

# THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLLY TREE.

## CHAPTER V.

Another five days passed, and I felt quite at home. It seemed to me that I had lived at King's Norton for many years. My love for its beautiful beauty increased every hour, and the old squire was wondrously kind to me. He would lay his hand on my head sometimes and say:

"You have a good face, Gladys—good and true. Think how even you have not the curse of great beauty, child, for beauty is a snare." Then he would forget me, and would pace up and down the room, repeating to himself, "Beauty is a snare; it is a curse to the woman who possesses it, and the man who goes mad for love of it."

Perhaps it might be so, but I was profane enough to wish that some little share of the curse had fallen to my lot. I wondered, too, at the same moment, why, if I was so hopelessly plain, Lord Estcourt cared for my society. He certainly did care for it; for, whenever Miss Carleon was either engaged or not disposed to entertain him, he sought refuge with me; and I—Ah, well, my story is of Philippa Carleon—not of myself.

One morning, during breakfast, there was a long discussion about some charades that were contemplated. Lord Estcourt had suggested that the dresses should be historically correct. Miss Carleon said that there were some books in the library descriptive of the costumes of all nations, and that we could not do better than look through them.

We four—Miss Carleon, Lord Estcourt, Captain Norman and I—went thither, and, after some little search, the books were found.

While they looked over them, I was searching for a little volume of plays. I found one, and, opening it, I saw the name "Anice Vane" on the title page. I repeated it to myself, "Anice Vane. What a strange, quaint, pretty name!"

While I was looking at it, Miss Carleon came and bent over my shoulder. Her face suddenly flushed crimson, and she took the book out of my hands.

"Where did you find this?" she cried hastily. "I had no idea it was here." She took it from me, and put it in her pocket. "I am thankful that papa did not see that," said she. "I thought they were all put away."

She did not recover her usual serenity for some time. The name seemed to haunt me—Anice Vane, who was she? Why must everything of hers be put away? Was there another mystery? The very atmosphere of King's Norton seemed full of such. The charades interested me no longer. Who was Anice Vane, that her name was not to be seen or heard? A restless fit was upon me.

I left the library and met the housekeeper, Mrs. Leeming, with a large bunch of keys in her hands. She told me that she was going over some of the spare rooms in the eastern wing, and asked me if I would like to see them.

The hall was a very large building; though the party of guests was numerous, and the number of servants very great, still, many of the rooms in the eastern wing were unoccupied, and these the housekeeper, attended to as I kept well clear.

We went through several large and very beautiful apartments; and then, while the housekeeper was opening windows, I made my way to an old dissipated lumber-room.

I was looking over some books, when my attention was attracted by a picture that was standing against the wall. I turned it to the light, and my eyes fell upon the most exquisite face that I had ever beheld—the face of a fair young girl, with sweet lips, and large, sad, violet eyes, fair as a rose in earliest bloom. The golden hair lay in waving masses on her white neck and shapely shoulders; the ripe red lips were parted with a smile; but in the violet eyes lay a deep shadow, mournful, dreary—an expression often seen in the eyes of those who die young. The sad, smiling beauty fascinated me; the eyes looking into mine told of some secret unknown to me.

The housekeeper's footsteps aroused me. She came into the room.

"Mrs. Leeming," I asked, "whose portrait is this?"

Her kind, comely face turned white. "Oh, Miss Ayerton, pray do not touch it—put it away! How careless of me to bring you here! I beg you will not mention having seen it."

"That, I promise you, I will not, if you will only tell me who it is."

She came over to me and spoke hurriedly, taking the picture from my hand.

"It is the portrait of Miss Anice Vane. She was a ward of the squire's, and if you mention having seen this I shall lose my place."

I gave my promise, sore against my will, I must say, and then we went on through the rooms. We came to a suit that were very beautiful; the windows on to large square balconies that in summer-time were wreathed with fairest flowers. I tried the handle of the second door of the suit, but could not open it. Again Mrs. Leeming hurried to me.

"You seem bent upon doing what you should not do, Miss Ayerton," she said with an impatient laugh. "This is the locked chamber; you cannot enter. It will never be opened again in our lifetime."

I looked at her in amazement.

"The locked chamber! What do you mean? Do tell me."

