

## Through Storm and Sunshine

"although it almost unmans me. I thought, when I had prevailed upon you to say that you loved me, all difficulty was ended. That is the first step I find. Let me do one thing, my darling—let me avow myself your lover—let me tell all the world how sweet and how great a pleasure I have won."

"Not yet," she replied. "I think the wish nearest to Lady Neslie's heart is that I should marry and leave Lancewood entirely in her hands. I would rather that she knew nothing at present—it would but increase my difficulties."

He kissed the soft hands that lay in his.

"Your wish shall be my law. I have won from you the admission that you love me; I should be wanting in grace and courtesy if I complained after that. Vivien, you will remember one thing—it is by your own wish and desire that our love remains for the present a secret; but you will not forget now that you have one who is all the world to you. I stand in the place of father, brother, friend. My darling, you will tell your trials and difficulties to me now; and, believe me, they will seem all the easier to bear because you have some one to share them. Should a time come when you need a friend, one word will bring me to your side, and I will defend you against the whole world."

They sat for some time longer, while the last rays of golden light died away and the stars began to appear; still he found so much to say, and she was so pleased to listen. Then they re-entered the house. Vivien retired at once to her own room; she wanted to be alone with her happiness. Lady Smeaton went to Lord St. Just.

"Hope you have good news for me," she said.

"Dear Lady Smeaton," he replied, touched by her kindness. "I have not gained all I wanted; but I have made some little progress. I do not despair."

On the following day Vivien returned to Lancewood. It was keen sorrow parting with her friends—above all, with her lover; but, as she drove through the pleasant smiling country, her heart grew warm within her, thinking of her love. She thanked Heaven for it—this love which had changed her whole life—this sweet happy love which had dawned upon her like the smile of an angel. Oh, if it would but please Heaven to take pity on her, to help her to save Lancewood, and to give her her love!

Presently the carriage drew up at the front entrance. There was no one to receive her. The servants seemed to be all out of the way. Repeated summonses brought a bewildered footman on the scene.

"What is the matter?" asked Miss Neslie. "What is going on here?"

"A fancy fair, miss," replied the man.

The house seemed to be deserted. She walked through the grand entrance-hall, through the long suite of rooms, and saw no one.

"Where is Mr. Dorman?" she inquired of the footman who followed her.

"In his room, miss," was the answer.

"Ask him to come here to me in the library," she said. "Say that I have returned and wish to see him."

A few minutes afterward Gerald Dorman stood before the woman whom he loved so well. Looking into the beautiful face he saw a subtle change there. The haggard, worn expression had disappeared, the exquisite colouring had all returned; the dark eyes were splendid in their depth and fire. Vivien held out her hand in kindly greeting to him, but Gerald could not speak. He could only look into the face that was all the world to him.

"You seem surprised," she said, with a lovely, laughing smile. "I am pleased to see you, Mr. Dorman—why do you look so astonished at me?"

"You are changed," answered Gerald. "Something—I cannot tell what—has disappeared from your face; and something—I cannot tell what—has taken its place."

She blushed crimson. Was it so plain then, this love of hers—so patient that people could read it in her face?

"I have been very happy," she said. "It was so grateful to be at peace and to be free from discomfort. I met such pleasant people and such kind friends. But, Mr. Dorman, what is going on here?"

"A fancy fair," he replied, "her ladyship's last whim. I am almost sorry that you came home before it was over. I should not imagine that there has ever been such a motley crowd at Lancewood before."

"A fancy fair! But why has Lady Neslie introduced that?"

"I cannot tell you, Miss Neslie. The whole neighbourhood has talked about it. You must indeed have been happily and busily engaged not to have heard of it."

Again her face flushed at the remembrance of how she had been engaged.

Lady Smeaton never spoke of Lancewood," she said, "knowing that it was not a pleasant subject to me. Even if they knew of it, no one would tell me."

"Every one in the county knows of it," declared Mr. Dorman. "There could not be greater preparations for the coming of age of a prince. Gunter's men have been down for the last two days from London; we have Wall and Tinford's band. The picturesque part of the affair baffles all my powers of description. There are tents with gypsies who tell fortunes, Tyrolean peasants, Swiss peasants, Italian peasants. There is dancing, shooting, every kind of amusement."

"And who are the guests?" asked Miss Neslie.

"I have seen few familiar faces amongst them," he replied. "Her ladyship has been seeking popularity lately amongst the very mixed society of Hydewell, as the county families positively decline her invitations. The visitors, many of whom are staying there only on the pretext of taking the waters, as well as others who are not recognized by the county people as accepted, and they, with their wives and families,

form the greater part of the guests. Then there is a fresh relay of visitors from Paris of the same stamp as the last. I saw Sir Harry Lane yesterday, and he said that he did not know what Lancewood was coming to."

"Lancewood shall come to no harm," said the girl with flashing eyes. "And you have not joined the crowd, Mr. Dorman?"

"No," he replied. "And Holmes, the butler, has offended Lady Neslie. He told her that he was accustomed to wait upon ladies and gentlemen. Her ladyship would have sent him away at once, but Monsieur de Nouchet said no one else understood the wines."

