

A DYING PROMISE

OR, THE MISSING
WILL

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

Then she turned, delicately flushed with a pleasant excitement and ran with a springing step in from the frosty air, singing some snatch of song in the glow kindled by this passing glimpse of another kind of life. A long dormant something woke within her under the spell of the lady's gracious presence; her voice, her face, her smile set many currents a-flowing in her half-petrified, half-crushed nature. It was wonderful to Jessie that she should at once have detected her loneliness, not the loneliness natural to a young creature bereft of kindred and friends, but that more invincible loneliness of one who lives among uncongenial and unsympathetic natures. Even Philip had never seen this; Philip, with all his tenderness, held her but a slight, mindless, colorless creature.

"And to think," mourned Mrs. Plummer, "that the parlor should have been all littered up with your painting messes—and the smell too, as if the house was being done up—for company to see."

"Miss Lonsdale paints herself, cousin," Jessie replied, gently. "I don't think she minded it. Please let me do a little more now the light is good. I will make all tidy by dinner-time."

"To be sure, Jessie, I'm not one to go against my own flesh and blood," continued Mrs. Plummer, in a resigned voice; "and if you are to be an officer's lady, tidy ways of plain folk can't be expected of you. But 'tis a pity. Many a time I've spoke to your poor mother against the way you was bred up, never to soil a hand. And I always told your poor father it. But I would come he'd repent it. But I might as well have talked to that cat."

Sebastopol, whom Mrs. Plummer equally disliked and feared, was not the only way from the mill that found refuge beneath her hospitable roof. It chanced that she needed both a dairy woman and a cow-man soon after Mr. Meade's death, and set her heart upon Sarah, the maid, and Abraham Bush, the miller's man. One obstacle prevented her from engaging them; they were not married, and the Redwood's cowman and dairy-woman had always hitherto been man and wife. After some reflection, she commanded her husband to open negotiations with Abraham, and at a certain stage to inform him that his bachelor condition was a bar to the office. At the same time she broke ground with Sarah and lamented that it was impossible to come to terms with a woman who had no husband.

"You never gave a thought to marrying, I suppose, Sarah," she said at this stage.

"I never encouraged nobody while poor Misses was alive," Sarah replied; "but to be sure, a lorn ooman is lonesome when getting in years. It's like this, Miss Plummer, I've had my own way this five and forty year, and that's pretty nigh so much as anybody hev a right to."

"To be sure, Sarah," assented Mrs. Plummer, "you've had more liberty than a woman ought to, and it is time you began to think of doing for some man going to rack and ruin for want of a wife; you don't know any steady widowerman who might be looking after you now, do you?"

"I knows two or three looking after the bit of wage I've a put by," Sarah replied, thoughtfully; "ain't a gwine to hev them, not as I know on."

"Abraham Bush has money of his own," suggested Mrs. Plummer, cautiously.

"Very like; he's a near one is Abram. Vine weather for gairdens, Miss Plummer, ain't it?"

Mrs. Plummer then put a similar question to Abraham.

"Ay, I've thought o' matrimony many a time," Abraham replied. "I've always a thought better of it."

"You'll be getting in years, Abraham," Mrs. Plummer urged, "and you'll find the want of a wife."

"I've a vound it this fifty year," returned Abraham, "and I've vound the best sart of a want. It's like this year, mum. Matrimony is terrible easy to vall into, but t's terrible hard to vall out of."

"A nice, steady, hard-working woman with a bit of money put by, Abraham, would be the making of a man like you."

"I dunno as anybody'd hae me," Abraham replied, in a relenting way; "but there, I need so well look round, Miss Plummer."

"Look at Sarah," suggested Mrs. Plummer.

"Many's the time I've looked at she," said Abraham; "a near one is Sarow."

"And such a dairy-woman!" sighed Mrs. Plummer. "Well, good evening, Bush and if you should hear of a married couple without encumbrance, you'll let us know."

"Yes, I'll let ye know, mam."

The consequence was that one evening Abraham lounged into the Stillbrooke Mill kitchen, just before

a tongue when you knows the worst of it?"

Thus it came to pass, to the great satisfaction of Jessie, that Sarah Fry and Abraham Bush were made one, and soon afterward installed at Redwoods, where their kind, familiar faces made the large kitchen a home-like place, to which she often resorted for a pleasant chat, Abraham's part of which consisted chiefly of a series of grunts, and which kept Jessie's heart warm and human in her petrifying isolation.

CHAPTER X.

Jessie was mistaken in her surmise that she was not again to see Miss Lonsdale, for the next morning the bright plume flashed above the low garden wall, the pretty ponies stopped at the wicket, and the sitting-room was again brightened by the lady's presence.

She came to see how the sketch was progressing, she wanted to take a hint from Miss Meade; for, fond as she was of sketching from nature, she had never yet been very successful in it. She had ventured to bring a portfolio of watercolors and prints, also a book that Jessie might like, a lovely book, which opened a new world to Jessie, it was called "The Seven Lamps of Architecture."

