

# Through Storm and Sunshine

## CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

Another little occurrence took place which increased her annoyance. She was in the library one morning with Sir Arthur and Mr. Dorman, when the family solicitor, Mr. Greston, was announced. He had come from London on business connected with the estate Lady Neslie received him very graciously. It was part of her policy to be civil to every one. She never felt sure what might happen, what friends she might need, and she therefore deemed it best to conciliate all. She paid little attention to what was passing until she heard Mr. Greston say—

"You cannot do that," Sir Arthur without Miss Neslie's consent."

"My daughter will consent," said Sir Arthur. "We have talked the matter over. She gives her consent on certain conditions."

"We shall require Miss Neslie's signature then," observed Mr. Greston. "As heiress of Lancelwood, she must sign these papers."

Lady Neslie looked up quickly. Of how little account she seemed! She did not even know what was passing. She rebelled against such a state of things. Surely she had a right to know what was going on. She would not be ignored. She went over to Sir Arthur and laid her jewelled hand on his shoulder.

"What are you doing, Arthur?" she asked.

Sir Arthur looked up with an expression of impatience.

"What are you doing?" she repeated.

"Nothing that you will understand, Valerie," he said. "Mr. Dorman, will you oblige me by looking for Miss Neslie? Mr. Greston's time is precious. He has to return by the evening train."

The young secretary left the room. "What business is it?" asked Lady Valerie, quickly. She was plucked at Sir Arthur's indifferent reply.

"None that you would understand," he replied.

"Surely," said Lady Neslie, "I may know as well as Vivien?"

She spoke with so much pique and bitterness that the lawyer looked up in wonder. Sir Arthur was greatly annoyed.

"The business concerns Vivien, not you," he said curtly.

Then "miladi" saw that she had gone too far. She had sufficient tact to retrieve any false step that she might make. She laughed—and the lawyer thought to himself what a false ring there was in her laugh.

"I was only jesting," she said.

But Sir Arthur was annoyed. She went back to her seat, and the master of Lancelwood bent his head over the papers; he was vexed that Mr. Greston should have witnessed the little outbreak.

"That is a spiteful, ill-bred woman," thought the solicitor, "and, no matter whether her name was D'Este or not, she is no lady."

Then Mr. Dorman returned, and Vivien followed.

Lady Neslie, watching with jealous eyes, saw the deference paid to her by Mr. Greston.

"How great is the difference," she thought to herself, "between the mistress of Lancelwood, and the heiress! He treats her with a hundred times more deference than he treated me."

It was bitter as gall and wormwood to her. Of what avail were her present paltry triumphs if this proud girl was one day to send her from the scene of her victories? She heard Mr. Greston explaining, asking questions; she heard him refer to a future time—

"When in your hands, Miss Neslie," she saw that every word Vivien uttered was received with deferential attention by the lawyer, and Sir Arthur, yet when she had spoken, her husband was simply annoyed.

"How I hate her!" she thought. "I hate her for her beauty, which outshines mine; I hate her for her calm, serene pride, her patrician air, her self-possessed manner; I hate her because she will one day drive me from Lancelwood."

And, as she looked at her, Lady Neslie thought to herself that she would give all she had in the world to out- rival her. Oh, if she had but a son—a son who could displace this girl, a son who would take Lancelwood, who would be lord of the domain! If she had but a son! And from her lips came a wild cry to Heaven that her prayer might be granted. She pictured it all to herself, if Heaven would but give her a son, Sir Arthur might perhaps just at first feel sorry for Vivien, but after a time the pride that all men feel in a male heir—above all, in a son of their own—would overpower all other feeling, and in a short time he would be as delighted as herself. A son to inherit Lancelwood, but above all, to supplant Vivien! If she had a son who would succeed to the Abbey, then she would never have to leave it. She might live there always, and it would be Vivien who would have to go.

"It is enough to tempt me to go to any extreme of peril and danger," she thought. "In fiction, a lady who desires a son and heir always buys one and cheats her husband. I wish I could do that; but I dare not even attempt it—Vivien would be sure to find me out. I could deceive Sir Arthur easily, but I could not deceive her."

Then she began to meditate on the feasibility of adopting a son—of pretending it was her own, and passing it off as such. She did not lack invention, but she lacked courage to carry out her plans.