"The squire locked this room," she replied, "three years ago and flung the key into the depths of the lake. It would be more than one's life was worth to open it while he lives."

"But why did he lock it? What is in it?" I again asked.

"That I cannot tell you, Miss Ayerton; if the squire or Miss Carleon do so, that is another thing. A servant of the family cannot speak of the family secrets."

"Certainly not," I rejoined hastily; "nor would I ask you, Mrs. Leeming. You shall see that I am prudent. Pray do not think that I would mention what I have seen or heard this morning."

When I had left her, my brain was in a perfect chaos of thought. Every family has secrets, but there was a mystery here. Had this fair young Anice Vane anything to do with Miss Carleon's refusal to marry? Was she living or dead? What had she done that the squire sought to remove all

traces of her? Should I ever know or understand these mysteries?

The next morning was beautifully fine, and, the frost continuing, the squire proposed a drive. I can hardly remember how it happened now that I was in the carriage alone with him and Miss Carleon. We drove for some miles over the hard white roads bordered by tall leafless trees, and then we came to the pretty town of Aberdare. The squire gave orders that we should return by way of West Deane. But it happened that some repairs were going on at the bridge we had to cross, so that the carriage could not proceed. He told the squire, "I must drive around by Deane's Chase, sir," said he.

"Do so then, if you must," was his angry reply; and then, to my utter astonishment, the squire closed the carriage-windows. I had never seen his face so stern, and, looking at Philippa, I saw that she had fallen back, pale and trembling. Yet no one of us uttered a word. We drove in silence through a domain of surpassing beauty, when suddenly to the right, I caught sight of a superb hill, on the summit of which stood a noble mansion. I cried out in admiration.

"What place is that?" I asked the squire.

His face darkened with anger; he raised his right hand as though he would utter some terrible curse, and then said:

"That is Deane's Chase, Miss Ayerton—the home of the man who is my mortal foe."

"Nay, father," pleaded Miss Carleon; "it is Christmas time—the time for peace on earth. Say no more."

"I would repeat these words with my last breath," persisted the squire. "He is my mortal foe, and if it be given to one man to curse another, my curse lies upon him."

An expression of deep, patient resignation came over Philippa's face. She made no reply, and the squire closed his eyes, lest they should look on the fair home of his mortal foe.

When we had left West Deane behind, and were within fair sight of King's Norton he looked at me.

"Do not take notice of this scandal, child," he said. "I know it is the time for peace on earth and good will to men; but there are some injuries, look you, Gladys Ayerton, that man cannot pardon, though Heaven in its mercy may. Such an injury that man, my mortal foe, did to me. If he were dying of famine, I would not give him one crumb, because of the cruel, wicked wrong he did to me."

Looking at his daughter's face—for I knew not how to answer him—I saw that her lips moved as if she were praying. The squire said no more. As we neared home he talked to me on different matters, but the impression of awe and dread did not wear away from my mind.

That day Lord Estcourt said he must shortly leave us. Captain Norman, I have forgotten to mention, lived at Norman's Court, only a few miles distant from King's Norton. Before he went Lord Estcourt renewed his offer; and, despite his eloquent pleading and his great love, he was firmly rejected. The squire was not angry—anger is not the word for the anxious sorrow that was to be traced in his looks and words. As men plead for dear life, I heard him pleading with Philippa one morning that she would marry Lord Estcourt, and make her father happy in his old age.

"I will make you happy," she replied. "I will be the most devoted and loving of daughters. But I cannot marry—not even to please you; and there is no need to trouble about my future. When I shall have lost you, it will matter little whether I am rich or poor."

The squire turned away with a groan. That very morning Lord Estcourt came to bid me good-bye.

"I shall see you again," he said; "for, while she lives unwedded, I shall never give up the hope of winning her."

Even as he said the words I knew they were useless, for Philippa Carleon would never marry him.

## CHAPTER VI.

Some months passed, and the mysteries of King's Norton were mysterious still. I never heard the name of Anice Vane, the story of the locked chamber, or of the hidden picture; and I respected Miss Carleon too much even to ask her one curious question. Perhaps that is the reason why she trusted me afterward so implicitly. As the months rolled on the lines deepened on the squire's face, and his anxiety became greater; but in the beautiful, noble face of his daughter came no change. The summer months came round. Captain Norman was a constant visitor at King's Norton, but he made no progress in the heart of the heiress. Lord Estcourt had been over, and had renewed his offer, meeting with the same kind courteous, grave rejection. When he had opened his heart to me, and told me the story of his sorrowful love, he asked me if I thought Miss Carleon had any other attachment. I told him—that was the truth—that no letters that could be called love-letters ever came to her, and that most decidedly she did not favor any of the numerous suitors for her hand who came to King's Norton.

