

# Through Storm and Sunshine

## CHAPTER XLII.

The houses in Victoria street are all of one class, large, respectable, and airy. Many of them are let in apartments, and the lodgers are most of them professional men—artists whose studios are in other localities, musicians who find the central situation most useful, authors and editors, whose ambition is perhaps higher than their means of gratifying it, surgeons of good professional standing. It is a quiet, respectable street, neither lively nor dull, but where people take a quiet interest in each other, and the occasional disappearance of an apparently well-to-do resident filled the rest with concern.

Lady St. Just had never been in the street before. She looked anxiously for the number which Gerald Dorman had given, and when the cab stopped, she looked even more anxiously at the house. It was a large house, with green balconies and a small garden in front—the very ideal of respectability. A few sad-looking flowers grew in the little garden; the windows all had green venetians and white curtains. "Shall I go in with you, my lady?" asked Joan, as the cab stopped. "No," said Lady St. Just. "And no matter how long I am, remain here till I return."

In answer to the summons at the door a servant-maid appeared, and she looked wonderingly at Lady St. Just. Vivien had dressed herself as plainly as possible, but she could not hide the magnificence of her figure or the grand, noble beauty of her face. The girl stared at the unusual vision, and Lady St. Just asked if she could see Mr. Dorman.

"I don't know. They say he is dying," replied the girl.

Lady St. Just recoiled at the words. Poor Gerald, to lie dying there! "Shall I fetch my mistress or the nurse?" asked the girl.

"The nurse," replied Vivien; and in a few minutes the maid returned with her, a kind, clever-looking woman, who courted her profoundly.

"You are the lady, I think," she said, "whom Mr. Dorman wishes to see?"

"Yes," answered Vivien; "I will go to him at once, if you please. Is he any better?"

"No," replied the nurse; "I am sorry to say Mr. Dorman will never be any better in this world, madam. I do not think he has many hours to live; but he told me this morning that he could not die until he had seen you."

Again the words struck her with all the force of a blow. What did they mean?

"Will you follow me, madam?" asked the nurse, who, like the servant, was struck by the wonderful grace and magnificent beauty of the visitor.

She followed the nurse up the stairs into a large, well-lighted, well-furnished room. A bedstead with crimson hangings occupied the middle; on it lay Gerald.

She saw the white face, wan, haggard, with a gray shade on it; she saw two large, wistful, almost despairing eyes, gazed and terrible, that fastened on her face with a hungry look; she saw the white hands, so thin and trembling, stretched out to greet her, and she knelt down by his bedside unable to resist her tears.

"Vivien," he whispered—and in all her life Lady St. Just had never heard anything so terrible as that voice—"have you come at last—at last?" and the dying eyes seemed to drink in every feature of her beautiful face. "At last—at last! and I have waited such long hours—dark, dreary hours; and death—see, death stands here by my side, but he would not lay his hand upon me until you had been—you, my queen, my darling, my only love!"

She raised her head with a warning gesture.

"Yes, I know," he said, "you are another man's wife, but none the less my darling, none the less my love, none the less my idol, though you have never loved me!"

"My poor Gerald," she said gently, "you were such a faithful friend to me—so good and so true."

"Yes, and I am dying because I love you so. I have tried my best; I have tried to live without you, to fill my life with other cares. I could not, so I lie here."

"My poor Gerald!" she said, with weeping eyes.

"Rich Gerald," he corrected. "I have lived for you, my beautiful, proud, stately love—lived, sinned, suffered. I also die for you. You will remember that, and not think hardly of me. I know," he said faintly, "that the love of you constituted my life; but I did not think I should miss you so greatly,

so terribly. Vivien, may I hold your hand in mine just once? I am a dying man, dear, dying for you."

She took the worn white hand in her own, and held it in her warm clasp.

"Vivien," he said, "I am thirsting to hear something—tell me, have you been happy since you married? Do not imagine that there is any foolish jealousy in my heart—but I want to know. I want to know if you have been happy."

His eyes were fixed on her face with such desperate earnestness—with such almost fierce craving for her answer. "Tell me," he said, "have you been happy? Tell me all."