A son—a son! If ever a woman prayed wildly, madly, passionately for a child, it was Lady Neslie. Not that she loved children; hers was not one of those sweet womanly natures that delight in the love and affection of a child. She merely wanted

a child as an instrument of vengeance. She would far rather have purchased one and passed it off as her own than have been the mother of one. No sweet instinct of maternal love actuated her, no desire for something to love which should be all her own. She desired a child simply that it might be an engine of vengeance, that it might bring destruction on the proud head of her rival. She had now been married more than two years, and as yet, Heaven had been dead to her passionate prayer for a child.

## CHAPTER XIV.

It was the month of May—merry, sunny, happy May—the month of blossoms and leaves, when the world seems to be at its fairest.

Lancelwood looked very lovely; the hawthorn was budding in the hedges, the green leaves were springing on the trees, the lilacs were budding, the golden blossoms of the laburnum were formed.

They were all out on the lawn one day, Lady Valerie preferring Lancelwood to a season in town, watching the tame doves which fluttered in the sunlit balmy air. Valerie, who was sitting near her husband, sighed deeply; then after a few minutes, she sighed again. Sir Arthur looked anxiously at her.

"What is the matter, Valerie?" he asked. "Why are you sighing?"

"I do not know," she replied.

"You do not seem quite like yourself, my darling. Do you know what I was thinking about?"

"No," she replied, listlessly.

"Last May," he said, "you gave six picnics—only imagine, six picnics in one month!—you had a picnic mania—and this May you have not given one."

"No," she replied, "I have not, Miss Smeaton was reproaching me yesterday."

"What is the reason, Valerie," asked Sir Arthur.

"I do not know," she replied, indifferently, "I do not feel so full of life this year as I did last."

Sir Arthur looked anxiously at her. "Not so full of life, Valerie? Surely you are not ill?"

"I do not know," she repeated; "I only know that the world seems quite different."

Her tone of voice was despondent; it had lost its joyous ring. Looking at her, he saw that the bright smile had died from her face. The master of Lancelwood grew anxious.

"Shall we have a picnic next week?" he asked. "Gayton's Craig would be a charming place to visit; you have not been there, I think."

"I do not feel equal to it, Arthur," said Lady Neslie, wearily—and when it happened that "miladi" was unequal to anything in the shape of pleasure, her husband felt sure there was something amiss.

Vivien, prejudiced as she was, could not help seeing that the young wife dropped and faded daily.

"Valerie," said Sir Arthur one morning, "you are losing all your color. You look like a lily, and I prefer to see you like a rose. Would you like to go anywhere for change of air?"

No; she preferred remaining at Lancelwood.

"It is the purest air in England," said Mr. Dorman, who was present.

"That it is. But perhaps Lady Neslie would be benefited by a change."

"I shall not leave Lancelwood," said Valerie, decidedly; and when she spoke so her husband knew that all further discussion was useless.

On another day he was distressed and anxious about her. She had been the life and soul of the house; she had been used to flit like a sunbeam from one room to another; she was always singing, laughing; or talking; no one had ever seen her dull, out of spirits, or even quiet. But one morning Sir Arthur, going unexpectedly into her boudoir, found her sitting with her arms laid on the table and her face hidden on them, her whole attitude so full of despair, so utterly despondent, that he was first startled and then frightened—what could have happened to his gay young wife?

"Valerie, my darling, what is it?" he asked, tenderly.

She raised a colorless face to his.

"I do not know; I feel very ill, Arthur," she continued, in a low, frightened voice; "do you think that I am going to die?"

"To die!" he repeated, in alarm. "I pray Heaven not. Why, my darling? What a question! I see no sign of death about you. What makes you think of such a thing?"

"Because I feel so ill, so strange," she replied.

"Valerie," said her husband, gravely, "I shall send for a doctor."

"No," she urged, with a shudder; "I dread doctors; I am afraid of them; the very sight of one makes me feel ill."

"But something must be done," said Sir Arthur.

She rose, and he was horrified to see how weak and ill she seemed. She looked at him, trying to smile her old bright, gay, defiant smile; but the effort was a miserable one.

"I will not have any doctor," she said; "let me die a natural death, if I am to die at all. I feel better—I shall soon be better; perhaps I have over-exerted myself"—and on the subject of her health she would not say another word.

