other; "it was worse than the ale."

"What is a lake?" asked the teacher. A bright little Irish boy raised his hand. "Well Mickey, what is it?" "Sure, it's a hole in a kittle, mum."

"Before marriage," she pouted, "you used to speak of my beautiful auburn locks, but now you call me red-headed." "My dear," replied the heartless man, "marriage opens the eyes. Before that event I was color-blind."

Pianist—"Which part of my rhapsody did you most enjoy?" Ignoramus—"Which part?" "Yes; which movement?" "Oh, the last one." "Ah, that is the presto." "Presto? What a queer name!" "Do you think so?" "Yes. Up our way when a man gets up, bends his back, smiles to the audience, and walks off, we call it a bow."

A colored lady came into the office of the Attorney General, on Austin Avenue a few days ago, and asked McLeary, the Attorney General, if he had a list of the convicts General Roberts had pardoned out of the penitentiary. "What do you want to see the list for?" "I have jess married a new husband, an' I wants to find out all I kin about him."

Arnold W. Pierce, an eccentric justice of the peace at New Troy, Berrien county, Michigan, has the following printed on his business cards: "Marriage ceremonies performed at all hours of the day or night. Especial attention given to claims of soldiers who were frightened or discouraged during the war. Office hours from one o'clock in the morning to midnight, standard time."

"You would be surprised to see what a lot of wedding presents my daughter had," exclaimed Mrs. Bascom to a friend who had been unable to attend the wedding. "And so appropriate and tasteful as some of them were, too! You ought to have seen the handkerchiefs Mrs. Jones gave her—lovely things, just as soft as wool—and every one of them had her utenalls marked in the corners."

They were reading the old farmer's will, and his nephew, the principal inheritor, was paying the closest attention to its provisions. Presently the notary comes to the clause, "I bequeath to the faithful servant that shall close my eyes one hundred francs." "Hi, hello there!" says the heir; "just read that again, will you?" The notary complies. "That's a hundred francs saved, anyhow," says the heir; "uncle only had one eye. Got the faithful domestic that time, didn't I?"

The Peasant and the Dog.—A Peasant who was Awakened at midnight by the Barking of a Dog under his Window threw up the Sash and called out: "How, now—what is the danger?" "There is none." "Then why do you Bark and Disturb my Slumbers?" "For the same Reason that you play the Fiddle and keep me Awake—for Self Amusement." Moral: When the Piano next door becomes Unbearable buy your boy a Drum.

Egypt in Winter.

In his valuable and interesting article on the Soudan, or "The Land of the False Prophet," in the *March Century*, Mr. E. R. Colston says that from Khar-toum to the lakes, on a cool day, in December or January, crocodiles of all sizes are seen sunning themselves on every sand-bank, as thick as logs after a freshet. Herds of buffaloes and gigantic antelopes, elephants, and giraffes come to slake their thirst at the water's edge, and the night is made lively, if not hideous, by the lion's roar on the land, and the continual bellowing of the hippopotamus in every pool. At this time of year, he further informs us, the climate is perfection, just like the brightest and warmest October days in Virginia, and travelling then is perfectly charming. Everybody is in fine spirits, for water and pasture are plentiful; laughter and endless chaff are heard from one end of the column to the other. A caravan of five hundred camels covers more ground than a large cavalry regiment, marching with a front of about one hundred yards where the wadies (valleys) are broad, and reducing to single file when crossing narrow defiles between gates of granite and basaltic cliffs. When evening comes, camp is pitched in some pleasant wady, and quickly dozens of fires illuminate the valley. The large Soudan sheep, which follow the caravan, grazing as they go, supply a delicious roast added to the game killed during the day's march, and the canned soups, meats, and vegetables we used to carry in abundance. After dinner comes the unequalled coffee, straight from Mocha, then pipes and pleasant chat, while all around we hear the laughter and gabble of the good-natured soldiers and Bedouins mingled with wild and barbaric songs, accompanied by the viol called kemengeh. Occasionally, of a moonlight night, the Bedouins perform their national war-dance, with sword, lance, and shield, in mock attack and defence; and even their great sheik condescends to take part; while the beating of the darabukas wakes the echoes of the wady and the answering yell of the astonished jackals and hyenas. Game is found in proportion to the vegetation; on the plains, ostriches and countless gazelles and antelopes; in the wadies, rock-partridge and grouse, guinea-fowls and hares; on the high ridges, capricorns and wild asses. Among the fauna of the wilderness are some unwelcome specimens, locusts, serpent, and scorpions, the latter quite numerous and altogether too fond of nesting on one's blankets of a cold night, but quite unaggressive if let alone. Add to these the vultures, which stalk familiarly about the camp, picking up what they can find, and the jackals and hyenas, whose howls are heard in the night.