

Through Storm and Sunshine

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A year and a half had passed away, and Vivien Neslie was once more firmly established at Lancewood. She had fallen into an even method of life that never varied. To keep up the grandeur of the Abbey, she gave hospitality entertainments, but they differed greatly from the gay revels held by Lady Neslie. Mothers with young daughters no longer refused invitations to Lancewood; on the contrary, they were eagerly sought after and an entree there was a passport everywhere.

Miss Neslie was no advocate of woman's rights; she had no idea of standing on a platform and delivering rapid lectures; she would have declined the study of medicine, except so far as it was common; she laughed at the notion of lady-barrister. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, she took a keen womanly interest in politics—in all social matters. She could discuss the probability of the return of a new member, the best plan for model cottages, what was really needed as regards the improvement of the laborer's condition, the most approved school buildings, the prospects of the crops, with equal facility.

She was one of the women essentially born to command. She would have been lost in an inferior position. She had grand administrative powers. Old dwellers in the county looked with envy at the fine flourishing estate, at the order, the method, the prosperity. She was a woman of large mind. Any one going to her with a plan, a scheme, an invention of any kind, was sure to be encouraged. She adopted all modern improvements; she spared neither thought, labor, nor expense, and it pleased her to hear on all sides high praise of Lancewood.

Her life was a busy one; yet she would fain have done more to drive away the specter that haunted her, the remorse and regret that never grew less. She went to church, but she did not join in others' prayers—how could she, while her injustice and sin remained? She opened the pages of her Bible, but closed them, for words telling of the reward and the blessing that followed justice were sure to trouble her.

"Do right come what may," were words that continually sounded in her ears. She thought of them until even her clear mind grew confused. Was it right to do as she was doing—making Lancewood what, even in its palm-iest days, it had never been before, or was it right to restore the estate to one who would simply ruin it? Did the means justify the end? Could it be possible that good ever arose from evil—that wrong could ever be right? She pondered these questions long and anxiously, and then she decided that Lancewood was her dearest interest, and that she would attend first of all to that.

There came a day when all these questions were suddenly settled. It was a clear, cold, frosty day in December, and Vivien had been working very hard. The winter was unusually severe and frosty, the people suffered much from cold. She had been round the estate, giving with a bountiful, royal hand relief where it was needed. The poor and the rich cried, "Heaven bless the good lady of Lancewood!" while she herself cried for mercy because she was a sinner.

On this cold December day she came in from her long drive almost frozen herself. She took off her warm, rich furs, and stood for a few minutes before the cheerful fire. It was the twilight of a December day. A haze lay over the fields and hills; the trees stood like huge bare giants, the air was clear, brisk, and cold, a gray shade was falling over the land, a gray shade that gave a peculiar yellow light. She was standing in the drawing-room, and, in that weird, strange light the room seemed to glow with radiance—the firelight cast a ruddy, cheerful blaze that contrasted forcibly with the grayness outside.

As she looked round, her heart warmed to her beautiful home; but for the shadow lying over her life, how happy she should be! Then she half wished that Gerald Dorman had cared less for her. In such a case he would never have done what he had. Her thoughts wandered to him. She had heard from him once or twice. He had written short, sad letters containing no particular news. It seemed like an answer to her thoughts when a footman entered with the letter-bag. It had been delayed in the morning, owing to the state of the roads from the frost, and had not

arrived until Miss Neslie had left the Abbey on her long round of visits.

She opened it mechanically. There could be nothing to interest her very greatly. The first letter she saw was one with a deep black border, addressed to her in Gerard's handwriting.

What did it mean? The other letters fell unheeded from her hand to the floor. A gasping sigh parted her lips. What did it mean, that broad black border? What did it portend?

It seemed to her that an hour had passed between the first moment that she had seen the letter and the moment when it lay open before her.

Then Gerald's words seemed to stand out in letters of fire.

"I have sad news for you—sad, though perhaps, after all, for the best. The boy is dead. He was unwell, ailing for months, and then became seriously ill; now he is dead. Believe me, he has had the best of care, the best of nursing, of advice, of attention. The cleverest of doctors, the most skilled of nurses, have attended to him, but it was all in vain. Had he been my own son, I could not have done more for him; but he is dead in spite of all my care and efforts. He passed under the name of Harry Dorman, and lest you should feel a doubt of my word, I inclose you the certificate of his death and burial.

