

# Greed For Gold

Or, The Sign of the Arrow

## CHAPTER XX.

There was silence for a moment. The old man collected his wits, the future Lady Grayne went over her "stock-in-trade" with a caressing hand and a powder-puff concealed in her handkerchief, and the step-daughter stood watching them in absolute astonishment. Sir George cleared his throat. How curious it is, when we have anything unpleasant to say, we find it necessary to clear our throats, as if to give the unpleasantness plenty of room to come out!

"Vere, you are no doubt surprised. Listen to me—I have offered myself to this lady in marriage, and she has accepted me."

"You! You would marry that woman!"

"This lady." There was sternness in the old man's tones as he corrected her, and went on: "You will therefore be prepared to recognise her as the future mistress of Grayne Hall."

"Oh, no—no—no! This is too terrible!"

"Vere!"

And then, for the first time, Evelyn spoke. She interrupted her future husband by saying:

"No, Sir George, do not be angry with the child. She has ruled here so long, naturally she does not at once realise the change. Leave it to me to reconcile her to it. She will in time learn to love me as dearly as I have come to love her, and all the little differences will be forgotten." She turned pleadingly to him, and added: "To please me, Sir George, leave as for just a little while."

He hesitated a moment, and then said:

"Well, as you wish it. Vere, I am going to dress for dinner. I have a rebellious child; when we meet at dinner, let me find an obedient daughter. This lady has done me the honor to accept me, see that you treat her with that respect and consideration which is due to the future Lady Grayne."

He crosses to Evelyn, and lifted one of the hands into which he had fallen, and carried it in old, courtly style, to his lips. Then, with a bow, he left the two women alone.

"Come here, child; sit down."

Vere recognised the changed tone, the strain of authority in it, but obeyed.

"Let us reason this matter out, Vere. I want to deal kindly and gently with you—if I can. Your stepfather has done me the honor of asking me to be his wife; you will concede, will you not, that you are powerless to prevent this?"

"Alas! yes."

"Good. That concession, although a reluctant one, makes the position much easier. Now, for your own benefit, I am going to talk very plainly to you, Vere. Grasp, will you, that of the ways of the world you lack knowledge, whilst I—am an experienced woman."

"I guess as much."

"You are young; it may be some time before you go out into the world to a husband and home of your own. It would not be pleasant for you to live away from here, with strangers, till that time arrives, would it?"

"Live away from here? I have lived here nearly all my life."

"And would miss its comforts all the more for that very reason, if you were sent away."

"Sent away? What do you mean?"

"A house divided against itself cannot stand, Vere, and I have every intention that Grayne Hall shall stand. When married, I shall be absolute mistress here—sole mistress. I shall allow no one to share my rule. What I am saying may sound brutal, perhaps, and I hope it is the last time I shall ever have to talk so; but it is well to speak plainly."

"You are doing so."

"Think, now, Vere, if we were to continue unfriendly, if you had license to speak to me as you were speaking a few moments ago when you were standing yonder—you remember?"

"Yes."

"It would scarcely be compatible with my position as mistress if I allowed it. One of us would have to leave—you would scarcely expect me to do so, Vere?"

The girl shook her head by way of reply.

"I said one of us would have to leave."

"Leave here! This place—my home, in which I have spent the best part of the years of my life! It is terrible!"

"Yes. The future seems gloomy. And yet it rests with you to make it either bright or dull. Friends—you will find me easy to get on with. Enemies—well, I have led too hard a life to be merciful to enemies. I never found it pay; if you do not crush them, they crush you. Now, are we to be friends?"

"What do you wish me to do?"

"To behave as you would do if you loved me."

"As if I loved you!"

"It will be an arduous piece of acting, perhaps; but as good acting should do, it will bring its reward. Once more—for the last time—are we to be friends?"

She stood up, and the girl stood too. Evelyn offered her hand, but Vere would not take it. She, however, answered slowly:

"I will act my part."

