

AFTER.

After the storm, the calm,
After the bruise the balm;
After the pang, the bliss,
After the tear, the kiss;
After the battle,—rest?
The good Lord knoweth best!

After the darkness, light,
After the blindness, sight;
After the doubt, belief,
After the pain, relief;
After the weakness, strength,
And the grace of God at length!

After the quicksands, clay,
After December, May;
After the fever, sleep,
Solemn and sweet and deep;
After the race, the prize,
And the doors of Paradise!

STRONGER THAN LIFE

CHAPTER IX. (CONTINUED)

"Aunt Rosa, I am going up to London."
"To London!" aunt Rosa repeats, staring at me through her spectacles, aghast.

"Yes. I am going up on business."
"But my dear Rosalie, you are not fit to travel—"

"My dear aunt Rosa, it is just what I want—some variety. I have telegraphed to Mrs. Wauchope to have my old rooms in Carleton Street ready for me to-morrow."

"You have telegraphed to Mrs. Wauchope! Do you mean to tell me that you are going up to those dreadful lodgings again—alone?"

"Where else would you have me go, aunt Rosa?"

"Why, I thought you might be going to Olive Deane, or to the Rollestons."

"The Rollestons are in Denmark; and I don't want to catch another fever in Dexter Square."

"Dear me, I forgot that!"

"Not that I am afraid of the fever." I am bound to add honestly. "I am not in the least afraid of it; but I prefer going to Carleton Street for a great many reasons."

"If you go, I shall go with you," aunt Rosa says decisively.

"And leave uncle Tod with that cold on his chest? My dear aunt Rosa, I assure you I am very well able to take care of myself."

"You will take Nannette with you, of course?"

"Indeed I shall do no such thing," I answer at once. My new maid is a weariness to me. If old nurse Marjory had not been past work, I would never have installed her in the lodge and hired this pert French *soubrette* in her stead.

"But, my dear child, it is an unheard-of thing for a girl in your position to go up to lodgings in London alone."

"Nobody need know. And it is not as if Mrs. Wauchope were not an old friend; and I shall only be gone a day or two, obably. If anything should happen to tain me in town, you may follow me—you like, and if uncle Tod's cold is tter."

Aunt Rosa does not like the arrangement from any point of view.

"You are very self-willed, Rosalie. You were always headstrong, since you were a baby of three years old. If ever a girl wanted a father or mother to control her, I think you wanted them. As for your uncle Todhunter, if you cried for the moon, he would have tried to get it or you. I often told him he spoilt you and so he did."

"I think I was always obstinate, whether uncle Tod spoilt me or not. Aunt Rosa, do you know cousin Ronald's address in town?"

Aunt Rosa stares at me, scandalised—this time over the rim of her spectacles. "My dear Rosalie, are you going to Sir Ronald Scott's hotel in London to call upon him?"

"Not unless I should want him, auntie. But it is always well to know the address of a friend in London."

"He is staying at the hotel your uncle always goes to in London. But I do hope, Rosalie—"

"That I will not do anything unbecoming. My dear aunt Rosa, I can be very steady—when I like; and I am sure you can trust to the chivalry of your friend Sir Ronald Scott."

"Sir Ronald Scott is a perfect gentleman. What will he think of this freak of yours, Rosalie? Do you suppose he will approve of your going up to London alone like this?"

"Ronald Scott's opinion of my proceedings is not of vital importance," I answer, throwing up my head. "Whether he is pleased or displeased matters very little to me. I am going up to London on business which nobody else could manage for me. If he chooses to disbelieve my assertion—should I feel called upon to make it—it is nothing to me."

"I wish it were something to you," aunt Rosa says a little wistfully, looking at me. "He is a fine fellow—a true gentleman; and he cares for you, Rosalie—he asked your uncle Todhunter's permission to pay his addresses to you. But I suppose you snubbed him, as you snubbed all the rest."

"Dear aunt Rosa," I answer gravely, "you cannot like Ronald better than I do; and what I said to him I said as gently as I could."

"Why must you have said it at all, child?"

"Because I could not care enough for him to marry him, auntie."

Aunt Rosa sighs. She would be so glad to hand me over to some good steady man like Ronald Scott, who could keep me in order. She would be so thankful to wash her hands of me and my vagaries, fond as she is of me, once and for ever. "I don't despair but that you will come to your senses some day, and marry him," she says deliberately, getting up from the luncheon-table. "I think your uncle Todhunter would die happy if he knew that you were married to such a man as Sir Ronald Scott."

