A DYING PROMISE

OR, THE MISSING WILL

CHAPTER XVII.

"Been to tea at the parsons!" exclaimed Jimmy Medway with a prolonged stare of astonishment at the unmoved face of his elder brother. "Well, I am—"

"I had no idea that Ingleby was such a good fellow," his brother said, tranquilly. "I wish I had looked him up before."

"What was there to do, Claude?" Lady Gertrude asked, from the depth of her chair, with her usual air of unwilling interest.

"Nothing. There lay the charm. Miss Ingleby is a crack pianist and can talk. One listens. Ingleby is keen on cricket, wants me to set the village boys on to play—one must, I suppose."

"Certainly," Sir Arthur added, looking up from his Morning Post, "that kind of thing is expected of one. And the Inglebys are very good people. You may rely upon it that I should never give the living to a man whom I could not see at my table with pleasure."

"But, Claude, just fancy Claude going to tea with the parson," continued Jimmy, who was sixteen and looked up to his eldest brother as a prince of fast men.

"I always said," murmured Lady Gertrude, suppressing a yawn, "that Claude would develop into a model squire in time. He will soon be au fait in top-dressings and short-horns—excited by turnips and depressed by cattle disease. You know the kind of man—stout and beefy."

"There is no knowing to what heights we may reach by dint of energy and lofty aspiration," replied Claude, looking before him with a curious little smile, "even Jim, now, Jim might become a bishop or a judge. Come, Jim, you are the last, and one of us ought to be in the Church."

All of a sudden a light seemed to flash upon Jim and he began to chuckle quietly to himself.

"Is Jessie Meade a crack piano player?" he asked, demurely, "or is she keen on cricket?"

Claude looked up with an angry frown that only half subdued Jim, who had passed Jessie at the rectory gate that afternon.

"Jessie Meade, what about Jessie Meade?" asked Sir Arthur, who had lost the thread of the conversation in his paper.

"A very quiet well-conducted young person," Lady Gertrude remarked, "I really think her quite a godsend for poor dear Ethel.

"I don't know what poor Miss Meade has done to be called a young person," exclaimed Claude with sudden heat.

"Claude is right, my lady," said his father, "it is very dreadful to be called a person, especially a young person unless one is a young person."

"But what on earth is Jessie Meade?" cried Jim. "Isn't a rough farmer's daughter a young person?"

"No, Jim," replied Sir Arthur, "Miss Meade, though a miller's daughter, is not a mere young person. She has every qualification for ascending the social scale. Beauty such as that young lady's is a distinction in itself, even without such a manner as hers."

"Surely, sir," objected Jim, "a woman takes her father's rank?"

"Her husband's," interrupted Claude.

"And Miss Meade is as good as married to a gentleman," added Sir Arthur.

"Oh! an officer and a gentleman! I daresay! But Randal is only a ranker," Jim urged.

"He is a gentleman by birth," his father replied, with emphasis, and as he spoke he caught Claude's eye on him with a look of surprise and caution.

"Oh, I thought he was a foundling, brought up by some fgrmer, and rose from the ranks," returned Jim; "well he is engaged to a confoundedly good-looking girl, that's all."

"After all, what is birth to a woman?" Claude added with a sententiousness that highly amused his mother, "rank and name descend by the male side. The son of a duke's daughter may be only Mr. Smith."

"Mr. Smith with a difference, a duke's grandson," Sir Arthur interjected.

"Still plain Smith, or Smith-Swellington at most, sir. But as you said, beauty and manner are the only needful things for a woman, her name and rank come from her husband."

Sir Arthur was not sufficiently interested in the question to point out that this was not precisely the purport of his words. "Did I say so?" he returned with a gentle smile, retiring into the seclusion of his Morning Post.

"I hope you will go to no more tea parties, Claude," his mother said, plaintively, "they make you ponderous. I wish Clara would come, one does get so bored at Marwell. Didn't somebody say something about having a letter from her, by the way?"

"I heard from her to-day, here is the letter," Claude replied, "you don't care to read it, Mother? Well, it's all about nothing. Stupid dinner parties, very slow balls. Garden party at Chiswick, royalties gracious and boring. Love to Aunt Gertrude and Uncle Arthur, weather melting, season over, nothing more."

