

Through Storm and Sunshine

CHAPTER XLIII.

Her husband's words made a great impression on Lady St. Just. She knew they were true. She had room for no other thought in her mind but the thought of the child Oswald. She took note, and found that for hours together she did nothing but think and ponder. She could never have been a real criminal—she had too keen a conscience. She could take Lancelwood from this boy because she did not think him worthy to hold it; but she could not forget the boy's existence. She must see him, care for him, advance his interests in life—do anything, in fact, except give him his inheritance.

"One thing is plain," she said to herself; "if I wish to keep my secret, I must not let it absorb me so entirely." The very expression of her face seemed to have changed; it was full of dreamy, absorbed thought, the life and animation had almost left it.

"I shall be better when I have seen the boy," she thought. "I am haunted by a thousand fears and a thousand thoughts that will be laid as ghosts are laid when I have seen him."

That soon became her one great object, and the day came that brought her a very fair chance of achieving it. Lord St. Just went with some friends to Gravesend; there was a government inquiry about some naval matters that required his attention. He would be absent the whole day, and on that day Lady St. Just resolved to go to Hammersmith.

As when she visited Gerald Dorman, she dressed herself as plainly as possible—a black silk dress that showed some signs of wear, a dark traveling-cloak, a bonnet with a thick veil.

Thus attired, who would recognize the beautiful and magnificent Lady St. Just?

She contrived to leave the house without being seen, having sent John Hubley out previously. She walked some little distance and then took a cab.

"It is a long drive," was the man's comment when she gave the address. "You shall be well paid for it," she replied, with sublime ignorance of a cabman's peculiarities.

Her heart beat loud and fast as the cab stopped before a large square house standing back from the road and surrounded by trees. "Grove House Academy," she read on the large brass plate.

"You will wait for me," she said, as the man opened the door—"I may be some time."

The man seated himself on his box, took out his newspaper, and mentally congratulated himself on being "in for a good thing."

The door was opened by a footman, who said that Dr. Lester was not in, but that Mr. Hardman, the head-master, was.

"I want to see one of the young gentlemen, a Master Henry Dorman. Is he here?"

"Yes, please step this way, and I will fetch him," was the reply.

She was shown into a small ante-room, with nothing very cheerful to recommend it—it contained a square table, a few horse-hair chairs, a pair of globes, and a large map. All view from the window was cut off by a thick wire blind.

Lady St. Just sat down. Her heart was beating fast, her limbs trembled—she could not stand. She was to see him again, Valerie's son, the child she had deprived of his inheritance, the heir of Lancelwood, the descendant of a French strolling player, the boy she had hushed in her arms, had tried to teach, and had given up in despair.

She threw back her heavy veil, and seemed to gasp for breath; her lips burned like fire; then she drew down her veil, and tried to calm her terrible agitation. She heard footsteps.

A tall, elderly gentleman entered the room, who introduced himself as Mr. Hardman, the head-master. He looked curiously at the beautiful face half hidden by the veil.

"You wish to see one of our boys, madam—Henry Dorman? He is an orphan, I believe. May I ask if you know any of his relatives?"

"I knew his mother," she replied. "I should like to see him, although he would not know me. I knew his mother when he was quite a little child."

"We are obliged to be cautious," said Mr. Hardman. "As a rule, we require a note from the parents or relations before any one is allowed to see any of the boys. But in this case I can dispense with the formality." He had recognized the musical, refined voice of a lady. "I will send young Dorman to you—madam," he said, as he quitted the room.

Ah, Heaven, if her heart would but beat less wildly—if the clinging mist would but pass from before her eyes—if her trembling hands would but grow still!

When had she seen Oswald last? She remembered the day and the hour. He had said a lesson correctly to poor dead Gerald, and, as a reward, she gave him a ball he had been longing for.

"You are a good sister, Vivien," he had said, as he ran laughing from the room. A good sister! The words returned to her with a keen pang.

Before the door opened she heard a laughing voice say—

"Some one to see me, James? You must be mistaken. No one ever comes to see me."

"You will see for yourself, Master Dorman," was the answer; and then he stood before her.

Her eyes almost devoured him. Her breath came in thick hot gasps as she looked at him. How was she to hide him? How was she to hide her sin?