That same evening—a wild, boisterous evening—when the wind was waiting round the Abbey and bending the tall trees in the park, Sir Arthur had a serious fright. Dinner was over, and the baronet and his wife and daughter were in the drawing-room. Vivien was singing. Lady Neslie had lain down on a couch, as though tired. She rose to find a novel that she had been reading, and when she was halfway across the room she fell, with a low cry, to the ground. Sir Arthur

hastened to raise her, crying out to Vivien for help. They laid her down again on the little couch, and were startled at her white face and lips.

"Papa," said Vivien, "I should not let anything prevent my sending for a doctor, if I were in your place. I am afraid Lady Neslie is seriously ill."

"Late as it is," decided Sir Arthur, "I will send directly;" and a servant was dispatched at once to Hydewell in search of Dr. Armstrong. When he arrived Lady Neslie was better, and laughing at the fright she had given them.

"I have never fainted before," she said; "it is a most curious sensation—I do not think that dying can be much worse."

She received Dr. Armstrong kindly, although she felt annoyed at his being sent for.

"I am better," she said. "I have over-exerted myself, doctor. I will not be an invalid, I refuse absolutely!"

But Dr. Armstrong looked gravely at her.

"I should like to speak to you," he said, "if you will permit me"—hearing which Vivien withdrew, leaving the doctor and his refractory patient together.

It was a long interview, and at its close Dr. Armstrong quitted the room with an expression of anxiety blended with amusement on his face.

"There is nothing serious, I hope, doctor," said Sir Arthur.

"No," he replied; "but allow me to say, Sir Arthur, that Lady Neslie is one of the most extraordinary patients I have ever attended."

The baronet smiled.

"I can believe it," he said. "Lady Neslie has a great dread of illness, doctor. I am glad you think there is nothing very wrong. Would you advise change of air?"

"No; let her rest and live more quietly—have less gaiety and keep earlier hours—she will soon be well then."

The doctor might have thought her ladyship a wonderful patient if he had seen her as she appeared after he left her. She was standing by the fire, a flush on her face, her eyes flashing, her red lips curved in a strange smile.

"Can it be true?" she said to herself. "Is my prayer really answered? Can it be true? I will not say one word to them until I am quite sure. And if the doctor does—but he will not—he dares not, now that I have forbidden him. Can it be that my prayer is granted? Now for my victory—now for my revenge! There shall be Lady Valerie's Drive without asking Miss Neslie's consent. Miss Neslie will not always be able to sneer at me—to look at me with calm proud eyes, as though I were immeasurably inferior to her. She will not be able to live at the Abbey while I am sent from its doors. She will not be consulted again, while I am told indifferently that it is upon business I do not understand. Farewell to Miss Neslie's heiress-ship and grandeur if this be true! But I will keep my secret yet awhile."

"You are better, Valerie," said Sir Arthur, entering the room and going up to her. "You have found some of your roses again. I was terribly frightened about you."

"I was frightened myself," she admitted, laughingly; "but I am better now."

"Now, Valerie," said her husband, "you must listen to reason. I know you will not be willing to submit to what I am going to say, but I must enforce obedience. You must live more quietly—you must keep earlier hours—you must go out less. We never have a quiet day at home. You have carried your love of gaiety a little too far, and you have made yourself quite ill."

To his surprise, she received the little lecture very meekly.

"You are right," she returned—"I see my folly, and I mean to be different. You shall see that I will follow your advice, Arthur."

"What a docile little wife! You may develop into a patient Griselda soon, Valerie."

To his great surprise, he found that she kept her word. She refused half the invitations that came. She said nothing more about giving dances or balls. She was delighted with the change; even Vivien was compelled to acknowledge the improvement. Lancelwood became more like itself again.

Later on Sir Arthur proposed going to London for a short period, but to his intense surprise Valerie resolutely declined.

"You may go if you like," she said. "I have had enough of gaiety; I want to be quiet at home."

"I shall not leave you," declared Sir Arthur. "London has no attraction for me—I would far rather be at Lancelwood. But there is Vivien, she ought to have a change."

It happened most fortunately that the difficulty was soon solved. Lady Smeaton was about to visit town and hearing that the baronet and Lady Neslie wished Vivien to go, but were unable to accompany her, she invited Miss Neslie to join herself and her daughters; and Vivien consented. Then, when the golden promise of summer filled the land, Lady Neslie told her husband the secret she had been keeping from him; and the secret was, that before many months had passed, there would be given to her the sweetest gift Heaven can give—the gift of a little child.