"I believe," Claude reflected when he was alone, "that the governor is half in love with her himself. Who could have fancied him solemnly giving out that her beauty was distinction, of admiring the manner of a girl so born? But who could imagine that I—Ah! Jessie! What princess ever moved with so sweet a dignity? Philip Randal, indeed! A clown by her! By Jove, I've lost my head. That I should live to be so hard hit! It seemed so easy at first The old story, rustic beauty, vanity, ignorance of life, and so on. I wonder if any man knows how great a fool he can make of himself for a woman's sake. I never thought there were such women. If my mother had been such a woman—or Clara, or if I had had such a sister—I might have been a better fellow; I might at least—Heaven only knows—" A hard, heavy sigh, almost a groan, broke from him; his face settled into a frowning rigidity, his eyes darkened, his mouth lost its genial curve. He turned to the open window, gazing over the star-lit summer night.

"I must lay my parallels with caution," he thought, a slight s...ile twiching his lips. "How in the world can I keep Clara in town? If she brings her heavy artillery to bear upon me, what is the good of all these gradual saps and well-laid trains? Why won't she marry Bardexter and help me to marry Jessie. I know she would like to be a duchess. She winds the governor round her finger and my mother sees with her eyes. She is clever. Her knowledge of life is extensive and peculiar."

"I am so utterly alone," Jessie mused as she passed along in the sunny morning, through the fields next day "and so absolutely helpless. I cannot be sure of what is right. I can only try to do what I think is right—if they would but let me! If I could see Philip face to face I might make him understand. poor boy; but he is so far away and letters are so different. He thinks himself so wise about me—in his man's arrogance. He—a man—is a human being; I—a woman—am a sort of weak attempt at one. If a man could once look into a woman's heart how surprised he would be."

She had reached the edge of a hay field which was divided from the next by a tiny wooded gorge, at the bottom of which gurgled and rippled a bright brown thread of a stream crossed by a wooden foot-bridge. She descended the slope with easy light-foot grace, and pausing at the bridge and leaning against the slight hand-rail looked down, arrested by the fascination of flowing water, into the brown, shallow stream, dappled by leaf shadows and sunlight.

She had not waited long before she heard a firm, quick step descending from the opposite field, and looked up into the handsome, good-tempered face of Mr. Ingleby, at which her own brightened, and said, with a pretty eagerness, as he approached her:

"I am so glad, Mr. Ingleby. I hope you are not in a hurry, I was on my way to see you."

"Hurry! My dear Jess—Miss Meade is anybody or anything ever in a hurry in the country? Look at this lazy, loitering stream; it seems as if it would never get to the sea."

"But it will," replied Jessie, looking thoughtfully dawn into it, "it keeps on, you see, it does the best it can."

"'Books in the running brooks.' What little sermon are you extracting from the water, Miss Meade?"

She looked up with a smile, and he noticed the strained serious set of her face, the blue shadows beneath her eyes, the general fatigued aspect which emphasized both her youth and her beauty.

"I have so few friends," she said, "and such confidence in you. And I wanted——"

"You were going to consult me?" he added, gently. "I only hope I shall prove worthy of the trust. And if I am too stupid, perhaps my sister——"

"No," returned Jessie, "I don't think Miss Ingleby would understand. Oh! Mr. Ingleby," she added, "it is so hard to know what to do—so very hard——"

"I should have thought, my dear child," he replied gravely, "that your life was marked out so clearly before you that you had no need to consider that question."

"That is the trouble of it. Others mark out my life for me; I am not a free agent. I am obliged to do what I know to be wrong."

"Surely not. No one who has charge of you would wish you to do what you know to be wrong," he replied with a gentle rebuke. "I know them all. They all treat me as a them all, Jessie, they are all upright, true people. Have you spoken to them? But of course you would do so before turning to a comparative stranger like myself."