"Yes," she replied; "I have been happy."

A sudden, almost beautiful light came over his face. She saw how the words delighted him, and she continued—

"I have been so happy that the world has been like Paradise to me. I love my husband dearly, Gerald; he is noble and generous, he is devoted to me, and spends his life in making me happy. Then I have two beautiful children. Oh, Gerald, how I wish you had come to our house instead of lying all alone here! I would have nursed you and cared for you as though I were your own sister."

"Never mind about me," he said, faintly; "tell me more about your happiness."

"It is so great," she replied, "that it is perfect. I am beloved and happy, Gerald; the days are all bright. What more can I say?"

"You tell me that for these past few years you who have suffered so much have been perfectly happy?" he said.

"Yes," she replied, "perfectly."

"And, tell me, Vivien—clasp my hand more tightly, dear, it is so cold—if you had never been married you would never have been happy?"

"No," she replied, "never."

"Then I am content," he said. "And, Vivien, you would never have married had you not known that Oswald was dead?"

"Never," she replied, "I would never have married with that awful secret on my soul. But, Gerald, that is all past, do not speak of it. I have repented; I have prayed for pardon through long days and long nights; I have been kind to every child for the sake of that one. Do not speak of it."

She saw a gray, terrible look come over his face.

"You have been quite happy, dear, for the past few years?" he repeated.

"Yes," Gerald, she answered; "but why do you ask?"

"You may hate me when I tell you—you may almost curse my name; but I loved you so I was determined that you should be happy, no matter what it cost me, no matter what I suffered, or how I sinned. I would have died over and over again to make you happy."

"But, Gerald," she asked, the same terrible sickening fear overpowering her, "what is it—what have you done?"

"Do not hate me, Vivien. Stoop down lower that I may whisper. Love—my love—Oswald is not dead, but living!"

She threw up her arms with a terrible cry—a cry like that of one drowning—a cry so shrill in its agony and despair that the dying man was alarmed at it.

"It cannot be true," she gasped rather than spoke; "it is too cruel, it cannot be true!"

"It is true. I swear it before Heaven!" he said faintly, and then for some minutes there was silence between them—an awful silence, more terrible than the quietness of death. The face raised to him then was in that short space of time quite changed; the rich coloring, the happy light, the proud, serene calmness were gone, never to return. It was a terrible face, even ghastly in its pallor.

"It cannot be true, Gerald," she repeated; "it is too cruel, it cannot be true!"

"It is as true as Heaven," he declared.

"But why did you act so? It was cruel, pitiless. Why did you deceive me?"

"Because I wanted you to be happy. I saw that you loved me very dearly; and I saw that you would be wretched all your life away from that one."

"Not half so wretched as I am now," she returned. "It was cruel of you, Gerald."

"I did not mean it to be so," he said, faintly. "I saw that you were unhappy, and that you would never

marry while this secret lay between you and the man you loved. You know, Vivien, that I would have died for you. When I saw you so miserable, I asked myself what I could do to make you happy; and I knew from what you had said that you could never be happy while the boy lived."

He lay quite still for some moments, and then he continued—

"May Heaven pardon me, Vivien, but I loved you so well that I could almost have destroyed him to render you happy. Another idea came to me—to make you believe he was dead. It was for that I went to America. I could not see any other way. I was very kind to the boy; he loved me very much—he loves me now. I took him away from my brother—he traveled with me; and then I deceived my brother as much as you, for I made him believe the boy was dead."

"How could you? How could you?" she sobbed. All her strength, all her courage, had given way at last, and she was weeping like a child.

"It was easy to deceive my brother. He is a bookworm, a scholar; a good man; but he takes no interest in the world or what goes on in it. Nothing ever surprises him; he is never sorry, never glad. Years ago, when I took the boy to him, he said, 'Is he your son, Gerald?' and when I bade him ask no questions, he asked none. He is unlike every one else. It was easy to deceive him. I told him that his charge was ended, that the boy was dead, and that he could return home. He asked no question, he made no comment—he returned, and I remained. Vivien, I meant to bring the boy up as my own, and never to tell you; but I found that I could not live. I worked hard to keep him and myself. I spent all my annuity on him. I brought him back to England when I found that I could not live, and he is here; but, Vivien, listen."