"I wonder why she cannot love me," he said. "I ask no fairer gift from Heaven than her love. I would devote my whole life to making her happy. Why cannot I win her love?"

He went away so sad, so despairing, and I was so grieved for him, that that evening I ventured to do what I had never done before—speak to Miss Carleon about her lovers. It was a glorious summer evening, and we were in the beautiful old-fashioned garden. Our favorite nook there was an arbor composed of fragrant lilac-trees, with all kinds of odoriferous flowers growing near it, making it a paradise of perfume; and, as we sat there, watching the sun set over the western hills, I began to speak to her of Lord Estcourt. She turned to me with a grave smile.

"I have been expecting it, Gladys," she said. "I know you are very sorry for Lord Estcourt."

I caught both her hands in mine; my face flushed—my eyes filled with tears—my whole soul seemed to come to my lips.

"Miss Carleon why will you not marry him? He is so noble, so generous—he loves you so very dearly."

"I know it," she replied. "I respect

Lord Estcourt too highly even to marry him."

"Why?" I asked, in surprise. "Because I do not love him; and I do, with the whole truth of my heart, love some one else."

"Is it Captain Norman?" I inquired timidly.

A smile came over the beautiful face. "No; the man I love, Gladys, is a man who has no peer, who is brave, noble, constant, generous, patient, with a lofty kind of pride that no words of mine could ever describe. Noble, chivalrous, a king amongst men, he is, nevertheless, the man my father calls his deadly foe."

"Who lives at Deane's Chase?" I asked.

"Yes, the same—Sir Guy Brooklyn of Deane's Chase. I will tell you my story, Gladys; and you will see that life is all pain for me, that my heart is torn, that my soul is as it were divided—one half belongs to my father, and the other half to the man I love, Guy Brooklyn. I love him! I have been his plighted promised wife ever since I was seventeen. My whole life belongs to him—and I cannot disobey him. Do you see how my heart is torn in two? I love my lover—I would follow him even unto death; but I cannot disobey my father. Do you understand now the secret that robs my days of peace, my nights of sleep—that has made the world a desert when it should be a blooming Eden? I cannot give up my love—I cannot take back my plighted troth—I cannot tear my soul from his; nor can I disobey my father. Living or dead, his commands are sacred to me, and so—oh, Heaven pity me! I have given up my dream of happiness, and only look for peace in death. You look at me, Gladys. Ah, child, my eyes are bright still, so people say, but I have shed torrents of tears. I have learnt to smile and look happy, while my heart is breaking; even the light of the beautiful sun and the fragrance of the flowers bring nothing but pain to me. Now I will tell you my story."

"Six years ago, Gladys, King's Norton was very different from what it is now. First, I must tell you that my father, Squire Carleon, did not marry his first love. In his youth, he loved a beautiful, fair girl, whose name was Anice Lile. Fraud and treachery parted them; but years afterwards he saw and loved my mother. He married her, and I was their only child. My mother died when I was ten years old, and five years afterwards my father's first love, whose marriage had been a very unhappy one, died also. She left her only child, Anice Vane, to my father's care; and now you will understand why my father loved Anice with such passionate love. She was the daughter of the woman he had worshipped; she was a legacy left by a dying mother. I used to think at times that all the love he had once given to the mother was lavished on the child. I was not jealous of her; she was like a sister to me. I remember the night my father brought her home. She was so beautiful, Gladys—so fair, with violet eyes and golden hair; her laugh was like a silver bell, her voice like sweetest music. She was gay, graceful and animated, yet, strange to say, when in repose her eyes had in them a deep shadow that always struck me as prophetic of coming sorrow."