"Yes," she replied with a wearied air, "I have spoken to them, each and all. They all treat me as a child, an irresponsible being. Philip forgets what a difference nearly two years makes in a girl; besides, he has been through such stirring scenes that he can scarcely be expected to give much thought to my small concerns—my life is not in perpetual peril, you see."

"She is going to break with that poor fellow," Mr. Ingleby thought. "Hard lines for Philip: but what could he expect of such a babe? And yet she cannot have asked to be set free. No man would bind a girl against her will."

"Jessie," he said aloud, "we can none of us take our lives in our hands and say we will do this and that with them. Our lines are cast for us, often before we are born; human beings are so linked and intertwined by ties, of kinship, duty and mutual service that no man can say I will go this way regardless of others—how much less a woman!"

"How much less indeed!" she broke out with a bitterness which startled him, "we wonder at Turks who keep their women in cages, and at Chinese who deliberately cripple them, but Englishmen are quite as bad; though they do leave their bodies comparatively free, they cage and cripple their souls."

"Tell me all about it," he said, after a brief pause of astonishment, "let us rest upon this felled timber in the shade and not excite ourselves, and you shall tell me, if you can or will, all about this caging and crippling, what you wish to do and what your good friends think of it. I am an old friend; I knew you as a very little girl—a good little girl though spoilt. I am the parson of the parish, and an old man in comparison with you. I ought to know more of life and its duties than Miss Jessie Meade, and few things would give me greater pleasure than to do her service."

"Yes," replied Jessie, as she took the place he indicated on the prostrate tree-trunk in the wood shadow and speaking with a seriousness that rather took him aback, "it is not like speaking to a young man; if people; are not wise at your age they never will be." Hr. Ingleby ruefully passed his hand over his crisp black hair, wondering if he had suddenly turned gray and if crow's feet had gathered round his eyes since the morning. "Wisdom and gray hairs" he muttered, seating himself at her side.

"And yet," she pursued, "you are but a man after all."

"True; I was never taken for a demi-god, to my knowledge, or a bear, even in youth."

"Mr. Ingleby," she continued, raising her serious, sweet eyes searchingly to his, "is not idleness a sin? Then why must I live in idleness? I have talents. Ought I to bury them in a napkin?"

"Good gracious, I hope she isn't stage-struck," he thought. "You need never be idle," he replied, with books, your needle, your pencil, and household tasks; all these things will prepare you for your approaching marriage. My sister will tell you better than I can what a busy, useful life you may lead.

"The old story," returned Jessie sadly. "No one wants my needle or my pencil at Redwoods. There are no books, no means of improving one's self. As to household tasks, my cousin has not enough for herself; if she had she could have extra maids. I cannot live at Redwoods; I am fretting myself away there and doing no one any good—ah, perhaps—perhaps I am doing harm—at least to myself."

So she spoke, unfolding her plans to him, her wish to support herself by some suitable occupation, or at der income, which she sadly feared, as she confessed, was partly made up by Philip, as would enable her to procure first-class instruction, particularly in painting, for which, she was assured, she had talent. Her marriage could not take place yet for some time. That marriage would place her in a position above that in which she was born; she needed some education for it. She wished Mr. Ingleby to persuade her guardians that Redwoods was no place for her, and that it was only fitting for her to go out into the world in some honest capacity. To teach in a good school for instance, and receive lessons at the same time. "You know, Mr. Ingleby," she said in conclusion, "that people always get into mischief if they have nothing to do."

"And I know that people never need be idle unless they choose," he returned, "especially women. What have you to do with art—the only great artists are men—or learning? Your duty, Jessie, is to be a wife and mother."

"Oh!" cried Jessie, with a little impatient, scornful turn of her head, for she was sick of the wife and mother cant, "is it absolutely necessary for wives and mothers to be idle and dunces? Men are not told to loaf about in idleness because they are to be husbands and fathers some day. Philip was not kept from the war on that account."

Mr. Ingleby smiled indulgently, as one smiles at the mischief of a pretty pet kitten, and gently patted her hand. "You shall have plenty to do," he said, "you know how glad I should be if you would teach in the Sunday School. Then I want to start a lending library, and a host of parish things in which help like yours would be half the battle. If you like I will suggest to your cousin that you should help in the household work and have more drawing lessons as well."