To be Continued.

## NOTE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

A great French artist is the author of a rule well known among students that to obtain effective results a portrait painter should always mass the blackest black and the whitest white in his picture about the face. It is a rule that may not be overlooked in the study of dress.

## SCHOOL CHILDREN RIDE GRATIS.

School children in Victoria, Australia, are carried on the streets cars free of charge.

## British Barmaids.

There are 120,000 barmaids in England, and at various times sundry folk have dreamed of having a law passed which should prevent the employment of girls as bartenders, says a London letter. But the efforts in this direction have had little public support, partly because an English institution is not easily set aside, and partly because of a general conviction that the girl behind the bar is not necessarily a bad lot. So an attempt in a new direction has been begun on behalf of the barmaid. Instead of being told that she is probably a sinner, or soon will be one, she is merely invited to come and take tea on Sunday afternoon with a woman who doesn't intend to preach to her and who would like to be a good friend, and, to quote her own words, would like "to give her a bit of blue sky to see."

Mrs. Cholmeley, the leader of this new work is wealthy, and one of the honorary workers in the Church Army, the organization with which the Church of England is unintentionally rivalling Gen. Booth's Salvation Army. She has received contributions from the Church Army and from other sources and engaged four or five girls who have been trained as mission workers to help her. The work, of course, makes it necessary that the barmaids should be visited at their places of business, for these girls work from 7 in the morning until half-past 12 at night, and, naturally, Mrs. Cholmeley has found it difficult to enlist women of her own social position to undertake making the rounds of such places. Another drawback is that there are really only about four hours in the day when this work can be attempted, for the girls are too busy with customers from 12 o'clock until 2 or 3 in the afternoon, and even busier all the evening. In spite of these difficulties, Mrs. Cholmeley and her assistants have succeeded in the last six months in visiting 4,000 barmaids and talking with them. They take with them a little letter, inclosed in an envelope, attractively printed and as little like a tract as possible, written simply yet calculated to interest the girl who receives it and to make her think.

Some of the larger public houses employ as many as twenty-five barmaids, and in others the girls are kept busy from morning until night, but in every case the workers try to have a few words with each of them, as well as to hand them the letters. Every letter is signed with Mrs. Cholmeley's name and bears her address, and the girls are told that she is at home every Sunday afternoon and will be pleased to have them take tea with her whenever they can. "At these teas she sometimes has three or four girls, sometimes only one, more often none. Considering that the girls' only breathing time in the whole week comes on Sunday afternoon and then is only five hours long, it is not strange that Mrs. Cholmeley's little receptions are not better patronized."

Mrs. Cholmeley says that there are many more good barmaids than evil ones. The girls usually enter the business for the simple reason that almost all the other lines open to women are paid so wretchedly that the \$2.50 a week, with meals, that barmaids receive seems like a fortune. Then, there is nothing degrading about the work, for every barmaid is called "Miss." In their visits, Mrs. Cholmeley and her girls have discovered four barmaids who were formerly teachers in Sunday schools, and several who keep a little box on the bar and make men who swear in their presence drop into it a penny whenever they offend. One girl collected \$4, and sent it to a charity fund.

As for the girls the great majority of them would leave in a moment if they could make as much money elsewhere in a more elevated calling. The hours are terribly long; they are obliged to stand all through them. There is dirty work to be done in the morning, sometimes insults to put up with, and always the temptation to drink. Mrs. Cholmeley says fewer of them yield to this temptation than would be expected. The girls are usually related to the proprietor or his friends and some of them enter the business as early as the age of 14. They find their husbands in the public houses. If they don't get married and retire they die young, the result of the hard work and long hours. At least, that was what the girls said when asked what became of the old barmaids.

What Mrs. Cholmeley hopes to accomplish eventually she hardly knows. Her ideal is, finally, to divide the city of London up into districts and enlist women workers enough to look after the girls rather carefully, in case any of them is ill or in trouble, then to find a woman of some prestige in each of those districts who would receive the girls on Sunday or whenever they could come and counsel them if they needed it. At present \$5,000 has been spent in the work.

## THE SMALL-MINDED MAN.

Well, said the Small-Minded Man, I have found out another woman's age.

How did you do it? asked the listener.

Why, I asked her suddenly how many years it was since 1873.

But how did you find out her age?

She figured it up subtracting five from thirty-two before she thought.