"She soon became one of us, and was quite at home with us. At my request my father made her the same allowance of money as he gave me; we shared every advantage. We were now a large family, comparatively speaking, for my father's youngest brother died, leaving his only son in my father's charge. So Arthur Brandon came home to live with us—you must have heard his name a dozen times each day since you have been here—but, though Arthur is my cousin, I cannot tell you whether I liked him or not. He made love to me, but I only laughed at him. He is either what he seems to be—a genial, light-hearted, debonaire man of the world—or he is a most accomplished hypocrite. We were a very happy family. My father told me of his intention to purchase a commission for Arthur, and to give Anice a dowry when she should marry."

"Gladys," she continued, with a weary sob, "I was just sixteen when Guy Brooklyn came home from France and took possession of Deane's Chase. He came over to see us; and he loved me, my darling, the first moment he saw me, and he has loved me—he has been true to me—ever since. We were both young; he was just twenty-one, and I was sixteen. Though the squire gave his most cordial assent to the marriage he said we must wait at least until I was nineteen. This seemed quite reasonable, and I had two, or nearly two, such happy years."

Her dark eyes filled with tears, her beautiful face glowed as with an inward light. How dearly she loved him—how true and noble she was!

"Gladys, when you love, yourself, you will understand me. I was young, full of poetry, and enthusiasm, and it appeared to me that a heavenly light had fallen over me and all belonging to me. Guy came over to King's Norton every day; my father was never so happy as in his presence. We spent the fair spring mornings, the long summer gloomings, and the happy winter evenings together, until my soul wholly grew one with Guy's soul, and we appeared to have but one life and one being. Many, many times, Gladys, he has held me in his arms, and has made me promise that I would love him always, and that I would be his wife. There is not a tree nor shrub that grows here, not a brook that sings, that has not heard such promises. In sunshine, the moonlight, the starlight, at all times, I have pledged my faith to him again and again. Can I break it, Gladys? I am true to my love, and he is true to me. I had not a thought but for him. I have known the brightest earthly bliss. I have loved and been loved. I was so happy in my own love, in the golden future before me, that I paid little heed to Anice's flirtations. She was coquetish. Sometimes, when the mood was on her, she would flirt with Guy, who laughed, and teased her. Then she would give all her attention to Arthur Brandon, and then distribute her smiles elsewhere. The squire used to warn me, laughingly, to beware, or she would win Sir Guy from me. I laughed, and he laughed, little dreaming how our laughter would turn to tears."

"I was just seventeen and a half when two events happened, Arthur Brandon obtained his commission, and Sir Guy Brooklyn was offered an embassy to Vienna, where he was to remain for a year. You may imagine how this changed our quiet life. Guy would have refused if I had only said one word; but I would not say it. I was proud that my lover should be chosen to represent his country; it was an honor due to his high talents, and I saw in it the har-

bingler of future fame and renown. When he hesitated, I urged him to go. Strange to say, the departure of both Arthur and Guy were fixed for the same day. They were not to travel together far. Arthur's regiment was stationed at Dover, and he was going thither. Sir Guy was on his way to Vienna.

"Gladys, do you see that large blackthorn tree there? Underneath it I stood with him in the morning he went away. He held me in his arms, and kissed me again and again. He made me promise once more that I would be true until death to him; and I will, I must be—yet I will never disobey my good, kind father. How it will end, Gladys, I do not know. Sometimes I think that, young and strong as I am, the struggle between my love and my duty will kill me."

A deep sob stifled her last words, and she wept with such passionate abandonment that I began to have some idea of what she suffered.

"It was in June," continued Miss Carleon, "that my lover, Sir Guy, and Arthur Brandon both left us. For some weeks previously I had fancied that Anice was out of spirits. She asked me one day if I thought Arthur Brandon loved me. I laughed as I answered her, 'Sure as of my own life'; and the next day she asked me if I thought Arthur Brandon loved me. I laughed again as I told her, 'No; he might say what he liked, but I knew that he did not really care for me.'"

"She sat looking at me, her fair young face raised pleadingly to mine, her beautiful, wistful eyes seeking to read my thoughts."

"Everyone loves you, Philippa," she said. "I wish—oh, I wish that I were very rich!"

"She sighed deeply, and clasped her soft, shiny, golden hair with both her hands."

"But, Anice, no one whose love is worth having would care more for you because you were rich."

"But, suppose some one loved you very much, Philippa, and could not say so because you were poor?"

