

A Scourge of Doubt.

OR.....

THE ERROR OF LADY BLUNDEN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Whether October is ashamed of its boisterous entrance, or whether the swift approach of death has softened it (as lies within the power of death to do at times, killing, as it does, all fire and energy), I know not, but to-day is mild and balmy and sweet as one stolen from the middle of September.

There was rain last night. The grave is still wet, and on the green grass and shrubberies lie diamond-drops that glisten and glister in the sunshine; while little spiders' webs, bedecked with heaven's tears, spread themselves like veils of silver gossamer from branch to branch.

A little song is in Gretchen's heart,—one of thanksgiving,—yet she gives no voice to it, loud lilt of any words being impossible to her at this moment. The sunshine gladdens her, seeming as it were a joyful omen of good days yet to come. It harmonizes with her every thought, because to-day—oh, blessed morning!—her Kenneth will return.

She smiles instinctively, almost unconsciously, as, standing on the terrace and looking towards the slumbering ocean, she again assures herself of this fact. Yet, even as she smiles, through very agitation of delight, the tears gather and dwell within her lovely eyes. All the world outside may breathe, and love, and die; what is it to her at this supreme instant, when she is filled with the glad certainty that in an hour or two her lover, her husband, will be clasped in her fond arms.

Going in-doors, she makes her way to his room, and looks around it. Yes, all is in order; it is just as he left it; no faintest flaw can be discovered. She almost wishes it was not so perfect, that there might yet remain something wanting to his comfort that she might arrange for him. Mechanically she pokes the fire, that burns as fiercely as though some salamander dwelling in it is exciting it to open rebellion. What shall she do to cheat time to make the moments fly? Did ever morning pass so slowly?

What if he did not come at all to-day,—if the journey had proved too much for him? She grows pale at the bare thought. But no; he would have sent a telegram in that case; he would not leave her in suspense; and, in spite of her aversion, she has faith in the dark young doctor, and he himself had sent one curt line to say Kenneth would reach home—to-day.

Indeed, her aversion to Dr. Blunt has rather died a natural death, now that he is giving Dugdale back to her alive, and if not better, at least no worse than when they parted. She has Kenneth's own word for that. In his very last letter, though he had not touched on the subject of improvement, he has positively assured her he had not deteriorated in health since last he saw her.

What o'clock is it now? Examining the marble tray of time upon the mantel-piece, she tells herself that in fifteen or twenty minutes, according to the speed the horses may make, he can be here.

Shall she go into the hall to meet him? No,—yes; she hardly knows; a curious nervousness is oppressing her. Oh, that it was all over, and her Kenneth safe within her sight again! What an eternity fifteen minutes can be! And how slowly this clock ticks! There must be something wrong with—

There is a slight sound, as of an opening door. She turns languidly, and—

Who is the tall young man standing pale and expectant in the doorway, with large blue eyes from which all melancholy has forever flown, with parted lips, and an agitated but happy smile? In each of his hands is a stick, on which he supports himself; but he is standing—standing—

From Gretchen's lips breaks a low but piercing cry. Involuntarily she places her hand against her throat, as though suffocating, and then, rushing forward, she flings her arms around the new comer with passionate gladness, yet with a suspicion, of the old carefreeness.

She lays her head upon his breast, and finding herself once again within the haven of his fond embrace, falls to weeping bitterly, as though her heart is broken.

"You should have told me; you should have told me," she whispers, incoherently, unable to control her emotion.

The shock of surprise has proved almost too great. To see him at all—alive, safe—his happiness enough; to see him as he now is, so far on the road to absolute recovery, adds to her joy, until it amounts to something akin to pain.

I think Kenneth himself is a little frightened at the tempest he has provoked. He has relinquished all support, and leaning against the wall, is holding her to him in a silent but passionate embrace. Yes, he should have told her; the strain has proved too great. Yet the almost boyish delight that lay in the thought of appearing before her—of

actually walking into her presence (however haltingly) unannounced and unsupported—had prevented his disclosing to her the fact that in the future lies the hope that he may yet be as his fellows, nearly, if not quite, all he once had been.