"You're looking poorly enough still,"

Mrs. Wauchope says, regarding me by the light of the gas in her great dingy drawing-room. "I don't know whether it's the bonnet, or what, but you look ten years older than you did when you were up here with me in the spring."

Mrs. Wauchope is truthful, if she is not complimentary. Glancing at myself in the sea-green depths of the mirror over the mantelpiece, I am forced to acknowledge that I do look ten years older than when I last saw myself reflected between the tall vases of imitation Bohemian glass which grace the mantelshelf. In deference to aunt Rosa's old-fashioned notions, and for other reasons, I have endeavored to give myself as staid an appearance as possible, wearing the close black bonnet which Olive always said gave me a demure look, though my dimples were against me. And I am wrapped up in my long fur lined cloak, and have altogether the look of a respectable young widow, as I say to Mrs. Wauchope laughing, while she gets my tea ready with her own plump hands.

"Isn't this a terrible business about poor Mr. Baxter?" she remarks presently. "I never got such a turn in my life as when I saw all about it in the paper, and such a young lad as he is too; and I believe she was a little more than a child!"

"Do you think he did it?" I ask, standing on the rug. My landlady is busied at the table, with her back towards me; she does not look round, though I can scarcely keep my voice steady while I speak the six words.

"Oh everybody knows he did it!"

"How can they know?"

"But there was no one else to do it."

"That proves nothing."

"Oh, but he was heard to threaten her! And then the stories he made up! And I believe she was a flighty little thing, and to pretty for her station in life. Those painters had spoilt her, for ever painting her picture. It was only the other day I found her photograph up in his studio—pinned to the wall."

A thrill of something very like jealousy of the dead girl, whose photograph Gerard Baxter had cared to pin up in his room runs like a needle through my heart. But what right have I to be jealous of her—the wretched child who had been his wife?

"Have you seen him since he gave up painting here, Mrs. Wauchope?"

"Once or twice—not more than that. I heard he was married; and I was sorry to hear it, knowing the kind of person he married. There was a great deal of good in him, poor lad; but he was as unstable as water—he never finished anything. There are upwards of twenty pictures up-stairs, not one of them finished. If they were good, I'd sell them to pay up his arrears of rent; but they're nothing but useless lumber."

"I wish you would let me see them, Mrs. Wauchope. I shouldn't mind taking some of them off your hands. And, if Mr. Baxter ever comes to claim them, you can refer him to me."

"You are welcome to see them, Miss Allie. The studio is just as he left it—I never even let the bedroom since. You see I had regard for him, having known him so long; and I thought he would come back to me some day, till I heard he had married that girl."

After tea, Mrs. Wauchope takes me up-stairs. If the studio had had an untidy look when I first saw it, it looks like nothing now but a gloomy attic full of lumber—the empty easel pushed into a corner, the unfinished canvases covered thick with grey cobwebs, every chair and table covered inch-deep with dust.

"Here is the photograph," Mrs. Wauchope says, taking something from the table, and wiping it with her black apron. "A pretty face, isn't it? I've known a man to lose his life for a face that wasn't half as pretty as that."

"But what had her face to do with it?" I ask vaguely.

"Why, they say he was jealous, you know. She was a flighty little thing, and some artist was painting her picture, and Mr. Gerard didn't like it. That was what they were quarrelling about on the morning of the day it happened."

I stand in the light of Mrs. Wauchope's mould candle, looking at the photograph in my hand. It is a beautiful face—an exquisite face—soft and bright and innocent as a child's.

"I will keep this for the present, Mrs. Wauchope. May I?"

Mrs. Wauchope nods. Lily Baxter's photograph is in all the shop-windows; but she does not care to have it at all.

CHAPTER X.

Early the next morning I transgress all aunt Rosa's rules of propriety by taking a cab and driving to my cousin Ronald Scott's hotel. I find him finishing breakfast, half a dozen business-letters scattered about the table.

"Ronald," I say, in my honest fearless way, "I have come to put a promise you made me to the test."

"I am glad to hear it, Rosalie," he answers, standing by the table. I have refused the chair he offered me, with the plea that my cab was waiting below.

"Do you remember the promise, cousin?"

"I have forgotten nothing," he says, smiling a little.

"I want you to manage an interview with that man—Gerard Baxter—who is in prison for murdering his wife."

Ronald Scott looks profoundly surprised.

"For me or for you?" he asks, his eyes on my white face.

"For me. You can be present of course; I should wish you to be present, and it need not last more than five minutes, if so long."