"That is not likely to be your case, Anice," I said. "Some knight will come riding by some fine day, who will love those golden locks better than all the diamonds in Golconda, or all the mines in Peru."

"Looking at her, Gladys, I saw her face wet with tears. A suspicion that all was not right flashed across me; but she was the elder, and I did not like to seem curious, or ask a confidante she did not give me. Have I made you understand what she was like, Gladys? She was fair as an angel, with a lovely face, a gay, graceful manner, and a loving heart. She was like a sunbeam in our home. My father loved her with a wondrous affection—I loved her as my own sister. Every one petted, indulged, and caressed her. She looked like one of those born to be caressed, indulged and loved. Trouble and care ought not to have come near her."

"Let me shorten my story, Gladys; it is not a pleasant one. My lover and my cousin left us on the 20th of June. They both partook of luncheon with us, and then went away! Anice did not come down; she sent word that she was not well, and should prefer keeping in her room all day."

"I have always blamed myself that I gave way to my great sorrow; but it was the first time I had been parted from Guy, and I was really sick from crying over it. The squire had some country business on hand—he went away to Aberdare. About seven o'clock I went to Anice's room, and knocked at the door; it was locked, and there came no answer. My maid appeared at the moment."

"Miss Vane is asleep," she said. "I have tried the door several times. She complained of a bad headache; perhaps it would be as well not to disturb her."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Taste at Home.

Art is not confined to big and expensive paintings, marbles and ornamental bric-a-brac or to old silver plate. One with a very limited salary may enjoy the pleasure—within his means—of having as artistic a home as the recipient of an income of thousands. Some bunches of flowers here and there, a few pretty pictures, a few good books and the essentials in the way of ornament are named at once. For one poor shilling a week a wife can buy blossoms enough to make her home look bright and blooming from January to December. Even with a very small salary this is a sum which may indeed be well spent upon the daily beautification of the house. Pictures, too, are almost as cheap as wall paper. Even those given away by some business houses as advertisements are sometimes pleasing enough to be an addition to any room. A common carrot will throw out broad, green feathery fronds if supplied with a little water daily in a small hole in the top; will thrive and make a thing of real beauty, to say nothing of the delight to be found in watching the tiny leaflets grow. A sponge filled full of flax seed, kept wet and hung in the window, will soon make a beautiful ball of the daintiest, freshest green.

A few sprays of a plant called "Wandering Jew," which any florist will gladly give away (or sell a great newspaperful for 10 cents,) will grow in a glass of water all winter long. A bit of charcoal in the water will keep it sweet and fresh.

The bulb of a hyacinth will cost one shilling, the peculiar glass vase used to grow them will cost another, but both the bulb and the glass will last winter after winter, keeping a yearly blossom hidden away to gladden your eyes when tired of the dreary grayness of the cold weather.

In fact, it only requires a careful housewife with her watchful eye ever searching for the things within her means, and at an almost infinitesimal outlay the home may not only be attractive but artistic.

## USEFUL RECIPES.

NEURALGIC OINTMENT. — Menthol, 45 grains; Cocaine, 15 grains; Chloral, 10 grains; Vaseline, 5 drachms. To be applied to the painful parts. *Jul. Pharm. et Chim.*

If the hands are stained, there is nothing that will remove the stain as well as lemon. Cut a lemon in halves and apply the cut surface as if it were soap.

A harmless remedy for moth patches is as follows: In a pint bottle of rum put a teaspoonful of flowers of sulphur. Apply to the patches once a day, and in two or three weeks they will disappear.

## FELL DEAD WHILE BLASPHEMING.

### The Fate of an Educated Colored Man who Ridiculed Sacred Things.

Four years ago John A. Brown, an intelligent colored man, for many years a resident of Louisville, studied medicine under Dr. Edward von Donhoff, the well-known surgeon of 109 East Chestnut street. Brown was an apt pupil, and followed his studies with much application under Dr. von Donhoff for two years with much advantage to himself. At the end of that time he went off to New York, and attended lectures in one of the largest and best medical colleges in the country. When his course was finished he graduated in the upper half of his class, and came back to Louisville to settle and practice his profession. He was well acquainted with the colored people, conversed well and dressed smartly, and before long he had a large and lucrative practice. The only drawback to his popularity was the fact that he never attended church, and openly boasted of being an atheist. Dr. Brown, being a single man, occupied a sleeping room over his office at 1,411 Grayson street.