Evelyn laughed—she could afford to, having won. And the victory had been a little easier than she had bargained for; she had thought Vere's temper more stubborn.

"You strange girl, Vere! Believe me, it is so much easier to bend than to break. Still, let it be 'acting' if you wish it, so long as the same result is achieved."

"I will not fail."

"Then, my little actress, to your dressing-room; prepare for the first act of your little drama. Beginners ready, the bell will ring directly, the curtain will ascend, and with the dining-room for scenery, Vere must be discovered 'acting' the role of

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obedient daughter, rejoicing in her father's contemplated second marriage."

With a low, mocking laugh, Evelyn finished her speech. Vere went from the room, and her agonised thought was:

"I am to call that woman 'Mother'!"

In her own room the tears she had held back came, real tears of grief at this great blow to her happiness.

For she feared Miss Westcar, recognised her power, and knew it would be exercised against her. With the loss of Reggie, her mother dead, her stepfather against her, the future had a very black and hopeless appearance to her.

Evelyn looked after her, and muttered:

"I dislike the girl. I am sorry, for the girl's sake. The little fool! She would have been wise to—"

Well, I suppose I must hold the candle to the devil. Although I want her to recognise the fact that I am master as well as mistress, it would never do for her to leave Grayne-wood—alive. Her fortune will be twice as great as Sir George's is, if she lives till she is twenty-one or marries. I stopped her idea of marriage with Reggie—the fool wears her heart upon her sleeve,—she is not likely to look elsewhere. The moment she is twenty-one she must make a will in Sir George's favor. Then—"

And the rest was lost in the little laugh she gave vent to. She was laughing at her thoughts. Some people are not only wicked, but rejoice in their wickedness. Miss Westcar was built that way.

## CHAPTER XXI.

There was a member of that household Miss Westcar distrusted. He was something of an enigma to her. She had tried to solve him, and failed; and failure did not please her. Miss Westcar always distrusted unfathomable people, and when she came down to the dining-room, the man whose depths she had been unable to plumb was quietly seated in an easy-chair, reading—Ashley Grayne.

As she passed round the table, Evelyn put the finishing touches to the arrangement of the flowers—love of flowers was a redeeming trait in her character—and then noticed that places for five persons had been laid at table. She frowned at the collection of Reggie. The servants had overlooked the fact that he had gone; she had herself seen him drive away to the station to catch the London train.

A servant entered, and Evelyn spoke:

"Remove those things, Chaplin. Dinner will be served for four only to-day."

Ashley looked up over the paper he was reading in surprise and inquired:

"Is not Sir George dining with us?"

"Yes; but Reggie is not."

"Of course not; he's in London by this time."

They were evidently talking from opposite angles. The servant, meanwhile, stood awaiting further instructions. Then a solution dawned on Ashley.

"Did not Sir George tell you of a guest coming?" he inquired. "He left me purposely to go to you."

"Leave the things, Chaplin."

When the servant left the room, Evelyn continued:

"No. Your friend is coming to dinner only?"

"No; to stop a few days as well. He will be here by the train arriving at 6.30, just in time for dinner; the trap has gone for him. What a curious thing that Sir George omitted to tell you! He went straight from me to do so."

"He lost the recollection of it, perhaps, in more important things he had to tell me."

"Really?" with a smile. "What important matters are on foot now?"

"Your uncle has asked me to be his wife."

He slowly lowered the paper he had been reading on to his knees, doing so that he might, unnoticed, clench his hands under its shelter. The news affected him. He could feel that his face was growing white, and turned it more away from the window, that the woman he was talking to might not see it. He controlled his voice, so that no evidence of his perturbation appeared in that as he asked:

"Yes—and you?"

"I accepted him."

"Allow me to congratulate you."

"Thank you; but congratulations are usually for the other—"

"Pardon me, of course. Sir George is to be congratulated."