Ronald Scott makes no answer whatever for a minute or two. He is standing by the table, one hand resting upon it, looking down at me as I look up at him.

"Do you think you can do this for me, Ronald?"

"I can try. Was he an acquaintance of yours?"

"He was a friend—was, and is."

"I should say 'was,'" Ronald observes, shrugging his shoulders.

"I say 'is,'" I repeat stubbornly. "Gerard Baxter is a friend of mine."

Ronald's dark brows meet in a rather heavy frown.

"May I ask how you made his acquaintance, Rosalie?"

"We lodged in the same house in London—the house in Carleton Street where I am staying now."

"But how—"

I cannot help laughing outright at the exceeding gravity of his face. I think of the bunch of violets; but I do not tell Ronald about them—it is so different relating a piece of thoughtless folly like that—it would seem so much more heinous an offence repeated under the cold unympathetic eyes of my judicial cousin!

"I cannot think how you ever made his acquaintance, Rosalie. If you had been lodging in the same house for fifty years, you should have had no acquaintance with him."

"Oh, he was quite respectable! I met him in other places—in society. The Rollestons knew him—he was at their house every day."

"As to his respectability," Ronald says coldly, "that must be a matter of opinion. Subsequent events have proved that he could not have been a very respectable acquaintance for you or any one else!"

"Oh, subsequent events!"

"But suppose there were no subsequent events. This Baxter was a poor artist—a Bohemian—not exactly the kind of friend Miss Scott's friends would have chosen for her—at least, I think not."

"We will not quarrel about that, Ronald. I dare say you are right; but it is too late to bemoan my want of exclusiveness now. What I want you to do is to manage that I may see my friend—if it is only for one moment."

"For what?" he asks sharply.

"Merely to ask him a single question. He looks at me doubtfully. His face has grown pale under all its sunburn—as pale as my own.

"I will keep my promise, Rosalie. But it will be altogether in defiance of my better judgment."

"Then so much the more I thank you for keeping it. If it cost one nothing to keep a promise, there would not be occasion for much gratitude, would there?" He does not answer, standing before me, still leaning on the table, still studying my face. "Then, since that is settled, I shall wish you good-bye, cousin Ronald."

"Where are you going?"

"Back to Carleton Street. I have written to Olive to come to see me."

"It was to—see this man that you came up to town?"

"Yes."

"But what is he to you, Rosalie, that you should concern yourself in his affairs?"

"He is nothing to me."

"Then why mix yourself up in such a disgraceful business?"

"Because the man is innocent, and I must prove it."

"Prove it my poor child! How can you prove it?"

"There must be some way to prove it—the man is innocent."

I believe he thinks my mind has not quite recovered from the effects of the fever—he certainly looks at me as if he thought me slightly deranged.

"I have not studied the case. But my own impressions are that the man is guilty. If I can manage what you want me to do, where shall I meet you?"

"If you come to Carleton Street for me, I shall be ready to go with you."

"It will very likely be to-morrow."

"Then I shall remain at home all to-morrow. And, if you fail, you will let me know?"

"I will let you know. I hope you are taking care of yourself, cousin Rosalie. You are looking thoroughly worn out."

"Oh, I am very well—a little tired from the journey perhaps!"

I wrap my fur cloak about me, shivering, though it is August. Ronald walks down the hotel-stairs with me across the hall, in silence which I do not care to break. He puts me into the cab in the same almost stern silence. I do not glance back at him as the cab leaves the door, though he stands there bareheaded, looking after me. I am thinking of a man in prison—a man whom I seem to love the more the world hates him—the more he seems to have made shipwreck of his own most miserable life.

I have seen Gerard in prison. Ronald Scott managed it all for me—came with me himself to the prisoner's cell.

I have heard Gerard's story—I have asked the single question I wanted to ask; and the answer has confirmed my own belief—Gerard Baxter is innocent of the horrible crime imputed to him. I believe every word of the story he has told me, as firmly as I believe that I am a living woman. He knows no more of the manner in which his wretched wife met her death than I do, except that he had no hand or part in it.

My interview with him lasted half an hour. Ronald Scott stood leaning with folded arms under the barred window; Gerard walked up and down the cell restlessly, reminding me of some caged creature—

"When all his stretch of burning sand and sky
Shrinks to a twilight den, which his despair
Can measure at a stride."

He and I had met without a word, with white faces, with trembling outstretched hands—two miserable beings—so young, yet for whom all the happiness there might have been in the world seemed to have come to an end. What Ronald Scott thought of our meeting I know not—I had never given him a thought during the whole of the interview.