She ceased her passionate weeping and looked at him.

"Listen, beloved," he said. "He has listened so completely; he is not the boy he was—cunning, false, undisciplined; our training has done him some good. He is not perfect—far from it—but he is a better boy than he was."

"Where is he?" she asked.

"I placed him in the best school I could find—Dr. Lester's, of Hamersmith. He is there as Henry Dorman. He has wanted for nothing, Vivien—you believe that?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am sure of it. But it was a cruel deception—a cruel kindness—a cruel deed. I would rather have died yesterday than have heard this to-day."

"Still you have been happy, my beloved?"

"Yes, but all my happiness is over now," she replied, with a bitter cry—"all over. I can never be happy again."

"I did it because I loved you, and could not endure to see you suffer. I meant only kindness—only love. I knew that if you believed the boy dead and buried your last scruple would be removed, and you would be happy. I knew that while you believed him living you would never know one moment's peace. Oh, pardon me, my beloved!"

He held out his white, worn hands. "See how I have suffered," he said, sadly, "I was a strong man once, and a good man. See to what my love for you has led me. I have stained my soul by sin, and my strength has left me. I have loved you so that I am dying for you. Now I know what

it is to waste one's heart—to garner the whole strength of a soul, and lavish it in vain. Now I say to myself, with contrite tears, that I ought to have thought of Heaven as I have thought of you."

"My poor Gerald," she said, "that is a terrible love."

"I know it—it has killed me. I have never had any hope in it. You were proud, stately, beautiful—I was only a poor dependent. I never dreamed of any return; but just as a flower gives its perfume to the sun, gives its all, gives it freely, asking no return, so I was willing to live and to die for you. I wanted no return. I laid my honor, my truth, my honesty, my very manhood, under your feet. I would have sinned even more deeply to make you happy. I loved you better than myself."

"But, Gerald," she said, gently, "why have you told me your secret? I was so happy in my ignorance. Why have you not kept your secret to the end?"

The sad dying eyes seemed to fill with a sudden light.

"Because I could not die with it untold. I have lingered on in the agony of death and could not die. You cannot see what I see, beloved. Here by my side stands the grim king, sword in hand. It would not fall until I had told you—until justice was done. I could live in sin—I dared not die in it."

"Still, I cannot see why you should have told me," she moaned, "I was so happy, Gerald."

"Listen, beloved," he said again. "Justice must be done; the boy must go back to Lancelwood."

"Never," she cried hastily—"never! All our sin and suffering shall not have been in vain."

"But I say it must be done, Vivien. You must do justice; you must restore the inheritance to the boy."

A sharp spasm of pain passed over his livid face. Lady St. Just laid his head down on the pillow, she smoothed back his hair from his brow; his face grew more calm again.

"Vivien," he whispered, faintly, "once, long ago, when I was going away from you, you kissed me, and the memory of that moment has never left me. Beloved, kiss me again, for I am dying for you."

She laid her fresh warm lips on his, already growing cold and chill. She saw a strange change come over his face, and she rose hastily and called the nurse.

"I am afraid Mr. Dorman is worse," she said.

The nurse looked at him.

"He is dying, madam," she told her. He opened his eyes, which were filled with a strange, deep shadow, and fixed them on Vivien's face. She saw his lips move, and bent over him.

"The boy must go back to Lancelwood," he said, with labored breath. "Promise me."

She made no answer.

"Promise me," he repeated, and before her answer came Gerald Dorman was dead.

To Be Continued.

## FEMINE INVENTIVE GENIUS.

Miss Van Nilla—The Scientific News says ice-cream freezers were invented by a woman.

Mr. Promenod—I don't believe it.

Miss Van Nilla—Humph! Perhaps you think women incapable of inventing anything?

Mr. Promenod—N—o. Women doubtless invented ice-cream saloons.

## DANGEROUS PRISONER.

A Hunter's Terrible Experience With a Leopard.