She saw before her a tall, slender boy with Valerie's golden-brown hair, and Valerie's eyes. There all resemblance to his mother ended. The face was exactly like her own—a true Neslie face. There was no mistaking it—no passing it by unnoticed. He looked up at her with bright, fearless, laughing eyes so like Valerie's.

"Are you quite sure," he said "that you want to see me? I did not think any one in the wide world knew me."

She took his hands in hers; all her heart went out in pity to the desolate, lonely boy.

"I knew your mother, Master Dorman," she said, "when you were quite a little child."

"I wish I had known her," he returned. "When all the other boys talk about their mothers, I wonder what mine was like."

"Do you not remember her?" she asked.

"I remember two faces," said the boy. "I think one was very fair and laughing, the other dark and beautiful, but I cannot tell whether either of them was my mother. I remember the faces only indistinctly, like a vague dream. Did you know my mother?"

How her heart ached for him, warmed to him, beat with passionate pain! She would do anything for him except give up Lancelwood.

"Yes, I knew her. Because I knew her I have come to see you."

"How did you know that I was here?" he asked; and the question puzzled her.

"I heard it by accident," she replied, "and I thought I should like to see you."

"For my mother's sake?" he interrupted; and she could not say it was for Valerie's.

"I shall come and see you sometimes," she continued, "and, if there is anything you would like, I will bring it."

"There are many things I should like. I should like a good bat for cricketing, and a bow and arrow."

"Would you?" asked Vivien, with a brightened face. "Then you shall have them."

It was some little comfort even to give him those things.

"I shall be passing by here next week," she told him, "and I will bring them to you."

"That is very good of you," said the boy; and the voice was so entirely like Valerie's, that she was startled.

She saw him looking intently at her veiled face.

"You have not told me yet who you are," he said, laughingly.

"You would not know my name if I told it to you," she replied; "you will easily remember Mrs. Smith."

"Are you Mrs. Smith?" he asked. "We have five Smiths in this school, and the boys say that the doctor will not take another. Mrs. Smith, did you know my father?"

"Heaven pardon me!" she sighed from the depths of her heart. His father was her own.

"Yes," she replied, in a low faint voice.

"He and my mother are both dead," sighed the boy. "I have been in America with my uncle, Mr. Dorman. Now he is dead, and I am quite alone in the world."

"Was Mr. Dorman your uncle?" she asked.

"Yes. I used to call him Uncle Dorman."

"And where did he live?" asked Lady St. Just.

"I think he had always lived in America," replied the boy, thoughtfully; "he never spoke of England to me when we were in New York. We came to England together. He placed me here at school, and now he is dead."

"He was very kind to you?" she said,

"Yes—no one could have been kinder," answered the lad. "I cannot remember going to America—I should not think I was more than five years old when I went."

"You were a young traveler," she said.

"Yes I went with some one who was always reading and studying—he never seemed to remember that I was alive. He used to look at me in such surprise and say 'Oh, little boy!' I cannot remember how I went from him to Uncle Dorman."

"Did your uncle never tell you, never speak to you, of any one whom he knew—of England, of any friends?"

"No," said the boy—"never."

"Then," thought Lady St. Just, "I am quite safe; there is no link here. He does not know the name of Lancelwood; there is nothing to connect him with it in any way. Even should any one know he had an 'Uncle Dorman,' who would never dream that this uncle, who he says lived in America, was Gerald Dorman who lived at Lancelwood. I am quite safe; there is no connecting link whatever."

"I shall be very kind to you," she said; "I shall bring you everything that you like. Have you plenty of pocket-money?"

"Are you any relation to me?" asked the boy, curiously. "Do you know, I fancy that I have heard your voice before, it is just like music; and it seems to me that years ago I heard one just like it. May I see your face? Your veil is so thick."

She hesitated a moment, and then she said to herself, "There can be no danger; he does not even know the name of Lancelwood—he will not remember me."

"See my face?" she replied. "Yes, certainly—I am rude to have talked to you all this time with my veil down."

She threw it back, and the boy looked long at the beautiful face.

"Why, you are like a picture, Mrs. Smith!" he said. "I wonder if I have ever dreamed about you."

"How could you dream about me?" she asked.