A rustle of silk was heard, a subtle perfume seemed to float through the room. Looking round, Vivien saw Lady Neslie watching her with a mocking smile.

"How do you do, Vivien?" she asked. "I had quite forgotten that you intended returning to-day. You find us in the midst of a very brilliant fete."

"I see a number of strange people here, Lady Neslie," she observed.

"Yes," was the careless rejoinder. "When we cannot have what we want, we must be content with what we can get," says a very sensible rendering of our French proverb. I hardly fancied you would return, Vivien. Did you not find an admirer amongst Lady Smeaton's friends?"

Miss Neslie's face flushed indignantly.

"You forget yourself, Lady Neslie," she said coldly.

"No, my dear, I never do that," laughed "miladi." But I fancied that I had heard of something of the kind. You will join our visitors, Vivien?"

"I think not. I do not know any of them, Lady Neslie."

"They are very amusing—much more so than your stiff countesses. For my part, I hold the English aristocracy in abhorrence."

"And they return the compliment," said Vivien. But "miladi" went back laughing to her guests.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a long day for Vivien—the time hung very heavy. She wandered through the deserted rooms; she looked up at the noble faces of the dead Neslies on the walls; she thought of the man whom she had learned to love. She looked long at her mother's picture. The slow, cruel, sunny hours lingered. She could hear the sound of music and revelry in the park. Passing through the dining room, she saw preparations for a large banquet; and, hearing a noise in the ball room, she went thither. She found that preparations were being made for a dance when the lateness of the hour prevented further dancing in the park.

Could this be Lancewood, the stately, beautiful home wherein an unworthy feet had ever trodden—this deserted house, the servants of which rushed distractedly from park to garden, where the sound of loud laughter came in through the open windows?

Hours later she saw the flushed, disheveled revelers entering the house. So motley a crew had never been seen at Lancewood. Vivien saw soi-disant military men with huge mustaches and large cigars; she saw ladies overdressed and rouged in the rooms that had been to her as shrines, because her father and mother had lived in them; she saw laughing crowds of people whose presence she considered a dire misfortune. She did not go amongst them—few inquired about her; others did not even know of her existence. The once-flattered mistress of the house was now little more than a cipher; no one noticed her, or seemed to remember her existence.

She had difficulty in finding a servant who had leisure to prepare her some tea; they were so busily engaged with "my lady's" guests. Vivien ordered it to be taken to her room—there at least she would have peace. But even there the noise of the music and the crowd followed her; she felt as though she were in some abode given up to the influence of evil spirits.

If Sir Arthur could but have foreseen this—all the evil, the scandal, the humiliation that this woman would bring upon his home! Then Vivien bethought herself that she had not yet changed her traveling attire. Sick at heart, she went through the ceremony of dressing, Joan choosing her lady's favorite costume—a dress of rich black velvet, cut after the quaint fashion of a Venetian portrait square in the front, showing the firm white neck and throat, with wide hanging sleeves, the costly lace showing the rounded, beautiful arms. A diamond arrow fastened the mass of dark hair.

Vivien went to the nursery to see the boy—he was absent, joining in the revels. Then she sought Gerald,

and asked him if anything had been done in the way of lessons.

"Nothing," he told her. "But Lady Neslie has given me to understand that she will not much longer require my presence at Lancewood."

Turn which way Vivien would, there was no comfort.

Amongst other devices for the amusement of her guests, Vivien found there was to be a grand display of fireworks; after that supper and dancing were to follow. She was only anxious not to see and hear of what was going on. She went to the drawing-room, the windows of which looked over the broad terraces and pleasure grounds.

"I shall not be annoyed here," she thought.

The day was dying when she took up her station there—the western sky was all aflame. She went out on to the large balcony, always a favorite resort of hers, and sat there watching the light fade over the trees, thinking of Adrian, and how well she loved him—thinking of her fate, and how hard it seemed—wondering if circumstances would ever take such a turn as in some degree to free her. At present to leave Lancewood would simply be to place it in the hands of the enemy.

She was thinking so deeply and so intently that she had not noticed the rush of people toward that part of the grounds where the fireworks were to be seen; she had not heard the loud explosions. She had not noticed the dying away of the day and the gleaming of the golden stars. She was wrapped in a dream. She would have sat there for hours, but that a sudden sound near her startled her. Looking round, she saw that "miladi" had entered the drawing-room with the tutor.

He had lighted one of the lamps, and a soft pearly glow filled the room; by it Vivien saw Lady Neslie. She wore a dress of white and gold brocade, with jewels shining in her hair, on her breast, and round her arms. The lovely, laughing face was flushed, a mocking smile curled the rich, red lips, a defiant light shone in the large, bright eyes, a long tress of hair, unfastened, had fallen on to her white shoulder. As Vivien looked at her she thought of a picture of a Bacchante which she has seen in a Paris gallery—a Bacchante with just such another lovely, laughing, defiant, flushed face. Vivien would have spoken, but the first words uttered arrested her attention and seemed to strike her dumb.

It was her ladyship who spoke first, and the conversation was carried on in French. She held a jeweled fan in her hand, and waved it lightly as she spoke.