Old Joe Massy, a famous hunter of Natal, some of whose reminiscences are printed in the Cape Magazine, was paying a visit to his old friend Jim Neil, who had given up elephant-hunting and settled in the thickly wooded country, which borders the Mooli River. On account of the depredations of a wary leopard, the settler had been compelled to confine his sheep at night in a shed built of rough stones. Even this precaution had proved ineffectual.

One day, after the arrival of Massy Neil returned from town with a huge steel trap. But the leopard disappeared for a time, and the men were about to let the flock sleep outside again when the natives reported another victim. Thereupon the trap was set, and the next night an excited native rushed in.

"Baas, baas! De teiger cot! De teiger cot!" he cried.

Seizing their guns, the two hunters rushed out. It was a dark night, the natural obscurity being increased by a thick mist. Neil called for a light, and a native presently brought a lantern. Guided by its rays, they entered the enclosure and flashed the light on the trap.

A huge leopard was crouching by its eyes flashing in the darkness. Neil took careful aim and fired. The leopard, which had been caught by its hind leg, had been caught by a thick mist. Neil called for a light, and a native presently brought a lantern. Guided by its rays, they entered the enclosure and flashed the light on the trap.

At this juncture the native, in his fright, dropped the lantern, and the hunters were left in darkness, in close proximity to the fierce animal. It was not a pleasant position, but eventually a Zulu put a larger lantern on the end of a whip-stick and passed it over into the enclosure. The writer says:

"I heard a report, and can now recall the wild roar of mangled fury and triumph with which the leopard, freeing himself by a last tremendous effort, dashed past me and sprang upon Neil. In the fitful light I could hardly make out the old man, as with gun clubbed he fought off the savage brute.

"Again man and beast struggled into the light, and then disappeared as they rolled together on the floor of the kraal. I was afraid to fire, as the least mistake might be fatal to my companion, yet immediate action was necessary, for the old man's strength was ebbing fast.

"Bearing the lantern aloft, and holding my gun pistol-wise, I approached the combatants. A chance move of the leopard's as he gained the ascendancy exposed his body, and I drew the trigger. The charge, a heavy one of slugs, passed through his lions, and with a growl he loosened his hold and slunk away into the darkness.

"With the assistance of the natives, I carried Neil into the house, and although much scratched and torn, he was soon on a fair way to recovery. The leopard was found in the morning dead near by, and the old man almost forgot his wounds in contemplating the animal's skin."

## A MUSICAL FAMILY.

A gentleman of decided and highly cultivated musical tastes, wishing to change his residence, advertised for rooms in "a private family fond of music." The next mail brought him the following reply:

Dear Sir: I think we could accommodate you with rooms, and as for music, one of my daughters plays the parlor organ and guitar; another one plays the accordion and banjo; I play a cornet and fiddle; my wife plays the harmonica, and my son the flute. We all sing, and if you are good at tenor singing you would fit right in when we get to singing gospel hymns evenings, for none of us sing tenor. Or if you play the base vial we have one right here in the house. If you want music as well as board we could accommodate you, and there would be no extra charge for it.

The trembling Boxer knelt before Li Hung Chang and strove to explain matters. I must have lost my head. I see no other reason why I engaged in the uprising. Oh, Son of the Blue Sky, he wailed. You are a trifle off in your grammar, interposed Li. You should say; I will have lost my head. And the executioner stepped forward at the proper signal.

## TEST THE KIDNEYS,

And if they are diseased use the World's Greatest Kidney Cure.

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It's a simple matter to test the kidneys. You need not consult a doctor. By asking yourself three questions, you can determine whether or not your kidneys are deranged.

First—"Have you backache or weak, lame back?"

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In its early stages kidney disease is readily cured by a few boxes of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, a preparation which has made Dr. Chase famous throughout the world for his wonderful cure of diseases of the kidneys.

If you have kidney disease you can take Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills with perfect confidence that what has proved an absolute cure in so many thousands of cases will not fail you. So long as the cells of the kidneys are not completely wasted away, as in the last stages of Bright's Disease, Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills will give them new vigor and strength and absolutely cure kidney disease. One pill a dose, 25 cents a box, at all dealers, or EDMANSON, BATES & Co., Toronto, Ont.