Before long Clara Lonsdale could not walk, or sketch, or read a new book without Jessie, and the days in which Jessie was not commanded to the Court were blanks to the lonely girl. The Plummers saw the growing intimacy with no concern, they held it an honor to Jessie and by reflection to themselves; they considered her position too far beneath Miss Lonsdale's for any thought to enter the child's head.

At Marwell Court there was more concern on Jessie's account. Even Lady Gertrude was sufficiently interested to say that it was a pity while Sir Arthur one day remonstrated with Clara.

"It is a very pretty head," he said, "and you might find something better to do than turn it for your amusement. I've half a mind to warn the Plummers."

So Clara immediately found something better to do. She took Jessie in to amuse the invalid girl, Ethel Medway, one day. Ethel at once took to a face so sweet and so near her own age, and Sir Arthur, over-glad to find any means of brightening his daughter's sad life, said no more.

Jessie left Miss Blushford's at Easter when the Medways were again at Marwell, and Clara was again interested in her new friend, with whom she had maintained a brisk correspondence in the interval, and with whose brief and uneventful history she was soon fully acquainted.

The news of the final capture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell had been received, and though the great revolt was now virtually quelled, Philip still had sterner work than marrying out for him for months to come yet. In his letters he now only alluded to their union as a distant possibility; as to Jessie's letters he seldom alluded to them at all. Many never reached him, those he did receive came out of their proper order and with such gaps and want of sequence that they were difficult to understand. On his part he had things of deadly interest to relate during the prolonged sieges that he confined himself to the baldest statement of facts, and this he often repeated, knowing how many chances there were that his letters would never reach their destination. Thus the two young people were spiritually as well as physically separated.

The wearing, maddening pain of vainly waiting for the post, of fearing the postman's knock and yet being blankly disappointed when he brings nothing to fill up the emptiness of the weary day, such, the frequent portion of women, who weep while men work, wait while they are absent, watch while they enjoy, was Jessie's portion in her secluded isolation. She ate her heart out while watching for Indian letters and when the rare, long-expected missive did arrive—and sometimes the same mail brought two—was always, after the first thankfulness that Philip was still alive and well, miserably disappointed and sat down to write her answer feeling that she might as well seek counsel and comprehension of a stone wall. Yet there was only Philip to speak to, and Miss Lonsdale, who read the child's inmost heart as she read the last new novel, because it was something new and therefore interesting to a world-worn mind.

In the genial spring weather they could sketch in the open air, and made appointments to meet at selected points of vantage, so that Clara might take hints and examples from Jessie's greater skill and talent, she said, but really for the companionship.

How happy Jessie was in this, to her, rare and cultivated companionship! How charming, clever, and accomplished as well as kind and friendly the woman of the world appeared to the simple girl! Her grace seemed beauty, her polish courtesy, her superficial cleverness and information genius and learning her tact heart-sympathy. Indian letters, Redwoods homespun, Miss Blushford's fettering pettiness, her own idle aimless life; all were forgotten with Clara.

One lovely forenoon they met by a thick grove of old oaks, descending a moderate slope to a fair-sized sheet of water, the banks of which, except that opposite the sketchers, rose steep, crowned with trees. From this level bank the rich sward, dotted by clumps of fine trees, rolled away up to the terrace in front of Marwell Court, the long and imposing front of which rose clear in the April sunlight and traced itself on a background of wooded upland. On one side of the fine pile a long vista of level landscape stretched away to some distant blue hills, on the other a hanging wood clothed a steep ascent, in the foreground some deer were grouped, as if for the express purpose of composing a picture; over all was the sweet, deep April sky of magical pale blue opalescence, from the mysterious depths of which clouds seemed to issue in vague outlines, which melted and mingled imperceptibly into its far lavender-blue recesses. The first swallows of the year flashed dark against that lovely sky, white pigeons and blue flew with clinging wings beneath it, larks shot up in spires of eddying song and were lost in it, the fresh half-opened foliage of beech, elm, and larch, flushed translucent on the wood beneath it. The sunshine was tender and even fresher than the light soft airs stirring the budded woods; one seemed to bathe health from its pure radiance, it threw a glory over everything, steeping the turf and young leafage, and calling forth such warm and acute touches of color from tree-trunks, the red broken banks and the still lake through which a stream loitered slowly, as no pencil could reproduce.

Russet and gold leafage was just beginning to break forth here and there in the gray masses of oak tops over their heads. Looking back into the living roof you saw only silvery mazes of thickly interwoven boughs, relieved by some burst of fresh leafage or some green undergrowth. The pale net-work made a hoary gloom about the strong low arches of those stout gray pillars; solemn, mysterious, and suggestive. All sorts of dreams rise and embody themselves in such dim woodland haze; dryads, nymphs, and fauns spring to life; fairies disport themselves about the mossy resorts. And when the sunshine loses itself in those close-woven branches, or shoots through some aperture in the oak roof, lighting up clusters of pale, sweet primroses, delicate light-blue-violets, spires of early bluebells piercing the moss and the red relics of last year's leaves, the effect is truly magical.