Presently—(it being mn mn mn mn) Presently—it being the most natural thing in the world for her to consider others before herself—Gretchen remembers, with a little pang, how bad all this agitation must be for him, and by a supreme effort conquers her emotion.

Raising her head, she looks at him long and earnestly, then—still holding his hands—leans back and regards with amazement (that has both pride and perplexity in it) his tall, slight figure, that yet stoops a little at the shoulders. Then she draws a long, deep breath; and then they kiss each other again, solemnly, fervently. There is a content too great for smiles. And I think she finds they have both been crying, because there are at least signs of tears upon his dark lashes.

"You have stood too long already," she says, feverishly, and, stooping, would have restored to him both his crutches, but, with a smile, he declines one, and, accepting her shoulder instead of it as a support, walks to the sofa near the fire-place. Making him lie down upon it, as in the olden days, she kneels beside him, and, smoothing back his hair from his forehead, gazes at him again tenderly, as though her eyes could never tire of what they have to feast upon.

After a moment or two she says, softly, in a low, pathetic tone, that comes straight from her glad heart,

"Thank God!"

And I believe the whole Book of Common Prayer does not contain more soul-felt thanksgiving than is conveyed in these two earnest words as uttered by her.

"Yes, how can we ever be grateful enough?" says Kenneth, slowly. "It is more than I deserve. I took the whole thing so badly, and rebelled so bitterly at times,—indeed, always."

"I think I never saw anyone so marvelously patient," says Gretchen, promptly, and with the air of one who will not suffer contradiction.

"I think, Gretchen," he says, earnestly, "I should like to do something for—the poor, you know, and the wretched, and that. I sent a check to one of the London hospitals; but I should like to do something nearer home. Don't the rector want new school houses built, or what was it?"

"School houses. But he was here on Monday, and said he had secured funds sufficient for them. But he said also," brightening, "he was most anxious to get some almshouses built, as there are three or four old men and women in the town, very respectable and very dependent,—I think old Widow Furness is one; and we agreed how charming it would be to have them comfortable in their last days."

"Very well; they shall be begun the moment we return from Italy, in the spring."

"From Italy?"

"Yes; I forgot I had not told you. I am to winter there, and you are to come with me, to take care of me, if you will be so kind,"—smiling, and pinching lovingly her little rounded ear, that looks like nothing so much as a tiny pink seashell.

"That will be delicious," says Gretchen, gayly, bringing her hands together with a pretty ecstatic movement. "It has been the dream of my life to go to Rome; and to find myself really going there now, and with you, it sounds"—with a soft sigh of the most utter content—"too good to be true." Then, with a start, "Ken, darling, you must have something; you are tired and hungry."

"Nothing yet," says Dugdale, with a slight gesture of refusal. "I must rest and talk to you a little. After awhile I should like a glass of sherry and a biscuit,—nothing more, as I had something just before leaving town."

"You are sure?"—anxiously.

"As sure as one can be of anything nowadays."

"Tell me how you came in so quietly," she asks, with some curiosity.

"I desired them to drive to the side entrance, and fortunately we found the door there open. Higgins and John gave me their arms to the hall, and from thence I walked boldly away from them into your presence. I really think the two men were most unfeignedly glad to see me able to do so."

"I am certain of it," says Gretchen, ready tears springing to her eyes. "I always liked Higgins, even though he is pock-marked; he is a most excellent servant. I—I have quite a regard for Higgins."

"Dugdale, at this sudden burst of enthusiasm for the hitherto unthought-of Higgins, forgets his manners and gives way to unmistakable mirth.

"I think his wages ought to be raised," he says; "don't you?"

"I do," replies she, stoutly.

"I'd raise everybody's wages," goes on he, still laughing, "and order 'wickski' all round besides, like Burnand."