## ONE WOMAN'S WISDOM.

Station Agent—Do you wish your baggage checked, madam?

Lady—Certainly not. I want it to go.

## From Pain to Health.

### A CHIPPEWA LADY TELLS A STORY OF SUFFERING AND RELEASE.

Suffered From Heart Trouble for Years—Her Misery Further Aggravated by Kidney and Stomach Trouble.

From the Star, St. Catharines, Ont.

In the village of Chippewa, and along the Niagara frontier, there is probably no better known or respected residents than Mr. and Mrs. David Schabel. Both are of German descent and display much of that old-fashioned hospitality so often found in the fatherland. To a correspondent of the St. Catharines Star, who recently called at Mr. Schabel's home Mrs. Schabel related the following story:—"Years ago my physician told me I had heart disease. I have been troubled at intervals with palpitation and severe pains, and sometimes my heart would almost cease to beat. I would become dizzy, restless and frightened. At other times I slept badly and had troublesome dreams. I lingered in this state until last winter when exposure to cold affected my kidneys and completely prostrated me. The spring came, when my complaints were further aggravated by stomach trouble. I loathed food and could realize that I was daily growing weaker. My physician's treatment would sometimes slightly benefit me, then again I was worse than ever. Finally, after all hope was apparently gone and a large sum of money, had been thrown away for medicines that did me no good, a friend strongly advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, two boxes of which were brought me at the beginning of the summer of 1899. I used them and to my joy noticed improvement. I continued the use of the pills faithfully until I had taken eight boxes. I am now able to attend to all my household, feeling entirely cured. I have never had better health than I am now enjoying, and since discontinuing the pills have had no symptoms of the old complaints. I feel that I am under lifelong obligations for the benefit I have derived from Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and will continue to praise them when opportunity offers."

## DOORSTOOP GARDENING.

Investments ranging all the way from \$10 to \$300 are now made by city residents for the purpose of decorating the exterior of their home with ornamental greenery. This fashion comes from Italy and France where, since time immemorial, it has been the custom to embower the entrances of the great houses of Rome, Paris, &c., in shrubbery, clipped and grown and potted in big tubs for the special purpose of threshold embellishment.

English ivy, Italian laurel, privet dwarf cedar, Canadian spruce, English yew or hawthorn and Dutch box are some of the most popular and serviceable shrubs for doorstep use just inside the glass storm doors or outside on the stone landing of the street steps. Mop-headed Italian laurel trees are the most expensive in this kind of verdure, for a good healthy pair cost all the way from \$50 to \$250. Fine specimens of English yew come next in estimation, while a richly leaved and quaintly shaped pair of Dutch box bushes are wonderfully ornamental, sturdy and valuable. Plain, green-painted boxes or tubs give the proper foothold to any of these species of evergreen, though now the brick-and-brac dealers, keen to seize a fresh opportunity for trade, are importing from Italy, France and England time mellowed but beautifully chiselled old marble vases that glorified eighteenth century gardens once.

Early in the spring the smartly kept city house will display a brace of fine privet or prettily blooming hawthorn bushes in green tubs, while pots on the stone posts of rough green pottery are filled with dwarf cedars and at the bases of these scarlet geraniums bloom. In the lower windows handsomely tiled window boxes of geraniums and green vines are set, and such an exterior decoration costs the owner \$50 or \$75. In the autumn laurel trees in tubs replace the privet until there is danger of a heavy frost, which the laurel does not often weather, and then come a couple of four or six sided box pyramids or handsomely shaped steeple pointed yews, and the window boxes are cleared and replanted with little pines and sturdy spruce and cedar well bedded and draped with the richest ivy. The result of all this is to take in no small degree from the stony hardness and monotony of close-set residence streets, and against the new houses or cream brick, gray stone and white marble the display of greenery is delightful.

## GAMBLING ON RAIN.

The English government has recently prohibited in India the peculiar hazard game called "Barsa ka satta." This game cannot be played, except when it rains, for, in fact, it consists of betting on the date of rain, and the quantity that may descend from the skies. On all the porticos, or "altans," as they are called in India, there are certain tubs introduced which have a perpendicular pipe in their centres, the pipe being provided with equal division marks or notches. The point of the game is to determine in advance just at what time a certain height will be reached by the water. The natives have pursued this method of gambling with such passion that quarrels, and dangerous ones, often resulted, and hence the ruling of the English government to make the play illegal.