Gerard had told me his wretched story

in very few words. What he would not say in self-defence to the magistrate he said to me—not that I might justify him before the world—he seemed to care very little about that—but that he might justify himself to me.

"She left the house on the twenty-second of July, and I have never seen her since, dead or alive," he said, pausing in his restless pacing up and down to confront me as I sat on the wretched pallet. "She ran away in a rage because I scolded her about something—and I never saw her again."

"Then why did you tell her mother what you did? Why did you invent those stories for the neighbors—about letters and messages?"

"They asked me, and I had to say something."

"But why not have told the truth?"

"I would rather have said I killed her than have told the truth."

"But why?" I asked, astonished. "If you knew nothing about her, why did you do what must turn to such terrible evidence against yourself?"

"I did not care about myself."

"But you did not benefit her."

He turned away from me, walking up and down the floor again, a deep red angry flush on his haggard face.

"She was such a fool, such a poor senseless idiot; and I had driven her to it—or so I thought. I ought not to have tried to reason with her as I would with a responsible being! I ought to have shut her up and fed her with bread and water like an obstinate child."

Mrs. Wauchope's hint of jealousy came into my mind. He had been jealous of somebody—some artist who had been painting his wife's beautiful face.

"It would have been better to have told the truth," I repeated. "Better to have said that she had gone—you knew not where."

"But I did know, or I thought I knew. She had threatened more than once to go to—a friend she had in London. And I thought that she had carried out her threat—at last."

Ronald Scott had moved restlessly at this juncture; but I had never glanced at him. I came here to hear Gerard Baxter's story, and I meant to hear it to the end.

"But it must have come out, sooner or later—"

"Then I should have destroyed myself!" the lad said fiercely. "I often wonder now why I held my hand!"

I have wondered since how I had strength to carry out my own resolution; but my indomitable will, the obstinacy aunt Rosa deplored so much in my character, and the resolution to save Gerard Baxter, if mortal power could save him, carried me through.

"And you never saw her again, from that day to this?"

"Never again."

"Do you think," I asked vaguely, looking into his hollow eyes—"do you think she—put an end to herself?"

"I do not think it. She was not the kind of girl to do a thing like that?"

"Where is he—this man you call her friend?"

"I do not know. I have never uttered his name to any one—except to her. I know now that my suspicions of him were groundless—it was only the day the police came for me that I met him, and he asked me why she had not come for any more sittings for the picture. He was an honest fellow, though he paid her compliments sometimes—everybody did. And I did not care enough about her to be jealous, only I told her I would have no nonsense—I would kill her first!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Curious Terror of the Sea.

The "derelict," is an ever-present terror to the navigator. It is an abandoned wreck floating about in the open sea and, carried hither and thither by the currents of the Atlantic. Oftentimes it is without masts, and being water-logged it lies almost even with the water. There is nothing to distinguish it in the dark or thick weather, and a collision with it would be a very serious matter.

A curious illustration of the wayward wanderings which these floating terrors of the deep often indulge in was given in the report of the German ship *Black Hawk*, which arrived from Hamburg, on March 23 the schooner *John H. Way* ran into the three-masted schooner *Twenty-one Friends*, and injured it so badly that it was abandoned. Warnings were given to look out for it, and many eyes on the southern routes of travel have looked anxiously for it. But it was hardly expected that the derelict would show up nearly two thousand miles from the scene of the wreck ten weeks ago. Yet on May 22 it was seen by the crew of the *Black Hawk* in latitude 44 degrees 12 minutes; longitude 41 degrees 58 minutes—in the direct path of travel. Capt. Haerloop, of the German ship, reported that the wreck was without masts, and that her hatches were open and full of water. Yet she showed no signs of sinking. She is a very dangerous obstacle.

P. T. Barnum recently received a letter stamped on its face and back seventeen times. The letter bore the prescription: "Mr. Barnum, America," and was posted in Maulmain, British Burmah. It contained two letters addressed to the attendants on the white elephant. This places Barnum by the side of Samuel Johnson and Franklin. The latter, it is said, once paid Johnson the compliment of addressing him a letter. "Samuel Johnson, Great Britain." Not to be outdone, Johnson responded with a letter addressed to "Benjamin Franklin, The World." It was duly delivered.

Until within a few years the most remarkable of all Chinese customs were the public fashionable suicides conducted with much pomp, and sometimes actually under the directions of an officer of the empire.