"Thank you," she replied, with an air so faultlessly inexpressive that he could not detect the sarcasm, "you mean well."

She sat with her hands, on one of which Mr. Ingleby had laid his own caressingly, clasped on her knee, looking before her at the brown flowing stream, in a sort of hopeless silence for some moments, revolving things in her mind, and wondering if she dared trust him with the truth, and if, even in that case, he would help her to what she knew to be her only safe course. He, in the meantime, was thinking seriously of her, and pondering what the key to her discontent might be. How account for the fatigued, worn look in the sweet young face? Had he not seen her only the night before at his own table, as happy, and pleasant, and unconscious of self as any well-conditioned young girl could hope to be? And those irrational fears of his respecting the danger of her frequent contact with Claude Medway had all been laid to rest. There was neither coquetry nor vanity in Jessie; it was evident that she and Medway were able to meet, however frequently, on such distant terms as excluded any possibility of touching each other's hearts; her position was high enough to insure respect, and too low to admit of intimacy. But there was a depth of sorrowful meaning in Jessie's face, and a gentle, patient endurance in the slightly drooping attitude that went to his heart. Redwoods must be, after all, a most uncongenial home for such a girl. Philip's distance and danger must be a heavy sorrow. And then Mrs. Plummer's tongue! Philip had been alluded to in a manner which indicated that he was not held the most faultless of lovers; perhaps there was some lovers' quarrel hard to bear at such a distance, and by the girl who was left behind. There was an evident desire to leave Redwoods at the bottom of it all, a desire due, perhaps, partly to the restlessness of a long engagement. Perhaps it was only a temporary rebellion against circumstances, brought on by a fit of temper, an unsatisfacttory letter from India, Cousin Jane's tongue, or some sudden disgust at the men Plummer's rough ways, mingled with the discontent of a spoiled child. But the look in Jessie's face touched him deeply, reason as he would, during the long silence in which he studied it; a silence emphasized by the murmur of the stream upon its mossy stones, the gentle sigh of the summer wind through the leafy boughs, the twitter and persistent chirp of chaffinch and starling, the hum of insects, and the rustle of small creatures among dead leaves and twigs. They were so quiet that a butterfly poised on a beech-spray almost touching Jessie's head, and a bee hummed about a spike of wood-betony which rustled against her skirts.

(To be Continued.)

SOME BIG LOCOMOTIVES

MACHINES THAT CAN HAUL 100 LOADED CARS.

More Cars to the Train Hauled Now-a-days Than Formerly.

"The giant freight locomotive of to-day," said a railroad man, "walks away easily with many times the load hauled by the freight engine of twenty-five years ago, and it has simply revolutionized the freight traffic business.

"The old-time freight engines weighed from 60,000 to 90,000 pounds, exclusive of the tender, which weighed from 45,000 to 60,000 pounds. In those days the freight cars were from 26 to 28 feet long, their average weight was ten tons, the maximum load carried to a car was ten tons, and the average number of cars to a train was twenty-five or thirty.

"Call the number of cars to a train thirty, for the sake of illustration, and say that each car was loaded to its maximum capacity, and you have a train of cars weighing 300 tons, carrying a load of the same weight, making, as hauled by the old time locomotive, a total load of 600 tons.

"The big modern freight locomotive weighs from 195,000 to 220,000 pounds, exclusive of the tender, which weighs about 140,000 pounds; or, to put these engine weights in tons, while the old engine, with its tender included, weighed altogether approximately sixty-seven tons, the modern engine, with its tender complete, weighs about 173 tons, and this giant locomotive can haul on a level road 100 loaded cars, and these cars are heavier than the old-time cars, and all carrying

MUCH HEAVIER LOADS.

"There are now made box cars of a capacity of forty tons, and on some roads of fifty tons. The forty-ton car, for example, is forty feet long and weighs nineteen tons.

"Observe that the capacity of this car is more than double the weight of the car itself, while in the old-time car, with the capacity and the weight of the car equal, there was as much dead weight hauled as freight. In all modern car building by better and more scientific construction a constant effort has been made, and with increasingly successful results, to increase the car capacity in proportion to the weight of the car.