But if the oak coppice behind them spoke of hoary legend and gray antiquity, all that lay before their eyes breathed of youth and morning in its fresh and tender beauty. The still lake, of a deeper azure than the delicate tints of youngest green and gave back the pensive gaze of primroses, most youthful and maidenly of flowers, and mirrored the pale golden glory of blossoming willows, already thronged with inebriate bees. Nests were hidden down by the water where the sedge rustled drily, little dark moor-hens darted out with their wild, plaintive cry; an emerald flash lighted on a sallow bough, its double in the water beneath proclaiming it a kingfisher; pigeons murmured contentedly, the little stream gurgled musically in its rocky descent to the lake, the spring-like fragrance of young leaves filled the air.

Jessie, seeing and feeling all this fresh, live beauty as she stood by the easel near her worshipped friend, felt depths upon depths within her, whether of pain or joy she did not rightly know; all was vague and undeveloped, like the blind stirrings of the spring in the world around; last year's nestlings cannot tell what wonders may happen as the spring days go by with fresh miracles, so it is with young, unstirred hearts, ignorant of the advancing pageant of life.

rather reluctantly throwing his cigar away.

"Oh, smoke if you like," Miss Lonsdale said; "no one here dislikes tobacco."

Which filled Jessie with surprise.

(To be Continued.)

VERB AND PREPOSITION.
Place Many Difficulties in the Foreigner's

English is said to be one of the most difficult languages in the world for a foreigner to learn. The verb and prepositions are particularly puzzling. A professor in Columbia School of Mines tells of the trouble of a Frenchman with verb "to break."

"I begin to understand your language better," said my French friend, M. de Beauvoir, to me, "but your verbs trouble me still. You mix up so with prepositions.

"I saw your friend, Mrs. Berky, just now," he continues. "She says she intends to break down her school earlier than usual. Am I right there?"

"Break up the school, she must have said."

"Oh yes, I remember; break up school."

"Why does she do that?" I asked. "Because her health is broken into."

"Broken down."

"Broken down? Oh, yes! And, indeed, since fever has broken up in her town—"

"Broken out."

"She thinks she will leave it for a few weeks."

"Will she leave her house alone?"

"No; she is afraid it will be broken, broken—how do I say that?"

"Broken into."

"Certainly; it is what I meant to say."

"Is her son to be married soon?"

"No; that engagement is broken—"

"Broken off."

"Ah, I had not heard that!"

"She is very sorry about it. Her son only broke the news to her last week. Am I right? I am anxious to speak English well."

"He merely broke the news; no preposition this time."

"It is hard to understand. That young man, her son, is a fine young fellow—a breaker, I think."

"A breaker, and a fine fellow. Good day!"

"So much for the verb 'break.'"

JAPAN'S WAR TOOLS.
Remarkable Appliances for Fighting in the Dark.

It is evident that the Japanese are making use of every modern contrivance in existence to obtain perfect efficiency in their navy and army.

We have heard how Admiral Togo utilized wireless telegraphy on several occasions, and particularly at the terrible bombardment which he inflicted on Port Arthur on March 10. We now learn that the Japanese navy is equipped with a remarkable system of sound signaling, which has already been of immense use.

This apparatus was furnished to them by Mr. C. E. Kelway, a naval engineer of London, who has supplied the public with the following details of the invention:

The system enables a ship to move safely on its objective through darkness, dense fog, or blinding snow, and it has been used in approaching Port Arthur under all these conditions.

Any unseen object or vessel can be safely reached (or avoided) in darkness by the use of the "locator" which measures sound and indicates to the listener the distance of any whistle, siren, bell of a screw, or roll of water on a beach, besides the direction in which the sound lies.

The navigator is called to the receiver by a bell, which records the receipt of sounds which, to the unaided ear, would be inaudible. A special watch is set going on the ringing of the instrument, and so soon as the sound becomes audible in the machine the watch is stopped and the distance is shown without calculation. By this means no vessel can steal away with lights out without giving warning.

The system is based on the velocity of sound carried by the Hertzian waves.

A SERIOUS OFFENSE

Mr. Banks acquired a dictatorial manner in his youth, and it had grown with his years. When he gradually became near-sighted he refused to wear glasses, and held other people responsible for any difficulties into which his failing sight led him.

One day he clutched by the coat-sleeve a man who was hurrying past him on the street.

"I want a word with you, Mr. Griggs," he said, solemnly. "I will detain you only a moment."

"My name is not Griggs. You have made a mistake," said the man.

"Your name isn't Griggs!" said Mr. Banks, still detaining the stranger and peering into his face. "I should like to know why not?"

Mrs. Simple Newlywed—I want you to send around a gallon of mid-night oil. Grocer—Midnight oil? Never heard of it. Mrs. Simple Newlywed—Why, I'm sure that's the kind my husband's mother said he always burned.

"Unearthed you at last, Clara," the mellow voice was saying.

"Is that you, Claude?" Clara replied, without turning her head. "I certainly pity you at this time of year in the country with nothing to kill."

"Is time nothing?" he asked,