Last Sunday night about 10½ o'clock Brown met Rachael Jones and Elvira Smith, colored women, who together occupy a house in his neighborhood, as they were coming from church, and accompanied them home. One of the women asked him inside, and he entered. Several more colored people came in, and the company were sitting around the fireplace talking, when a religious controversy sprang up between two of the men. They were arguing their point, when Dr. Brown stopped them. He said they were two fools, and there was talking a mere lot of bosh. He said there was no Christ, and that the person of that name was merely an ordinary person, who happened to be better morally than the people among whom he lived. He said there was no God, and that He was an imaginary person whom people like to believe in simply because it makes them comfortable. He made fun of sacred things and was in the midst of a tirade of awful blasphemy, when suddenly an ashy paleness came over his yellow features, his voice faltered and failed as if the tongue had cleaved to the roof of the mouth, and with a terrible expression on his face he tottered from his chair, stood steadily on his feet a second, and then fell a corpse.

## How Plaster Casts are Made.

The *St. Louis Globe* gives the following account of Col. Pat. Gilmore's experience in the hands of a couple of youthful modelers: "I went to the studio at the hour fixed, and was to be met there by a well known sculptor, who had courteously undertaken to do the modeling himself. By some unfortunate mischance, he failed to put in an appearance. Two apprentices were vigorously stirring the liquid plaster of Paris or whatever villainous compound is used for the purpose. After about half an hour's waiting, it was decided to proceed in the great man's absence, and I was invited to disrobe."

A much plastered white sheet was wrapped around my neck and shoulders, tightly, and my face and hair were liberally greased to prevent the plaster sticking to the flesh. Pieces of paper were stuffed into my mouth, nose, and ears, and I was told to shut my eyes. No sooner had I done so than my persecutors commenced pouring the liquid on my head. One poured while the other pressed the rapidly hardening compound so as to fill every recess and get a cast of every feature. They poured a great deal too much on, and soon my head was incased in a mask as hard as iron. The heat was insufferable.

I could not move my head, for the awful weight threatened to dislocate my neck if I did; my eyes seemed being pressed into my brain, and the paper circlets not proving adequate for their purpose, I began to feel the first symptoms of suffocation. I could not call out, and believed myself to be dying. But my troubles had barely commenced. The apprentices had not fixed the centerboard, or slit, properly, and when they mercifully decided to release me, they found the cast would not come in half as it usually does. In a successful operation the two halves are joined together after removal, and a perfect reproduction of the face and head easily produced; but in my case both dividing board and grease had been overlooked, and the only course left was to smash the mask off. Mallet and chisel were used, producing an effect like concussion of the brain. Finally my face was freed, and I was able to breathe, and make a few remarks to the boys on their carelessness. Then it transpired that they had omitted to grease behind my ears, and the plaster adhered to the skin like glue. To remove the former, the latter had to be torn away, and when at last I got away I was a mass of blood and sores. After two weeks' medical attention I got about right, but the memory is still fresh."

## Betrayed by a Button.

"One of the best laid schemes to do murder," says Mr. A. H. Canby of the Carleton Opera Company, "was a plan that was detected by the merest chance in the Kellogg-Hess Opera Company, years ago, when Mr. Carleton was the baritone of that organization. A certain artist playing prominent roles was suspected by a member of the chorus with paying altogether too much attention to the chorister's wife, and the artist was duly warned by his friends to keep a close watch on the movements of the husband. One evening, as he was passing across the stage to his dressing room, he chanced to hear one of the wardrobe women say to another that there were buttons off all the soldier uniforms."

"Now, as the husband was to be one of a file of soldiers whose duty it was to fire a volley of shots at the artist as he made his escape up a rocky pass, the absence of the buttons—little balls of steel—soon awakened suspicion in his mind. Before the curtain went up on the act in which this incident occurred, he went to the property man and insisted on having the charges in the chorister's gun examined. The firearm was taken from the husband's hands, and when the load was drawn one of the buttons was found rammed down under a wad. One button had been cut from every uniform so as to conceal the positive proof that the missile came from the husband's gun. Had that shot been fired and proved fatal, no evidence but the thinnest of circumstantial testimony could have connected the true murderer with the tragedy."