

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

George had spoken no falsehood when he said that he felt as though he must marry Angela or go mad. Indeed, it is a striking proof of how necessary he thought that step to be to his happiness, that he had been willing to consent to his cousin's Shylock-like terms about the sale of the property, although they would in their result degrade him from his position as a large landed proprietor, and make a comparatively poor man of him. The danger or suffering that could induce a Caresfoot to half ruin himself with his eyes open had need to be of an extraordinary pressing nature.

Love's empire is this globe and all mankind; the most refined and the most degraded, the cleverest and the most stupid, are all liable to become his faithful subjects. He can alike command the devotion of an archbishop and a South Sea Islander, of the most immaculate maiden lady, whatever her age, and of the savage Zulu girl. From the pole to the equator, and from the equator to the further pole, there is no monarch like Love. Where he sets his foot, the rocks bloom with flowers, or the garden becomes a wilderness according to his good-will and pleasure, and at his whisper all other allegiances melt away like ropes of sand. He is the real arbiter of the destinies of the world.

But to each nature of all the millions beneath his sway, Love comes in a fitting guise, to some as an angel messenger, telling of sympathy and peace, and a strange new hope; to others draped in sad robes indeed, but still divine. Thus when he visits such a one as George Caresfoot, it is as a potent fiend, whose mission is to enter through man's lower nature, to torture and destroy; to scorch the heart with fearful heats, and then to crush it, and leave its owner's bosom choked with bitter dust.

And, so far as George is concerned, there is no doubt but what the work was done right well, for under the influence of what is, with doubtful propriety, known as the "tender passion," that estimable character was rapidly drifting within a measurable distance of a lunatic asylum. The checks and repulses that he had met with, instead of cooling his ardor, had only the effect of inflaming it to an extraordinary degree.

Angela's scornful dislike, as water thrown upon burning oil, did but diffuse the flames of his passion throughout the whole system of his mind, till he grew wild with its heat and violence. Her glorious beauty daily took a still stronger hold upon his imagination, till it scorched into his very soul. For whole nights he could not sleep, for while days he would scarcely eat or do anything but walk, walk, and try to devise means to win her to his side. The irritation of his mind produced its natural effects upon his conduct, and he would burst into fits of the most causeless fury. In one of these he dismissed every servant in the house, and so evil was his reputation among that class, that he had great difficulty in obtaining others to take their places. In another he hurled a heavy pot containing an azalea-bush at the head of one of the gardeners, and had to compromise an action for assault. In short, the lunatic asylum loomed very near indeed.

For a week or so after the memorable night of his interview with Philip, an interview, that he, at least, would never forget, George, was quite unable, try as he would, to get a single word with Angela.

At last, one day, when he was driving, by a seldom-used road, past the fields near the Abbey House on his way from Roxham, chance gave him the opportunity that he had for so long sought without success. For, far up a by-lane that led to a turnip-field his eye caught sight of the flutter of a gray dress vanishing round a corner, something in the make of which suggested to him that Angela was its wearer. Giving the reins to the servant, and bidding him to drive on home, he got out of the dog-cart, and hurried up the grassy track, and on turning the corner came suddenly upon the object of his search. She was standing on the bank of the hedge-row, and struggling with a bough of honeysuckle from which she wished to pluck its last remaining autumn bloom. So engaged was she that she did not hear his step, and it was not until his hard voice grated on her ear that she knew that she was trapped.

"Caught at last. You have given me a pretty hunt, Angela."

The violent start she gave effectually carried out her purpose as regards the honeysuckle, which snapped in two under the strain of her backward jerk, and she turned round upon him panting with fear and exertion, the flowery bough grasped within her hand.

"Am I, then, a wild creature, that you should hunt me so?"

"Yes, you are the loveliest and the wildest of creatures, and now I have caught you, you must listen to me."

"I will not listen to you; you have nothing to say to me that can interest me. I will not listen to you."

George laughed a little—a threatening, nervous laugh.

"I am accustomed to have my own way, Angela, and I am not going to give it up now. You must and you shall listen. I have got my opportunity at last, and I mean to use it. I am sorry to have to speak so roughly, but you have only yourself to thank; you have driven me to it."

His determination frightened her, and

she took refuge in an armor of calm and freezing contempt.

"I don't understand you," she said. "On the contrary, you understand me very well. You always avoid me; I can never see you, try how I will. Perhaps," he went on, still talking quite quietly, "if you knew what a hell there is in my heart and brain you would not treat me so. I tell you that I am in torture," and the muscles of the pallid face twitched in a way that went far to confirm his words.