"I should like to," returns she, undaunted. "Now! Have you snubbed me enough, you naughty boy? But it does make my heart warm when I hear how they all love you. Ken, how long your mustache has grown, and it is a little fairer, isn't it?"

"Is it? Have I changed, then?"

"Slightly, and for the better. Your face has stolen from the Fatherland a little brown shade that I love."

"I thank my stars I haven't changed for the worse," says he, devoutly. "You might have objected to me on my return and sued for a divorce, and Blunt would have had to answer for it. By the bye, he says that only for my own obstinate refusal to take medical advice during all these past months, before I came to town, I might have been as far recovered as I am now a year ago."

"If so, you would probably never have come to Laxton, and never have met me," says she, quickly, keeping love, as a woman will, always in sight, as the chiefest good the world can afford.

"Then I am glad I was obstinate," rejoins he, with such satisfactory genuineness in look and tone as makes her color deepen to a rich delicious pink, and creates within her a little warm glow that renders her already happy heart even happier.

"Where is Dr. Blunt now?" she asks, quickly, some fresh idea having occurred to her. "How is it I never asked about him before, dear, kind, charming man?"

"Bless me!" says Ken; "the last time we discussed him I fancied you spoke of him as one of the most detestable of men, if not the vilest wretch on the face of the earth."

"Oh, we have changed all that," says Mrs. Dugdale, with an enchanting little grimace. "I now think him the most delightful, fascinating, irresistible young man of my acquaintance; and I shall certainly make a point of telling him so when we meet."

"My dear, I hope you won't. I have a regard for that young man. You will turn his head, and reduce him to idiocy, if you go making pretty speeches to him with that intense look in your eyes. At present he is useful to mankind. Do not spoil him for his profession."

"Nevertheless I really must see him, and tell him something of all I feel. Yes, I shall go to town myself, the whole way, to thank him for what he has done, if, indeed, I can find words to express myself. Do you know, Ken,"—solemnly,—
"I almost feel as if I could kiss him!"

"Oh, don't, you know," says Dugdale, mildly. "I really wouldn't, you know, if I were you. He wouldn't like it. It would frighten him to death. And then it would be such a horriby one-sided affair, you see, because I'm positive he wouldn't return it. Think of the disgrace of that!"

"That, on the contrary, would be another inducement to do it. Well, perhaps I may not go so far as to embrace him; but I shall certainly want to do it all the time."

"Poor Blunt!" says Kenneth. She rings the bell, and as Lyman comes to answer it, and while the 'fa' o' his fairy feet' can still be heard outside the door, Kenneth raises himself to a sitting posture, and says, quickly, with all the eagerness of a boy,—

"Let me rest my hand on your shoulder. I must let him see that I can stand."

"But, dearest, take care you do not fatigue yourself too much," says Gretchen, cautiously, feeling it her duty to expostulate, though in reality she is dying to show him off to every one.

"Not a bit of it," says Ken, briskly. "I am to walk so much every day; and I didn't do my accustomed allowance this morning; so I may take liberties with myself now. Ah, Lyman, I am very glad to see you again."

He is standing tall and erect—if one hand is on Gretchen's shoulder,—and Lyman, awestruck, delighted, indeed overcome with emotion, is standing too staring at him. The old man has known him since he was a lad; has given him his first lessons in riding and his first surreptitious shots out of his uncle's gun during the holidays; has glowered in his beauty and strength, and mourned over his misfortune. Now, advancing slowly, he takes the hand his master extends to him between both his own, and, having bowed over it, says,—

"Oh, sir—sir!" in a tone impossible to describe, and, finally breaking into sobs, beats a rapid retreat.

"He shall have his wages raised, too," says Gretchen, with an attempt at lightness that rather falls through, because her tone is heavy with tears. In a minute or two, however, correcting herself sternly, she says,—

"Now we shall have no more scenes to-day; on that I am determined. So I shall go for the wine myself. Because I know Mrs. Judson (the housekeeper) will want to see you next, and I simply won't have you tormented or fatigued, which means the same thing. Kenneth, lie down again directly. What do you mean by overtaking your strength in this manner?"