"I am sorry for his death, but it is well that it has taken place. I entreat of you to believe that he could not have been more kindly treated. Remember, a certain number of years are allotted to every one. He would have died just the same, even had he remained at Lancewood.

"Now, Miss Neslie, you may be happy. You may cease to lament and mourn. The boy is the better for what has happened. My brother taught him what he would never have learned at Lancewood—to fear, and love, and serve his Maker.

"You may be at rest now; Lancewood is your own—the terrible past lies buried. Let me hear that you have married the man you love, and that you are happy; you know how I long to hear this.

"Once more before I die I shall try to see you; it may be soon, it may be in years to come. The kind words that you will give me then will be the reward of my life-long love and devotion to you."

She looked at the papers enclosed; they were copies of certificates of Harry Dorman's death and of his burial in New York. And so she said to herself the tragical page of that story is closed.

Was she glad or sorry? The world seemed to stand still; her heart beat slowly; her pulse barely throbbed; her whole soul seemed to have suddenly received a sudden shock. An hour afterwards she found herself kneeling with the open letter in her hands.

He was dead—this child of a struggling player, whose inheritance she had taken because she did not think him worthy to hold it. He was dead, and Lancewood was in very truth her own.

She might be sorry for what she had done—for the sin of the past—but the haunting sense of wrong was at an end—quite at an end. She was not keeping now that which belonged to another. It was her own. She need no longer feel scrupulous or hesitate to enjoy her life. The dark, terrible shadow had vanished. She was not wronging the heir of Lancewood, for he was dead.

Yet perhaps she had never shed bitterer tears than she shed as she knelt and thought of the dead child; but, when the tears were spent, and she rose once more to the level of everyday life, there was a great change in her. She seemed to have grown years younger. The rich color returned to her beautiful face. She laughed, talked, smiled, as she had not done for years. The terrible weight had fallen from her. She was no longer keeping unjustly what belonged to another.

She was herself, as she had not been since her father's marriage. She did not seek to hide from herself the terrible enormity of the sin she had committed—with deepest contrition she accused herself of it before Heaven; but the burden of the sin seemed to have been removed by the child's death; and, if any anxious thought came to her that his death might have been caused or hastened by his removal from Lancewood, she remembered what Gerald had said. His allotted number of years would have come to an end whether he were in England or America. If the idea was

that of a fatalist, she did not know it.

People wondered how she had lost her sad gravity, her gloom. They fancied it was the effect of time on her sorrow. She knew that she was released from a terrible secret that had weighed her down to the earth.

Then she heard from Gerald that his brother, no longer having an object for remaining in America, was returning to England. Gerald preferred remaining where he was. Vivien sent to his brother a handsome sum in acknowledgment of his services, and then she said to herself that the whole affair was ended.

That year, for the first time since her father's death, she went to London. She left her beloved Lancewood in all prosperity, and went with Lady Smeaton and her daughters. In the metropolis she met Lord St. Just, who was first amazed, then delighted.

"If I could only understand you!" he said to her one day. "You are the greatest puzzle I have ever met with. But, do you know, I begin to think that you do love me after all, Vivien, and that you will consent to be my wife at last."

"Try me," she said, with a blushing smile.

"Will you?" he asked. "Oh, Vivien, it cannot be that you intend to make me happy at last? I cannot believe it, Will you be my wife?"

She laid her hand in his and looked up at him.

"Mine has been a strange life," she said, "a hard life, and it had had some terrible episodes in it; but, if you think that I can make you happy, I am all your own, Adrian."

He seemed, at first, as though he could hardly believe her, as though he fancied that she was still unsettled. He could not realize the happiness that was really his. He found, at last, that it was true, and then his delight knew no bounds.

Lady Smeaton was delighted.

"You have come to your senses, Vivien, at last," she said; "though why you have acted in so strange a fashion puzzles me."

And Vivien did not wonder at it; looking back, she was almost puzzled at herself.

The marriage took place in June, and perhaps there never was one that gave more general satisfaction.

One of the newspapers containing a full account of it was sent to America, and read there by a lonely desolate man, who bent his head over the paper, weeping bitter tears.