A tighter clenching of the hands, a feeling as if he would like to spring at the throat of the woman who was foiling his plans and throttle her; but not a trace of that feeling was audible as he answered:

She went into the conservatory to pick a rose for her throat, and Ashley watched her. If looks could have killed her, she would never have left the conservatory alive. This woman then—cursed her!—was to come between him and the money he wanted so badly! This was the reward for his sycophancy and pandering to the old man's whims! For weeks and weeks he had felt secure. He had worked things so that Reggie was cut out of the old man's will. Everything was left to him; Reggie only came in after Ashley's death, and he did not count on leaving much behind him when he died. If Sir George married again, that will was not worth the paper it was written on.

When was the marriage intended to take place he wondered? Intended, because it must be his business to prevent it. It was not likely that he was going to allow this stranger woman to step into his shoes—not likely.

If Sir George died that night, everything would be his. And somehow his thoughts would not go beyond that point. He tried to think on, but the words seemed to keep singing in his ears:

"If Sir George dies to-night every-

thing will be mine," and it was a song he had to listen to.

He did not pose as a saint, but the thought of murder had never before occurred to him. If it was to be his choosing between wealth and beggary—well, Sir George was quite old enough to die. Detection? Ah! yes, he must guard against that. How should he set about it? How divert suspicion?

And then a most unjustifiable hatred of the woman who had necessitated this step entered his soul, for after all she was but playing her cards to win—viewing the matter from his own standpoint. He argued, that but for her his hands would be clean. He was to steep them in blood through her. She was the cause of it—she should suffer. He would arrange matters so that suspicion of Sir George's murder fell on Evelyn Westcar. He was full of these thoughts when Miss Westcar re-entered the room.

"I can see the trap returning in the distance," she said.

It roused him; he had forgotten his guest. He pulled himself together, and went to meet him. He was a new friend he had met at the club, one who seemed to highly appreciate his—Ashley's—opinions and seek his friendship. He was good company, and so he had, with his uncle's permission, invited him to Grayne-wood for a week.

"Ashley was in the hall to receive him, and showed him to the chamber allotted to him. Then, leaving his friend to dress, he returned to the dining-room, wherein were Sir George, Vere, and Evelyn.

His uncle greeted him:

"Your friend has arrived, Ashley?"

"Yes, uncle; but do not wait—he asks that you will not—he will not be five minutes."

And he was not. Before that time the servant opened the door and announced:

"Count Oscar de Verement."

They turned to meet him, and one woman went white to the lips, and—despite her boasted strong will, was the next moment on the floor, a huddled-up mass of fainting femininity. She—Evelyn Westcar—had fallen before they could start to her help.

True, it was enough to startle her. She recognised the Count in a moment—the man by whose side, three years back, she had stood in the dock of the Old Bailey.

(To be Continued.)

## CORDITE PROVES USELESS

SENSITIVE POWDERS MAKE SHOOTING ERRATIC.

Heavy, Long-Range Guns Are Made Practically Useless.

The dispute, now amicably settled, between Rear-Admiral Lambton and General Sir A. Hunter as to the efficiency of the firing of the heavy naval guns during the siege of Ladysmith has drawn attention to a far more serious disclosure than the apparently obvious inference that members of the naval and military services are not always—let us say, in agreement. The position disclosed is that, with the use of cordite powder, the heavy, long-range guns are practically valueless as the distances which they were constructed for and have been supposed to be able to cover. As cordite is now almost the only powder used in the navy, the grave question would arise whether in case of need the guns could be relied on.

**DANGER IN INSTABILITY.**

The grave instability of cordite is admitted by the manufacturers. One of the experts of the National Explosive Company, which makes large quantities of this powder for the Government, said to a representative of the London Daily News: "No way has been found of getting over this unstable nature of the sensitive powders. All high velocity gun powders suffer from the same fault. It was perhaps some satisfaction to know that other Governments used a powder the base of which contained much more gun-cotton, and was, therefore, still more sensitive. There was really no comparison for reliability between these powders and the old cocoa powder, but that was not quite smokeless. Cordite is very sensitive to change of temperature. It is more powerful in heat, sluggish in cold, and freezes before a low temperature is reached, and in that state is practically useless. Then it is also affected by the heating of the gun due to firing. Long-range gun-firing is, therefore, entirely a matter of chance or luck."