THE GOLD MINERS ON THE JURAC.

Attempts to Get Up a Dispute with Canada About the Alaskan Boundary.

All the reports of impending trouble on the boundary line between southeastern Alaska and Canadian territory are simply revivals of old stories invented by enterprising individuals on both sides of the boundary, who are on the lookout for a fat Government billet. The boundary on which they are trying to make trouble, is the line which separates the thirty-mile wide strip of southeastern Alaska from British Columbia.

With the exception of its water front on the channels which flow between the mainland and the islands of the Alexander Archipelago and the Stickeen, Jurac, and Takon rivers, this strip of territory is an impenetrable wilderness of mountain and morass. Gold deposits have been discovered on the coast and on the rivers, and placers have been worked at several points with more or less success. Prospecting parties are constantly on the lookout for new and promising locations. The latest of the reported finds is on the Jurac River, about 100 miles south of Fort Wrangle, and some forty miles north of the southern boundary of Alaska.

As the boundary line is just thirty miles back from the coast there can be no great difficulty in fixing upon the place at which it crosses the river and determining whether the miners are working in Alaskan or Canadian territory. Even in the absence of a certain fixed line agreed upon by the Governments, no difficulty need arise. The mining laws of the United States and Canada are similar, with this trifling exception, that in Canada a miner must take out a license, costing \$5. Where a miner is in doubt whether his claim is on the Alaska or Canada side of the line, he will, if he is wise, fortify his right to the ground by taking out a Canadian license. These are issued as freely to American citizens as to Canadian or British subjects.

The report that the Wrangle Indians are stopping miners from going into the Jurac river without paying toll to them is probably a canard. If it is true, the Indians should be summarily dealt with, as they have no claim by right of discovery or otherwise to the placers. Unfortunately for the Wrangle Indians they have one or two bad white advisers who seek to gain influence among them by pandering to their worst faults and passions, and fomenting dissension between the Indians and the miners and traders. The commander of the gunboat *Pinta* can soon suppress the interference of the Indians with the miners whether the latter be Alaskans or Canadians.

The Takon mining country is also said to be under the control of the Wrangle Indians. It is entered from Chilcat at the head of Lyon Canal, the northern terminus of the inland channels. The Chilcats permit no interference with the rights by the Wrangle or other tribes, and insist that all trading between coast Indians and the Interior Indians must pass through the Chilcat tribe, which largely outnumber the Wrangle and other clans of southeastern Alaska. The Chilcats formerly opposed the passage of whites through their territory; but since the visits of the Wachusett and Adams to their waters they have abandoned their opposition, and now behave well to the whites. Two salmon canneries have been established in their waters without opposition from the chief or his followers, and many of the latter find employment in supplying salmon to the canneries.

There is nothing in the attitude of either Indians or white men near the border line of Alaska and British Columbia which calls for the appointment of a costly international commission to locate the exact and precise line which divides the rough, snow-topped mountains of southeastern Alaska and British Columbia.

ODD STORIES.

It is said that a district about to be attacked by cholera is at once forsaken by swallows and sparrows.

A whale caught recently near Coos Bay, Oregon, had embedded in its body a harpoon that was of a pattern of forty years ago.

At a Fredericksburg pumpkin seed guessing a blind boy guessed the exact number of seeds, 496, while a Miss Kellogg guessed 495.

Half a pound of red pepper sifted upon an ivy rind the residence of a Germantown, Pa., gentleman of a colony of sparrows that had been a great annoyance.

The electrical conditions consequent on the earthquakes in the province of Malaga have, it is said, given vitality to vineyards that were given up as dead.

As a sacrifice for the loss of a child, a butcher at poplar Creek Agency, M. T., cut off his forefinger, besides killing a fine mare and a three-year-old steer on the grave of his child.

A child less than two years old pulled the tail of a gamecock in Little Hempston, Eng., when the bird turned, knocked the child down, and killed it by driving its spur into its brain.

A few days ago an Upson county, Ga., man found hidden in the earth 3,000 silver half dollars that he buried twenty-two years ago. He had lost his landmarks, and had searched for years in vain.

While Henry P. Smith of Farmington, Kansas, was splitting a log that had belonged to an old blacksmith shop built before the war, but now in ruins, it parted at large auger hole that had been securely plugged, and \$1,000 in greenbacks fell out. The shop formerly belonged to Judge Thomas Halle, who, it is supposed, secreted the money in the log for safety during the war. The Judge was subsequently killed by some Federal soldiers on one of the highways near his me.