"She will be happy at last," said Gerald Dorman, "while I shall never know what happiness means."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Married and happy." It seemed to Lady St. Just, when she heard the bells chime on her wedding-day, that she had reached the end of her troubles at last. She was in one of the highest positions that fall to the lot of women uncorrupted. She was mistress of Lancewood, with its large revenues; she was also mistress of King's Rest. Lord St. Just was one of the wealthiest peers in England. She had almost boundless wealth—boundless love. What more could woman desire?

Yet as she thought of these splendors, of her riches and her magnificence, she told herself, "My sin will keep me humble before Heaven and man."

It was so. There was no kinder, more considerate, more thoughtful or charitable woman in England than Lady

St. Just; above all was she tender, compassionate, and loving to little children.

He looked at the beautiful, earnest, noble face, and smiled.

"How you love children, Vivien!" he said. "I almost wish I were a child; you would love me more."

"I could not love you better, dear," she responded. And the words rose to her lips, "I once wronged a child," but she did not utter them.

So in every way she tried to make reparation for the wrong done.

Then came news from Paris—"Miladi" had married the Comte de Calloux after all, and sent her wedding-cards to Lady St. Just. Her husband wished her to ignore them, and he wondered why to this woman whom he knew she disliked Vivien sent a magnificent present. It seemed to her some kind of reparation, so she did it.

Lord St. Just studied how to please his wife in every way. Knowing how well she loved Lancewood, he spent six months of every year there, and within the walls of the Abbey, recently the scene of light revelry, were gathered some of the noblest and wisest men in England. Lord St. Just was a keen politician—nothing delighted him more than the interest his wife took in his affairs. She was of considerable assistance to him; she entertained the noble statesmen who gathered round him. Many a Gordian knot was cut by her quick womanly wit; many a strong and noble measure, blessed by half the country, was first discussed at Lancewood.

She was wonderfully happy; there were times when she bent her beautiful head in mute, lowly thanks to Heaven, wondering that so much mercy, so much pity had been shown to her—wondering why she had been preserved to enjoy such blessings as fall to the lot of few.

Then a son and heir was born—heir of King's Rest and his father's title. That increased her happiness, yet brought the past more vividly than ever before her. She never looked in the face of her own child without thinking of little Oswald, buried in a far-off land.

But his mother had not loved him as she loved her boy. She had cared only for the prosperity that her child brought her, not for the boy himself.

To be Continued.

CHINESE PROVERBS.

An indication of the Chinese character can be inferred from the nature of their proverbs. A few of them are as follows: "If the blind lead the blind they will both go to the pit." "An old man marrying a young wife is like a withered willow sprouting." "A wife should excel in four things, virtue, speech, deportment and needlework." "Every day cannot be a Feast of Lanterns." "Would you look at the character of a Prince, look at his Minister, or the disposition of a man, observe his companion, or that of a father, mark his son." The higher a rat creeps up a cow's horn the narrower he finds it." "Let us get drunk to-day while we have wine; the sorrows of tomorrow may be borne by to-morrow."

AN AID TO MEMORY.

Magistrate, to prisoner—Did you really call this old gentleman an imbecile and an idiot last night?

Prisoner, trying to collect his thoughts—The longer I look at him the more probable it seems to me that I did.

An Honored Physician,

Trusted and Admired by Tens of Thousands of Grateful Cured Ones is Dr. W. A. Chase.

First, by his famous Recipe Book, and later by his great family remedies, Dr. Chase proved his wonderful skill as a conqueror of disease. A grateful world now rises to call him blessed and to tell of the incalculable benefits derived from the use of his great prescriptions.

ECZEMA ON THE HEAD.

Mrs. Joseph Querin, Ethel, Huron Co., Ont., writes:—"I was troubled with eczema on the head and face for about 9 years. My head was a mass of scabs, and though I tried the doctors I was all the time getting worse. I finally began to use Dr. Chase's Ointment, and to my surprise obtained relief from the first application. Three boxes have cured me, and I would not begrudge \$200 for the benefit I have derived from this great remedy. Dr. Chase's Ointment is of almost daily use in the home, and I would advise everybody to keep some on hand."

WEAK AND NERVOUS.

Mrs. J. M. Bradley, 100 Jane street, Ottawa, states:—"For several years I have been gradually running down in health; I was very nervous and weak, and worried greatly over my future.

Hearing of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food and the wonderful results it has accomplished in others, I obtained a box and began using it as directed. I began to improve immediately, and am now restored to full health and vigor."