"I do not know; all my thoughts are so confused, so vague, so like dreams. Now that I look at your face, I think I have seen one like it once."

"Where?" she asked, in sudden fear. "I cannot tell you where," he laughed; "I only remember a background of trees and a face like yours looking sorrowfully at me. I do not remember it when you smile, but I do when you look serious. Have I ever seen before?"

"I have never been to America," she replied, evasively.

"Then I cannot have seen it. I am glad you know me, Mrs. Smith; it is very dull all alone here. Perhaps some day, when you are not very busy, you will take me out—I have never been out since I came."

"Poor child—poor boy!" she said, her beautiful eyes growing dim.

"I shall soon be old enough to go out by myself," he told her proudly. "You will come to see me again?" he added.

"Yes," she replied, "I will come again."

She bent her stately head and kissed the brow so like her own. The boy blushed.

"I do not remember that any one has ever done that before," he said. "Good-bye, Mrs. Smith."

In another minute she had left him, standing thinking about her face, and how he had come to dream about her.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Lady St. Just could not, forget her half-brother. She had fancied that going to see Oswald would put an end

to the intensity of her thought about him. It did not. His face never left her by night or by day. She admired him very much. He was tall for his age, with a fine, well-built figure. She was startled, too, when she looked in the glass, to see how much her face was like his. He had Valerie's eyes and Valerie's hair, but the true Neslie mouth and brow.

She was of a loving, tender disposition, and the thought of this boy alone in the world, with no one to visit him, no one to care for him, desolate and lonely, touched her with keenest pain.

"I took him from mother, home, and friends," she thought. "I must make it up to him—I must do all I can for him."

But the consciousness of the difference between his position as heir of Lancelwood and as an unknown boy in a boarding school was great—and that was what troubled her. She silenced the pleading of her own heart with an iron hand; she would hear none of it. It was for the best—he would have ruined Lancelwood.

She had found her first visit to the school so uncommonly easy that she took Oswald the cricket-bat he had called again and again. She longed for; she gave him pocket-money; she gratified every whim and wish of the boy.

"You are very kind to me, Mrs. Smith," he would say—"what shall I do for you in return? Is it all for my mother's sake?"

"I have learned to like you for your own," she replied.

He noticed that she always seemed to have a difficulty with his name—she paused slightly before uttering it.

"You do not like my name," he said to her one day.

"What makes you say that?" she asked.

"Because you always hesitate before you say it. If you do not like Henry, call me Harry—the doctor always calls me Harry."

She knew that her impulse always was to call him Oswald, but she could not tell him so.

"Shall you ever take me out?" he asked her one day.

"Not at present," she replied. "You shall have a long holiday—you shall go to the seaside; but you must wait awhile."

To Be Continued.

THE SERGEANT WAS COOL.

Towards the close of the battle of Paardeberg Lord Kitchener, when returning from an interview with Lord Roberts, came upon a sergeant carrying canteens of water for the wounded. A cannon ball came bounding over the hill and knocked off the sergeant's helmet, who coolly picked it up, brushed it with his sleeve, and carefully placed it on his head again turned to salute Lord Kitchener, who admiring his coolness, remarked, "A narrow shave, that, my man." The sergeant replied, again saluting, "A miss is as good as a mile, sir."

DEFLECTION OF FUNDS.

Have your summer vacation plans matured yet, Billy?

Oh, yes, but they had to be sidetracked on account of some summer notes that also matured.

TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING FUNNY.

David, they've sent us a whole gallon of ice cream by mistake.

All right; well eat it, and pay for the half gallon we ordered. Then, the next time we feel like having ice cream we'll go pay for the other half gallon.

Summer Sufferings of Women.

It requires an enormous amount of vitality to withstand the weakening and trying effects of the withering summer weather, to overcome the languid, worn-out feelings, and to fight off the fevers and dreadful fatal diseases which are especially prevalent in the summer time, and ever ready to attack those in a low state of health.

There is nothing so trying on the system, as the hot, summer weather, and none who suffer more from the heat than the woman with the cares of a family on her hands, requiring work in the hot kitchen and over the stove. Many a worn-out, despondent woman who could scarcely drag herself about the house has been restored to health and strength by the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, pills, the great blood builder and nerve restorative.