"I do not understand your meaning; unless, indeed, you are trying to frighten and insult me, as you have done before," answered Angela.

Poor girl, she did not know what else to say; she was not of a nervous disposition, but there was something about George's manner that alarmed her very much, and she glanced anxiously around to see if any one was within call, but the place was lonely as the grave.

"There is no need for you to look for help—I wish neither to frighten nor insult you; my suit is an honorable one enough. I wish you to promise to marry me, that is all; you must and shall promise it—I will take no refusal. You were made for me and I for you; it is quite useless for you to resist me, for you must marry me at last. I love you—I love you."

"You—love—me—you—"

"Yes, I do; and why should you look at me like that? I cannot help it, you are so beautiful; if you knew your own loveliness, you would understand me. I love those gray eyes of yours, even when they flash and burn as they do now. Ah! they shall look softly at me yet, and those sweet lips that curl so scornfully shall shape themselves to kiss me. Listen; I loved you when I first saw you in the drawing-room at Isleworth, I loved you more and more love you to madness. So you see, Angela, you must marry me soon."

"I marry you!"

"Oh! don't say you won't, for God's all the time that I was ill, and now I sake, don't say you won't," said George with a sudden change of manner from the confident to the supplicatory. "Look I beg you not to, on my knees," and he actually flung himself down on the grass roadway and groveled before her in an abandonment of passion hideous to behold.

She turned very pale, and answered him in a cold, quiet voice, every syllable of which fell upon him like the stroke of a knife.

"Such a thing would be quite impossible for many reasons, but I need only repeat you one that you are already aware of. I am engaged to Mr. Heigham."

"Bah, that is nothing. I know that; but you will not throw away such a love as I have to offer for the wavering affection of a boy. We can soon get rid of him. Write and tell him that you have changed your mind. Listen, Angela," he went on, catching her by the skirt of her dress, "he is not rich, he has only got enough for a bare living. I have five times the money, and you shall help to spend it. Don't marry a young beggar like that; you won't get value for yourself. It will pay you ever so much better to marry me."

George was convinced from this experience of the sex that every woman could be bought if only you bid high enough; but, as the sequel showed, he could not well have used a worse argument to a person like Angela, or one more likely to excite the indignation that fear of him, together with a certain respect for the evident genuineness of his suffering, had hitherto kept in suppression. She wrenched her dress free from him, leaving a portion of its fabric in his hand.

"Are you not ashamed?" she said, her voice trembling with indignation and her eyes filled with angry tears; "are you not ashamed to talk to me like this, you, my own father's cousin, and yourself old enough to be my father? I tell you that my love is already given, which would have been a sufficient answer to any gentleman, and you reply by saying that you are richer than the man I love. Do you believe that a woman thinks of nothing but money? or do you suppose that I am to be bought like a beast at the market? Get up from the ground, for since your brutality forces me to speak so plainly in my own defense, I must tell you once and for all that you will get nothing by kneeling to me. Listen; I would rather die than be your wife; rather than always see your face about me. I would pass my life in prison; I had sooner be touched by a snake than by you. You are quite hateful to me. Now you have your answer, and I beg that you will get up and let me pass!"

Drawn up to the full height of her majestic stature, her face flushed with emotion, and her clear eyes flashing scornful fire, whilst in her hand she still held the bough of sweet honeysuckle, Angela formed a strange contrast to the miserable man crouched at her feet, swaying himself to and fro, and moaning, his hat off, and his face hidden in his trembling hands.

As he would not, or could not move, she left him there, and slipping through a neighboring gap vanished from sight. When she was fairly gone, he stirred, and having risen and recovered his hat, which had fallen off in his excitement, his first action was to shake his fist in the direction in which she had vanished, his next to frantically kiss the fragment of her dress that he still held in his hand.

"You shall marry me yet, my fine lady," he hissed between his teeth; "and if I do not repay your gentle words with interest, my name is not George Caresfoot." And then, staggering like a drunken man, he made his way home.