"I'll telegraph for Blunt if you address me in that tone again," says Dugdale, with a slight smile.

"Very well, then, I will be obedient. You shall make me your prisoner if you like; I desire no better fate and no gentler jailer. But, I say, Gretchen, don't be long."

(To Be Continued.)

HABIT OF LYING.

Ways in Which Prevarication May Be Developed.

How does one become a liar? That is to say, how does the child discover a lie and habitually make use of it?

We can admit that at the beginning there is absolute sincerity. The child through all its first years neither lies nor dissimulates. Its sentiments, its desires, translate them into words and into acts. Its body is the constant and perfect expression of its inmost being. Such is the starting point—sincerity, absolute transparency.

There is a multitude of little lies tolerated which we treat as pardonable. We tell the domestic to say we are not at home when we are; we compliment people to their faces and criticise them when they are gone; we say we are happy to see some one and directly after speak of having been annoyed. No more is necessary. The example has been given.

We lie to the child himself; we are pressed by his many embarrassing questions, and in order to free ourselves from the embarrassment reply with what is frequently a falsehood. Some fine day he discovers the truth, and the evil is done. The gravest case is when the child is taken as an accomplice in a lie, or when his mother tells him, "Above all do not tell tales to your papa." This is the ruin of all morality.

The third stage is the first encounter of the child with society—the first shock with social life. The child who tells all he knows, sees and hears, all that he would better have left unsaid, is called the "enfant terrible." His parents do not tell him to lie, but they tell him it is not necessary to tell all he thinks. This is extremely serious, as it teaches the child that he cannot show himself as he is. This is the revelation of the lie obligatory.

Above all, among his comrades he quickly learns to dissimulate, because if he is naïve—expresses all his joys, pains, desires—they make sport of him—nay, worse, they abuse his confidence; the hopes, projects which he has confided to them he some day sees used against him.

Thus the impossibility of living without lying is revealed to him. Society excuses certain forms of lying which are inspired by a feeling of politeness, modesty, shame.

The child becomes a liar because all the world about him lies. The distinction between the liar and the man of sincerity is only relative. There are in reality only two categories. If she had heard that her only son had committed a forgery or a murder, Lady Ryvers could not have been more affected. "A penniless, nameless stranger," she said—"and he my only son! He has spoiled his life; he has indeed, Monica."

"Mamma," said the girl, "I have never seen tears in your eyes before; that distresses me more than Randolph's marriage."

"He was so gifted. He had a larger fortune and brighter prospects than any young man I know; handsome, gifted, heir to a grand old name and a grand old estate, yet he has spoiled his life by marrying a doctor's daughter. My dear Monica, words fail me."

"Dear mamma, she may not be so hopelessly bad if she is very beautiful."

"Hush!" said Lady Ryvers, with gories—those who content themselves with the lies exacted by social life and those who have habituated themselves to lying more than society wishes—to lie because of some personal interest.

An important cause in the development of lying in children is the employment of excessive and ill-advised punishments. The child who becomes a liar is the one who lives in perpetual terror of reproaches, humiliation or strokes. The lie for him is a supreme resource.

BEYOND THE REACH OF LAW.

An English tourist in the Highlands tells a story which illustrates the rights and privileges of the individual against even the dictates of the law. The man was travelling by rail in the north of Scotland. At one of the stations four farmers entered the compartment.

They were all big, burly men, and completely filled up the seat on the one side of the compartment. At the next station the carriage door opened to admit a tall, cadaverous individual, whose girth was about that of a lamp-post.

He endeavored to wedge himself in between two of the farmers, and finding it a difficult operation, he said to one of them, "Excuse me, sir, you must move up a bit! Each seat is intended to accommodate five persons, and according to act of Parliament you are entitled to only eighteen inches of space."