**SHOOTING BECOMES ERRATIC.**

Skilful gunners get used to the tricks of the powder, just as they do to the tricks of their guns. The guns themselves have their erratic little fancies. Two may not vary the slightest in any other way, but yet cannot be made to fire alike, and why cannot be discovered. But no temperature tables or scales have ever been drawn up, nor have the variations of the cordite been scientifically stated in figures. It would, perhaps, be useless. Before a gunner gets his range he may have to fire three shots. By the time he has the range the firing has changed the temperature of his gun, and away goes the accuracy of his calculations again. Judgment might help chance, but tables of variation would not be of much service, for no two guns heat exactly alike any more than they fire alike. As I said, with very

## AT DEATH'S DOOR.

THE STORY OF THE RECOVERY OF MISS FALFORD OF ST. ELIE.

She Says "I am Confident That Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Saved My Life"—Hope for all Weak, Sickly Girls.

To be well, to be strong, to possess a clear complexion, bright eyes and an elastic step, the blood must be pure and filled with life-giving energy. When you see pale, sallow, sickly girls, easily tired, subject to headaches, backaches, and violent palpitation of the heart, it is the blood that is at fault, and unless the trouble is speedily corrected the patient passes into that condition known as "decline" and death follows. The one sure, positive way to obtain rich, red health-giving blood is to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. This medicine has saved thousands of young girls from a premature grave. Strong proof of this is offered in the cure of Miss Zenaide Falford, of St. Elie, Quebec. Miss Falford tells the story of her sickness and recovery as follows: "Like many other Canadian girls, I went to the United States and found employment in a factory at Woonsocket. The close, indoor work proved too much for me and nearly ended in my death. At first I was taken with headaches, would tire very easily, had no appetite, and no energy. I tried to continue the work, but grew worse and worse, and finally was compelled to return to my home. I was so much changed and so emaciated that my friends hardly knew me. Two weeks after my return home I was forced to take my bed. I had a bad cough, was distressed by terrible dreams, and sometimes passed whole nights without sleep. Two doctors treated me, but without avail, as I was steadily growing weaker; in fact I could not hold my hand above my head for more than three or four seconds, and had to be turned in bed. No one expected I would get better, and I thought myself I was about to die. At this time my brother came from Montreal to see me, and strongly urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. A supply of pills was procured and I now bless the day I began taking them. It is enough to say that before three boxes were used I began to feel better, and from that on I grew stronger every day. By the time I had taken nine or ten boxes I was once more enjoying the blessing of perfect health. No symptoms of the old trouble remain, and I am confident Dr. Williams' Pink Pills saved my life."

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long range guns and the present highly sensitive powder, hitting the object aimed at is very much a matter of mere luck, though I should not have thought the variation would have been so much as 600 yards in 9,000."

**LIKE TOMMY ATKINS.**

A cab-owner bought a new horse and trusted it to one of his best drivers for its first day's trial. In the evening when the jehu returned, he found his master waiting to hear his opinion of the animal.

"Well, John, what do you think of the new horse?" was asked.

"I think it bears a resemblance to the British soldier."

"What makes you think that, John?"

"Because," said John, "it will die before it will run."

**JOHNNY ON THE SPOT.**

"Who gives this bride away?" asked the minister.

"I do, willingly," replied her father innocently, with an approving smile at the groom.

**WIND COLIC.**

"In my opinion," writes Mrs. Philip Collins, of Martindale, Que., "there is no medicine can equal Baby's Own Tablets. Before I began the use of the Tablets my baby cried all the time with wind colic and got little or no sleep, and I was nearly worn out myself. Soon after giving baby the Tablets the trouble disappeared, and sound natural sleep returned. I have also proved the Tablets a cure for hives, and a great relief when baby is teething. I would not feel that my children were safe if I did not have a box of the Tablets in the house."

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