"Now, Henri, quick! Why have you brought me away from my guests? What do you want to say to me?"

"I want your answer to my question, Valerie, and I am determined to have it. You duped me years ago; you shall not, I swear, dupe me again."

"You rather enjoyed the duping," she returned, carelessly.

"I have been here now—how many months? I find it dull, this old Abbey of yours. I am tired of it. I long to be at Baden or Monaco, Homburg, Paris, anywhere where there is a semblance of life. I want your answer at once."

"And why, pray, do you want it in this hurried fashion?"

"You call it hurried, when I have been waiting for months! I will have it to-night, and the reason that De Calloux returns to Paris to-morrow, and my affairs must be arranged."

"What if I do not choose to give you this promise, monsieur?"

His face grew livid with rage.

"Then," he replied, "I swear that I will betray you to the proud daughter of this house. All England shall know who my Lady Neslie is."

Vivien had recovered herself. She pushed aside the roses and the passion flowers all damp with dew. She stepped from the balcony into the room.

"Let me warn you," she said in French. "I have no wish to listen to your conversation. Permit me to pass through the room."

But Henri de Nouchet interposed.

"I am glad you are here, Miss Neslie. I make my appeal to you—you are proud and cold and hard, but you are just and honorable."

"Miladi" laughed mockingly.

"This promises to be interesting," she said; and the Frenchman's dark face grew darker as he heard the mocking tones.

"Appeal to you," he said passionately, "to see justice done to me. This lady promised most faithfully, when I met her in Paris, to marry me, and now she refuses to keep her word."

"That I do, most decidedly," put in Valerie, with a smile.

"Is it fair to me, Miss Neslie? Is

it just—is it honorable? She promised. We arranged it all. I was to come to Lancewood on some pretext or other, to seem to fall in love with her, and we were to be married. I should have come in the guise of a traveling artist, but that she proposed my coming as tutor. Is it fair or just that she should refuse me now?"

"I beg of you not to appeal to me in the matter. I can have nothing to say," replied Vivien.

"Most wisely answered," sneered "miladi."

"We were engaged to be married," went on M. de Nouchet, undeterred, "when Lady Neslie was only seventeen. When she broke off with me to marry your father, she promised faithfully that if she was left a widow—above all, a wealthy one—she would marry me. I met her in Paris; she renewed the promise, and now refused to fulfill it. Is that just, Miss Neslie?"

Vivien turned away with an air of proud contempt.

"It does not interest me," she said, coldly.

"Pray listen!" he continued, vehemently. "You are the only one here possessed of truth and honesty. Is it honest of miladi to deceive me again?"

Lady Neslie laughed, while the light quivered in her jewels.

"It is all wasted pathos, Henri," she said. "Miss Neslie does not like you."

"I know it; but Miss Neslie will see justice done to me," he cried.

"My dear Henri," said Lady Valerie, "I was a foolish young girl when I first fell in love with your handsome face—and a very handsome face it was in those days."

He muttered something between his closed lips; "miladi" fanned herself languidly.

To Be Continued.

## Dyspepsia's Victims.

### THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT.

It Frequently Produces Headache, Heartburn, Dizziness and Other Distressing Symptoms—A Victim Tells of Her Release.

From the Telegraph, Quebec.

The primary cause of indigestion or dyspepsia is lack of vitality; the absence of nerve force; the loss of the life-sustaining elements in the blood. No organ can properly perform its functions when the source of nutriment fails. When the stomach is robbed of the nutriment demanded by nature, assimilation ceases, unnatural gases are generated and the entire system responds to the discord.

A practical illustration of the symptoms and torture of dyspepsia is furnished by the case of Mrs. A. Labonte, who lives in the village of Stadacona, Que.

When interviewed by a reporter of the Quebec Telegraph, Mrs. Labonte looked the picture of vigorous health, showing no traces of the malady that had made her life for the time miserable. Speaking of her illness, Mrs. Labonte said: "For about two years I suffered dreadfully. My digestive organs were impaired, and the food I ate did not assimilate and left me with a feeling of flatulency, pain and acidity of the stomach, and frequently heartburn. This condition of affairs soon told on my system in other ways, with the result that I had frequent headaches, dizziness, and at times a feeling of vision with spots apparently dancing before my eyes. I became so much run down that it was with difficulty I could do my household work, and at all times I felt weak, depressed and nervous. While I was at my worst, one of my friends, seeing that the doctor was not helping me, urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. My husband then got me half a dozen boxes and I began taking them. After I had used two boxes I began to enjoy my meals and the various symptoms of my trouble began to disappear. I continued the pills until I had used the half dozen boxes, and I again felt perfectly well. My stomach was as healthy as ever it had been. I could sleep well and my head was clear and free from the dizziness and aches that so long helped make me miserable. It is more than a year since I stopped taking the pills, and health has continued better than it was for years before."

Mrs. Labonte added that she will always feel grateful to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for the misery they have released her from, and she always advises friends who are ailing to use them.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. Avoid imitations by insisting that every box you purchase is enclosed in a wrapper bearing the full trade mark. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. If your dealer does not keep them they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.