"But, while such highly economical cars have now come into use, the great majority of the cars running throughout the country have not yet been brought up to so high a standard. If you should take the cars as you actually find them running to-day you would find them to average a length of about 35 feet and a weight of 15 tons as against the old-time 28-foot, 10-ton freight car.

"As to the load now carried, it is pretty difficult to strike an average, but that could probably be set down at 25 tons, as against the old-time maximum 10-ton load, making the present day average box car and load together weigh 40 tons, against the old time total of 20 tons.

"And now if you will take a train of to-day of sixty loaded cars, which is far below the average for level roads, you will find a big engine hauling a train of twice as many cars as were hauled in an old-time train, and these loaded cars weighing twice as much, or sixty cars of a total load of 40 tons each, as against thirty cars of 20 tons each, making the total load hauled now four times the old load, or

2,400 TONS AGAINST 600.

"And don't forget that while in the 600-ton load more than 50 per cent. was dead weight, in the 2,400-ton load the dead Reight is only about 38 per cent. and the revenue weight about 60 per cent. And, as we have seen, in the most modern cars the proportion of the freight weight carried to the dead weight is larger still.

"We have used as a basis for figuring a train of sixty average cars. But as I have said, that would be far below the average of the number of cars hauled by great trunk lines running through level regions. On such lines they have trains of 100 loaded cars, making the weight hauled, say, 4,000 tons; and trains of 95 loaded cars are not uncommon, and the average number of cars to a train on such roads might be set down at 85 or 90.

"These figures are largely approximate, but they show the revolution in freight hauling that has been wrought with the aid of the modern freight locomotive.

"The great locomotives have increased the efficiency of the railroads in many ways. If, for instance, it should be sought to haul with engines of the old-time power the enormously increased amount of freight that the railroads have now to handle, there would be so many trains on the roads that they couldn't move and the roads would be practically blocked.

"Of course, the big locomotive is vastly more economical. It costs twice as much as the old-time locomotive did to begin with, but that is really an inconsiderable item as compared with the increase in the amount of work it does.

"The big engine can be run by the same number of men that handled the little one, and with power brakes on the cars the same crew can handle the bigger train.

LABOR COSTS MUCH MORE

than it formerly did, and the big engine burns more fuel, and of course the cost of the supplies needed for the running of the big train is greater and so is the cost of repairs; but all this greatly increased expense is spread over so much more freight hauled that the actual cost of hauling has been reduced and freight is now hauled cheaper than ever.

"The great modern freight locomotive couldn't be used on roads as they used to build them, and so they lay now-a-days far heavier rails than formerly; where they used to put down rails of fifty or sixty pounds to the yard they now lay 100-pound rails to sustain the added weight of the great engine.

"And as far heavier rails are laid for these great engines to run on, very different appliances and machinery are used in handling them when off the road. In old times, for example, when they had one of those little old engines in the shop for repairs, if they had occasion to raise it they used to jack it up. Now-a-days they have tremendous cranes that will lift one of these ponderous engines as easily as the great engine itself will haul its heavy load on the rails.

"And as to the roads, again, besides being relaid with far heavier rails they have been further improved and the hauling of far heavier loads over them made possible by far better construction and by the straightening out of curves and the reducing of grades, and all these improvements have of course contributed greatly to the present day efficiency of the roads in the hauling of freight; but all these things together wouldn't count for much without the modern freight locomotive, the giant engine that walks away across the country easily hauling a hundred loaded freight cars."

THE NEW ARRIVAL.

The birth of a child among the working-class in Cumberland, England, has been from time immemorial, and is still, celebrated by the making of a mixture called "rum-butter." Its ingredients are butter, sugar, rum, and spices, and it is a really palatable compound. Every person entering the house where a birth has taken place is offered a taste for several weeks after the event. It is an insult to the child and its parents to refuse the proffered dainty, and not to proffer it is considered equally discourteous.

Old bachelors in India are indeed fortunate. Widows there are not permitted to marry again.