"Oh, Arthur," thought Angela, as she crept quite broken in spirit to the solitude of her room, "if I only knew where you were, I think that I would follow you, promise or no promise. There is no one to help me, no one; they are all in league against me—even my own father."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Notwithstanding his brave threats

made behind Angela's back, about forcing her to marry him in the teeth of any opposition that she could offer, George reached home that night very much disheartened about the whole business. How was he to bow the neck of this proud woman to his yoke, and break the strong cord of her allegiance to her absent lover. With many girls it might have been possible to find a way, but Angela was not an ordinary girl. He had tried, and Lady Bellamy had tried, and they had both failed, and as for Philip he would take no active part in the matter. What more could be done? Only one thing that he could think of, he could force Lady Bellamy to search her finer brains for a fresh expedient. Acting upon this idea, he at once dispatched a note to her requesting her to come and see him at Isleworth on the following morning.

That night passed very ill for the love-lorn George. Angela's vigorous and imaginative expression of her entire loathing of him had pierced the thick hide even of his self-conceit, and left him sore as a whipped hound altogether too sore to sleep. When Lady Bellamy arrived on the following morning, she found him marching up and down the dining-room in the worst of his bad tempers, and that was a very shocking temper, indeed. His light-blue eyes were angry and bloodshot, his general appearance slovenly to the last degree, and a red spot burned upon each sallow cheek.

"Well, George, what is the matter? You don't look quite as happy as a lover should."

He grunted by way of answer.

"Has the lady been unkind, failed to appreciate your advances, eh?"

"Now look here, Anne," he answered, savagely, "if I have to put up with things from that confounded girl, I am not going to stand your jeers, so stop them once for all."

"It is very evident that she has been unkind. Supposing that instead of abusing me you tell me the details. No doubt they are interesting," and she settled herself in a low chair and glanced at him keenly from under her heavy eyelids.

Thus admonished, George proceeded to give her such a version of his melancholy tale as best suited him, needless to say not a full one, but his hearer's imagination easily supplied the gaps, and as he proceeded, a slow smile crept over her face as she conjured the suppressed details of the scene in the lane.

"Curse you! what are you laughing at? You came here to listen, not laugh," broke out George, furiously, when he saw it.

She made no answer, and he continued his thrilling tale without comment on her part.

"Now," he said, when it was finished, "what is to be done?"

"There is nothing to be done; you have failed to win her affections, and there is an end of the matter."

"Then you mean I must give it up?"

"Yes, and a very good thing too, for the ridiculous arrangement that you have entered into with Philip would have half ruined you, and you would be tired of the girl in a month."

"Now, look you here, Anne," said George, in a sort of hiss, and standing over her in a threatening attitude, "I have suspected for some time that you were playing me false in this business, and now I am sure of it. You have put the girl up to treating me like this, you treacherous snake; you have struck me from behind, you Red Indian in petticoats! But, look here, I will be square with you; you shall not have all the laugh on your side."

"George, you must be mad."

"You shall see whether I am mad or not. Did you see what the brigands did to a fellow they caught in Greece the other day for whom they wanted ransom? First, they sent his ear to his friends, then his nose, then his foot, and last of all, his head—all by post, mark you. Well, dear Anne, that is just how I am going to pay you out. You shall have a week to find a fresh plan to trap the bird you have frightened, and, if you find none, first I shall post one of those interesting letters that I have yonder to your husband—anonously, you know—not a very compromising one, but one that will pique his curiosity and set him making inquiries; then I shall wait another week."

Lady Bellamy could bear it no longer. She sprang up from her chair, pale with anger.

"You fiend in human form, what is it, I wonder, that has kept me so long from destroying you and myself too? Oh! you need not laugh; I have the means to do it, if I choose; I have had them for twenty years."

George laughed again, hoarsely.

"Quite penny-dreadful, I declare. But I don't think you will come to that; you would be afraid, and, if you do, I don't care much—I am pretty reckless, I can tell you."

"For your threats," she went on, without heeding him, "I care nothing, for, as I tell you, I have their antidote at hand. You have known me for many years, tell me, did you ever see my nerve desert me? Do you suppose that I am a woman who would bear failure when I could choose death? No, George, I had rather pass into eternity on the crest of the wave of my success, such as it has been, and let it break and grind me to powder heights, or else bear me to greater heights. All that should have been a woman's better part in the world you have destroyed in me. I do not say that it was altogether your fault, for an evil destiny bound me to you, and it must seem odd to you when I say that, knowing you for what you are, I still love you. And to fill up this void, to trample down those surging memories, I have made myself a slave to my ambition, and the acquisition of another power that you cannot understand. The man you married me to is rich and a knight-to-day, I made him so. If I live another twenty years his wealth shall be colossal and his influence unbounded, and I will be one of the most powerful women in the kingdom. Why do you suppose that I so fear your treachery? Do you think that I should mind its being