"Aye, aye, my friend," replied the farmer, "that's a' very guid for you that's 'been built that way; but ye canna blame me if I ha' na been construckit according to act of Parliament!"

The builder of a church, on returning thanks for the toast of his health, which had been proposed, remarked: "I fancy I am more fitted for the scaffold than for public speaking."

THE CRADLE OF HUMANITY

AUSTRALIA WAS THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

So Says German Professor, Who Declares It Fulfills Conditions.

The cradle of humanity has been located more than once. More than one anthropologist has staked out a little sector of the globe and said: "This was Eden." But now another scientist has used certain premises as a compass and certain theories as a chain, and has surveyed a new portion of the world, and has located a new nursery.

Australia is the new Eden and Prof. Schoetensack of Heidelberg is its discoverer. His conclusions were presented to the Berlin Anthropological Society at a recent meeting. The methods by which they were reached are as interesting as the conclusions themselves.

The anthropologist began with the assumption that during the geological ages the brain of man was developing and his body was extremely feeble. At this time there were beasts of great strength and agility which would have made the development of a race weak physically impossible.

With this assumption fixed Prof. Schoetensack, with his knowledge of the various forms of life which existed at various times on the globe, began to count out the regions where it would have been impossible for man to have been nourished.

America, Europe, Asia and Africa were quickly put out of consideration, as there existed on these continents animals which would have destroyed every trace of human life in extremely short order.

Life could not have been sustained at the northern or southern extremities of the globe because of the cold. The brain of man at this time was not sufficiently developed to enable him to discover fire, and he could not have warmed himself. The only place men could have existed where ferocious beasts lived would have been in the trees, and if they had led such a life the result would be a four handed instead of a

TWO HANDED RACE.

Every one of the scientist's premises forces the conclusion that men were developed in some climate where the temperature was moderate, where food was easily obtained, and where life was not a continual struggle against animals superior physically.

Such being the case, the anthropologist finds but one place answering that description. That is Australia. At one time this may have had a connection with southern Asia. Here man may have been nourished and developed, he reasons. It is safe from carnivorous beasts which could threaten the existence of men.

Such carnivorous animals as existed on the island or continent were too small to be a danger. The dingo or wild dog, now known to have existed there with prehistoric man, was not a dangerous foe. One of the marsupials was carnivorous, but it was neither large enough nor strong enough to have been a danger at any time.

There was an abundance of food easily procured, and the climate was tempered to a weak race. There more easily than anywhere else the art of making fire might have been discovered.

Australia also lacks the dense forests which might have produced an arboreal race, but it is pointed out that the tall Australian trees would be calculated to produce just such hands and feet as the human race actually has.

All these theories have led Prof. Schoetensack to pronounce with positiveness that Australia was the cradle of the race and that it was the garden of Eden.

EDITOR'S TROUBLES.

A correspondent tells the following story of methods of censorship in Russia: I was at an evening party of the local press censor in a South Russian town. About midnight I had strolled from the music room into a card room, and was watching a game of cards, one of the players being our host, the censor, when the hostess approached her husband: "I wish, my dear, you would step behind. There are three poor wretches there who have been waiting for you a couple of hours. I did not wish to disturb you sooner." "They must wait a little longer," replied the censor; "I must finish my rubber." Twenty minutes later our host absented himself for a quarter of an hour. Meeting his wife next day, I asked her who were the "three poor wretches" referred to. "Editors of the three local journals," she replied. They had waited two and a half hours in the censor's back kitchen with their MSS. and proof sheets for that morning's issue, without which they could not go to press!

"I suppose," he ventured, "that you would never speak to me again if I were to kiss you?" "Oh, George," she exclaimed, "why don't you get over the habit of always looking at the dark side of things?"

The value of the present British Crown is put at £113,000.

The famous Siamese twins were born in 1811, and died in 1874.