Mrs. D. W. Cransberry, 163 Richmond St. West, Toronto, Ont., states:—"My daughter got completely run down in health. Her nerves were so exhausted and she was so weak and debilitated that she had to give up

work entirely and was almost a victim of nervous prostration.

"Hearing of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food pills, she began to use it and was benefited from the very first. It proved an excellent remedy in restoring her to health and strength. After having used four boxes she is now at work again, healthy and happy, and attributes her recovery to the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, pills."

As a summer medicine to revitalize the brain, the spinal cord, the nerves, and through them the entire human body, Dr. Chase's Nerve Food is unrivalled and unapproached. It increases the number of red corpuscles in the blood, creates new nerve force and entirely overcomes the wretched languid and worn out feelings of summer. Disease can find no foothold when the blood is kept pure and rich and the nerves strong by using this great restorative.

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, pills, 50 cents a box, at all dealers or by mail post paid on receipt of price, from Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

IN MERRY OLD ENGLAND

WHAT JOHN BULL AND HIS PEOPLE ARE DOING.

Record of Occurrences in the Land That Reigns Supreme in the Commercial World.

British locomotive firms have work on hand for 12 to 18 months.

A youth cannot be sent to Sandhurst for much less than £250 per annum. London has 600,000 houses. Paris has 90,000 houses. New York has 115,000.

One year's sweepings of the British Mint yields over £1000 in gold and silver.

Municipal electric launches instead of steamboats are now mooted for the Thames.

A new building slip is to be constructed at Chatham Dockyard at a cost of £150,000.

The lawn at Buckingham Palace is large enough to allow ample room for over 2,000 men to manoeuvre.

Statistics show that the total consumption of paper in the British Isles is as much as 1,047,000 tons a year.

The British Government used 124,000 gallons of corn whiskey last year in the manufacture of smokeless powder.

The lowering of the height standard by the military authorities is believed to have caused a boom in enlistment.

The British Houses of Parliament are partly lit by 40,000 electric lamps, a number which is being constantly increased.

In the remote parish of Markby, in Lincolnshire, stands a little thatched church, probably the only one existing in Great Britain.

London can boast of more parks and open spaces, than any city in the world, and their number is being constantly augmented.

The average age of the British soldier now at the front is nearly two years higher than that of the soldier who fought at Waterloo.

A parent, named Jeskins, in an English town, has named the triplets which arrived the other day, Roberts, Buller and Tugela. The latter was a girl baby.

One hundred and ten thousand copies of the New Testament or of St. John's Gospel have been distributed to the British soldiers at the front.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has consented to the grounds of Lambeth Palace being handed over to the London County Council as a public park.

Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, who is almost 92 years old has left his comfortable chambers in London and undertaken a long voyage to British North Borneo.

Princess Beatrice is becoming quite an expert hockey player, and is so devoted to the game that she played nearly every day at Windsor Castle during the winter.

Some one has calculated that the postmen of London walk, together, something like 48,360 miles per day—a distance equal to twice the circumference of the globe.

At the annual meeting of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond street, London, it was intimated that the "Punch" fund had reached no less a sum than £16,400.

Welshmen are proud of Mr. Thomas, who from being a miner in South Wales has risen to the position of being one of the first scholars and preachers in the country.

The Duke of Connaught is to-day, next to the Queen, the most popular member of the Royal Family. His popularity among the soldiers is only equalled by that of Lord Roberts.

The late Mr. John Thomas Bedford, was for nearly 30 years a leading member of the London Corporation, and to him the community is indebted for the preservation of Epping Forest.

The young Marquis of Grahame, the future Duke of Montrose, has adopted the sea as a profession, and has been assisting in the navigation of a trading ship from Australia to England.

The Prince of Wales, pre-eminent as a British Freemason, has been unanimously elected Most Worshipful Grand Master. The Prince has now been a Freemason exactly 32 years. Several of the most distinguished officers now at the front are prominent Masons. Lord Roberts is Past Grand Warden. So is Lord Methuen. Lord Kitchener is Past Grand Warden and District Grand Master of Egypt and the Sudan. Sir Charles Warren is past District Grand Master of the Eastern Archipelago. The Duke of Connaught takes as active an interest in Freemasonry as does his eldest brother.