known that I had thrown aside that poor fig-leaf, virtue—the green garment that marks a coward or a fool; mark you, all women, or nearly all, would be vicious if they dared. Fear and poverty of spirit restrain them, not virtue. Why, it is by their vices, properly managed, that women always have risen, and always will rise. To be really great, I think that a woman must be vicious with discrimination, and I respect vice accordingly. No, it is not that I fear. I am afraid because I have a husband whose bitter resentment is justly piling up against me from year to year, who only lies in wait for an opportunity to destroy me. Nor is he my only enemy. In his skillful hands, the letters you possess can, as society is in this country, be used so as to make me powerless. Yes, George, all the good in me is dead, the mad love I have given you is hourly outraged, and yet I cannot shake it off. There alone my strength fails me, and I am weak as a child. Only the power to exercise my will, my sense of command over the dullards round me, and a yet keener pleasure you do not know of, are left to me. If these are taken away, what will my life be? A void, a waste, a howling wilderness, a place where I will not stay! I had rather tempt the unknown. Even in hell there must be scope for abilities, such as mine?"

She paused awhile, as if for an answer, and then went on:

"And as for you, poor creature that you are, words cannot tell how I despise you. You discard me and my devotion, to follow a nature, in its way, it is true, greater even than my own, representing the principle of good, as I represent the principle of evil; but one to which yours is utterly abhorrent. Can you mix light with darkness, or filthy oil with water? As well hope to merge your life, black as it is, with every wickedness, with that of the splendid creature you would defile. Do you suppose that a woman such as she is will ever be really faithful to her love, even though you trap her into marriage? Fool, her heart is as far above you as the stars; and without a heart a woman is a husk that none but such miseries as yourself would own. But go on—dash yourself against a white purity that will, in the end, blind and destroy you. Dree your own doom! I will find you expedients; it is my business to obey you. You shall marry her, if you will, and taste of the judgment that will follow. Be still, I will bear no more of your insolence to-day." And she swept out of the room leaving George looking somewhat scared.

When Lady Bellamy reached Rewtham House she went straight to her husband's study. He received her with much politeness, and asked her to sit down.

"I have come to consult you on a matter of some importance," she said. "That is, indeed, an unusual occurrence," answered Sir John, rubbing his dry hands and smiling.

"It is not my own affair; listen," and she gave him a full, accurate and clear account of all that had taken place with reference to George's determination to marry Angela, not omitting the most trivial detail. Sir John expressed no surprise; he was a very old bird, and was spread in vain, whether in or out of sight. Nothing in this world, provided that it did not affect his own comfort or safety, could affect his bland and appreciative smile. He was never surprised. Once or twice he put a shrewd question to elucidate some point in the narrative, and that was all. When his wife had finished, he said:

"Well, Anne, you have told a very interesting and amusing little history, doubly so, if you will permit me to say it, seeing that it is told of George Caresfoot by Lady Bellamy; but it seems that your joint efforts have failed. What is it that you wish me to do?"

"I wish to ask you if you can suggest any plan that will not fail. You are very cunning in your way, and your advice may be good."

"Let me see—young Heigham is in Madeira, is he not?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"But I do," and he extracted a notebook from a drawer. "Let me see—I think I have an entry somewhere here. Ah! here we are—Arthur P. Heigham, Esq., passenger, per Warwick Castle, to Madeira, June 16' (Copied from passenger-list, Western Daily News.) His second name is Preston, is it not? Lucky I kept that. Now, the thing will be to communicate with Madeira, and see if he is still there. I can easily do that; I know a man there."

"Have you formed any plan, then?"

"Yes," answered Sir John, with great deliberation, "I think I see my way; but I must have time to think of it. I will speak to you about it to-morrow."

When Lady Bellamy had gone the little man rose, peeped round to see that nobody was within hearing, and then, rubbing his dry hands with infinite zest, said aloud, in a voice that was quite solemn in the intensity of its satisfaction:

"The Lord hath delivered mine enemies into mine hand."

To be Continued.

A NOVEL RAT-TRAP.

The Scientific American describes an invention which it calls "a humane rat-trap." The inventor asserts that not only are ordinary traps cruel, but they cause the teeth rats and mice to be wary. The new device is a wide-open trap, which is so arranged that a rat entering it is clasped round the body with a rubber band, which carries bells and is covered with tufts coated with phosphorescent paint. The trap does not imprison the rat, but simply turns it into a scarecrow. This, the inventor thinks, would be the most effectual method of ridding a house of such pests.