"Dr. Chase's Nerve Food is an excellent remedy, and I can recommend it to all who are weak, nervous, or run down in health."

KIDNEY BACKACHE.

Mr. D. Vid. McLesch, 279 Slater St., Ottawa, Ont., states:—"I was troubled with kidney disease and backache for four or five years and have used very many remedies without obtaining permanent benefits. Some time ago I began using Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, and found them to be the best medicine I ever used. Their use took away that kidney backache, and made me feel better in every way, gave me refreshing sleep, and made my digestion good."

Imitators of Dr. Chase's Remedies do not dare to reproduce his portrait and signature, which are to be found on every box of his genuine remedies. At all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates and Co., Toronto.

LAUGH AND GET WELL.

People Who Would be Healthy Should Not be Afraid to Laugh.

"Laugh and grow fat," is a saying that contains a deal of truth, and is worthy of attention by many sufferers in body as well as in mind. We instinctively associate jollity with rotundity, and a sour disposition with a spare form. The rule is, of course, not without exceptions, for we often see people with little propensity, to take on fat who are full of fun and sunshine. Such persons are not boisterous, however. They are possessed it may be, of a quiet humor, are happy and make others happy, and they smile easily and perhaps laugh softly; but they do not laugh loud, and certainly they do not cachinnate.

The convulsive movements which we call laughter exert a very real effect upon the physical organism. They cause the arteries to dilate, so that they carry more blood to the tissues of the body, and the heart to beat more rapidly, so that the flow of the blood through the vessels is hastened. In other words, laughter promotes the very best conditions for an increase of the vital processes—the tissues take up more nutritive material and the waste products are more promptly removed.

Not only is laughter an accompaniment and an expression of joy, but it even creates joy. Often a good laugh, excited in spite of oneself, will change the current of thought, and impart a general rosy tint to what was before of the deepest blue.

This happy effect is due in part to the increased flow of blood to the brain, and the consequent better working of the instrument of thought and partly to the fact that when a mental state and a physical act are associated, the physical state being usually induced by the mental act, the performance of the physical act even if at first perfunctory, will in time induce the mental state corresponding to it.

The doctors have hardly yet learned what a valuable curative power there is in laughter. It is a precious, and health-giving tonic, often more efficacious than bitters and iron, and far pleasanter to take.

Let the dyspeptic, the bilious, the melancholy, and those who seem to be wasting away without any discoverable cause, take a course of funny stories and humorous books; let them retire to their closets or to the woods, and laugh out loud for a few minutes two or three times a day; and when they have done this for a month or two, let them tell their friends the secret of their improved health.

FRILLS OF FASHION.

Wraps for elderly women are made to a great extent of black taffeta. Gold buttons, and, in fact, buttons of every description, are much employed.

Fringe, especially white or black, asserts itself, in many of the new gowns.

In lace effects the very newest whim is the lace coat, which may be long and close-fitting or short and loose.

Linsens of all tints and weights are extremely fashionable, and some of the prettiest are made of pure linen toweling.

When summer heat is at its highest, both white and beige linen two-piece suits, tailor-made of course, are to be much worn.

The shirt waist is found developed in flannel, silks—plain, and trimmed, percale, madras, embroidery, lace, and even mousseline de soie.

Pretty handkerchiefs of delicate tints, such as heliotrope, sky, rose, etc., embroidered in one corner with a very dainty white initial.

Dainty boleros of tucked or plaited taffetas, seams and edges, finished with bands of peau de soie and entirely lined with white satin, are very swell.

The latest novelty in the jewelry line is the friendship fob, which is a silk ribbon with from five to nine or ten sterling silver hearts and sterling mountings.

The lace cravats, threaded with black velvet ribbons are very popular, velvet ribbon being an important feature in the decoration of many stylish costumes.

Shirring is very much in evidence on the new thin gowns. Skirts are shirred around the top, sleeves from the shoulder to the elbow, and usually there is a shirred yoke to match.

A New York concern has produced a straw sailor hat with an unbreakable brim. This will be welcome news to both men and women wearers. This hat can be rolled like a hoop without damage to the edge.

The sash is an important feature of the summer gown, the most handsome ones being embroidered in floral or other artistic designs, some finishing in fringe. The majority of the new sashes are wide and of very delicate coloring.