AN INQUIRY.

Marie—Have you seen Miss Passay's latest photograph?  
Gladys—No. Did she look pleasant or natural?

A SERIOUS EXPERIENCE

PASSED THROUGH BY ONE OF BROCKVILLE'S BEST KNOWN MEN.

His Legs Gave Out and When He Sat Down He Had No Control Over Them—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Restored Him to Activity.

From the Brockville Recorder.

There are few men in Brockville or vicinity better known to the general public, and there is certainly no one held in greater esteem by his friends, than Mr. L. deCarle, sr. Mr. deCarle came from England to Canada forty-four years ago, locating in the county of Glengarry. Eight years later he removed to Brockville and has made his home here ever since. He established the large marble business still carried on by his sons here, and is himself one of the most expert stone-cutters in the Dominion of Canada. He is also well known as an artist in other lines and as a draughtsman has few equals and no superiors. Ample evidence of this is afforded in the fact that when the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was begun, Sir Sanford Fleming, chief engineer of the great trans-continental road, requested him to join his staff. Mr. deCarle accepted the position at Sir Sanford's request and remained with the company for nine years, during which time he drew nearly all the profiles of the road and the plans of the bridges between Ottawa and Thunder Bay. His work was commended as the best done by any draughtsman in the company's employ. Since leaving the company's service Mr. deCarle has lived a retired life, enjoying a well earned competence at his cosy home in the west end of the town. Mr. deCarle is possessed of a rugged constitution and had always enjoyed the best of health until the fall of 1896. Then he was stricken with an affection of the limbs which much alarmed him. Speaking with a Recorder representative the other day, the conversation happened to turn upon this event, and the circumstances connected therewith can best be told in his own words. "Last fall" said he, "my legs became in such a condition that when I sat down I had no power over them. I could not move them one way or the other, and was naturally much alarmed. I was advised to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I had read of their curing cases similar to mine, and so I decided to give them a trial. I purchased a supply of the Pills and commenced taking them according to directions. I had only taken them a short time when I found that I was regaining the use of my legs and could raise one up and cross the other without much difficulty. I also remarked to my wife that the pills were doing me much good and she was both surprised and delighted when I showed her with what ease I could move my limbs. I continued taking the pills for about a month and by that time I had as full control of my legs as I ever had—in fact was completely cured. I have never had a symptom of the trouble since and am now as well as ever I was. I attribute my cure entirely to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. In fact it must have been the pills for I took nothing else in the way of medicine, and I cannot too strongly recommend them to anyone afflicted as I was."

UNUSED ROOMS.

In the old-fashioned brick palace at Kensington, a little suite of rooms is carefully guarded from the public gaze swept and garnished and tended as though the occupants of long ago were hourly expected to return. The early years of England's aged sovereign were passed in these simple rooms and by her orders they have been kept unchanged the furniture and decorations remaining to-day as when she lived inside those walls. In one corner is assembled a collection of dolls of all sizes, dressed in the quaint finery of 1825. A set of miniature cooking utensils and a rocking horse stand near by. A child's scrap books and color boxes lie on the tables. In one sunny chamber stands the little white-draped bed where the heiress to the greatest crown on earth dreamed her childish dreams and from which she was hastily aroused one June morning to be told that she was a Queen. So homelike and livable an air pervades the place that one almost expects to see the lonely little girl of seventy years ago playing about the unpretending chambers.

Affection for the past and a reverence for the memory of the dead have caused the royal wife and mother to preserve with the same care souvenirs of her passage in other royal residences. The apartments that sheltered the first happy months of her wedded life, the rooms where she knew the joys and anxieties of maternity, have become for her consecrated sanctuaries, where the widowed, broken old lady comes on certain anniversaries to evoke the forgotten past, to meditate and to pray.

Who does not open in memories some such sacred portals, and sit down in the familiar rooms to live over again the old hopes and fears, thrilling anew with the joys and temptations of other days? Yet each year these pilgrimages into the past must be more and more lonely journeys, for the friends whom we can take by the hand and lead through the antiquated halls become fewer with each decade.

A QUEER FACT.

It is an inexplicable fact that men buried in an avalanche of snow hear distinctly every word uttered by those who are seeking for them, while their most strenuous shouts fail to penetrate even a few feet of the snow.