

# A DYING PROMISE

OR, THE MISSING  
WILL

## CHAPTER XXV.

The rain was now rushing in torrents straight from the torn clouds above, there was no time to lose; Claude took her hand and bid her run with him, and turning up a sidepath from the main road, they reached a large shed, half-full of bark and faggots, where they were sheltered from the rain, though from the open front they could still see the tempest raging over the great space of sky which the slight downward slope of the woodland from the shed made visible. Jessie turned shuddering from it.

Seeing the cause of her distress, he drew her back among the bundles of bark, where, by displacing some and piling others, he made a screened recess and arranged a seat for her. Her thick, irregular heartbeats became quiet and rhythmic, and a delicious calm stole upon her. He sat by her and took her hand; she did not withdraw it, his touch was too healing. The storm crashed furiously on, the rain rushed with a hissing splash on the leaves all round the shed, the air was still like the heavy vapor of molten brass; yet Jessie was undisturbed, her delicate cheek was tinged like an infant's and her breath came with the soft ease of a sleeping child's, she could not see the distracting dazzle of the lightnings in the pleasant dusk among the bark-bundles which emitted a wholesome forest odor. She leant against the bark in happy silence, it would be heaven to sit thus forever.

He feared to break the blissful silence or mar the exquisite peace of the sweet face so near him.

They were completely isolated, fenced round for the next hour at least by that blessed storm; there was plenty of time, without spoiling that perfect moment, "to look before and after, to pine for what is not." Besides, what could express her love and confidence more than that silent surrender of herself with the instant solace that his touch so evidently gave. "My bird will never escape me now," he thought, "she has fluttered home for good and all."

The tumult and tension of the last few days, with the climax of nervous agony wrought by the storm, had exhausted her; she only cared to be still now in the utter peace of Claude's presence. In the pauses of the thunder, they could hear each other breathe above the prolonged hiss of the rushing rain. The fragrant nest among the bark-bundles seemed like a sanctuary whither no unhalloved thing could penetrate.

Rush on, blessed rain; flash on, fierce kind lightnings; crack, rumble, and roar, majestic, deep-voiced thunder, tear the clouds and break up the heavens in your wild exultant strength; only let us be together.

That stern resolve never again to see him, all the struggles and mental conflicts, the thousand reasons for avoiding him, fell from Jessie like a garment, and when she began to let some cloudlet of thought drift across the happy heaven of her peace, she asked herself, more moved by Claude's eloquent silence than she had ever been by his words, why, after all, they should be parted? Could either have any happiness apart from the other? His very touch healed her. Surely God had brought them together and made them one. Excessive weariness is a narcotic, conscience falls asleep, the furies of thought sink to rest under spells of Orphean melody, and the tired soul refuses to heave the stone of Sisyphus any more up the steep: this is the Tempter's hour.

All the sophisms Claude had uttered and she had combated about marriage, the falsity and cruelty of conventions, the purity of a soul union such as theirs must be, came stealing back, unchallenged, unresisted, with tenfold force, in that beautiful calm. To Claude they came also with renewed force, the offspring of his own brain returning no longer children to be moulded and controlled, but armed men to conquer and subdue.

"You are calm now," he said, at last, breaking the golden silence with reluctance, and she smiled in reply.

"You were ill with fright, poor child," he added; and then Jessie spoke of the nervous trouble thunder had always caused her.

"Never before was calm in a thunder-storm," she said; "what a coward I am!" she added, with a low, tranquil laugh.

A terrific crack of thunder, as if storm, after growling sullenly in the distance, had returned in renewed fury, drowned her laugh.

"No coward," he replied. "Oh! don't do you remember the viper?" "Ah! I was frightened then," she returned; "I thought people died ofadder's bites."

"And you offered your life for mine. And you gave me something better than life, all that makes life sweet."

She withdrew her hand, reality

broke in upon the blissful waking dream in which they seemed to be in some higher, nobler state, disembodied spirits, anything but mere mortals bound by strict conventions and stern moral obligations. "No," she said, "I brought you trouble. But we part friends."

Claude laughed, it seemed more like meeting than parting. "Whither are you flying?" he asked, gayly.

"To my old school for a time to-morrow."

"Who goes with you?"

"No one. I go alone by the carriage."

"Jessie," he said, with emphasis, "this is a heaven-sent opportunity. You go with old Winstone as far as Yellow Cross, there you get out to pick flowers, what you will. Instead of following the cart, you turn up the Blackwell road, where you find me with a closed carriage. We catch the evening boat and are in France the day after to-morrow morning."

"Oh! this is madness!" cried Jessie; "you must not say such things, indeed, indeed!"

"I must," he replied, taking her hands and speaking earnestly; "you have given me the right, you must not trifle with me. Child, do you think you can take a man's heart in your hands and play with it, and throw it away when done with it? No. We belong to each other, Jessie; we love each other with heart and soul. No power can part us. Trust to me, wholly; no love is perfect without trust. Leave all these ethical and conventional subtleties to me. I am responsible to Heaven for both of us. Was not the woman made for the man, and only the man for God? He for God only, she for God in him? There is no wrong in such a union as ours, only the purest, holiest happiness. Besides, the last barrier is broken down. That miserable terror of Mrs. Grundy cannot come between us any more. You need never again be afraid of what people will think."

"What do you mean?" gasped Jessie.

"We have been seen. Don't you know what they say of people in our—in your—in short—"

"Oh! I know now too well and too late, but I did not know till Mr. Ingleby told me."

"Ingleby told you, did he?" he said, darkly; "it was like his confounded—"

"It was like the kind, wise friend he is," she rejoined.

"A reputation is easily lost—it only means being seen with the wrong man—"

All at once his meaning flashed upon her; she said nothing, for sheer anguish.

"We will go to Switzerland," he added, "marriage laws are easy there."

"We cannot marry, you have given your father your word of honor," she said, in smothered tones. He explained that such a marriage would probably not be valid in England, and was only intended as a concession to her scruples. "It is not only my word of honor to marry no one but my cousin," he added, "but it is Marwell Court and all that goes with it; these jolly old woods in which we have been so happy. And it is not for myself—ah! Jessie, as if I would not give up fifty Marwell Courts for you—but think of my people. It would kill my father—and as for the others—To be born and brought up in a place like this, a place belonging to history, with all sorts of family traditions and associations—such places don't belong to the man who actually owns them, but to the whole family, for whom he holds them in trust. One can't play the game of life for one's own hand—especially if one is an eldest son; you see?"

"I understand—oh! understand so well," said Jessie, brokenly, her face buried in her hands, while her arms were supported on her knees. I was not born for things like that—I should shame you. Oh! Claude you must marry Miss Lonsdale—you must forget me."

"Forget you!" As he spoke he bent over her bowed head and hidden face. She listened and quivered, and the old arguments came back with fresh and ever fresh force, while the thunder rolled fitfully in the distance and she did not heed it.

All she heard or heeded was the low musical voice, the unutterable charm of the unseen presence, the immense need they had of each other, the supreme importance of his happiness, the impossibility of either living apart from the other.

What was anything in comparison with his happiness? what was honor, peace of mind, heaven itself? There was no heaven without him, to lose him was hell. She was his, she lived for him alone, had no life apart from him. What if her life was laid waste and spoiled for him? As she thought thus she suddenly lifted her head and looked at him.

He saw his advantage and followed it up by eloquence glowing with suppressed passion; it seemed to

Jessie that they were already one and could not be parted without sacrilege. She thought of Shelley and Mary.

He drew a wedding-ring from his pocket and would have placed it upon her trembling hand. Were they not in the temple of nature, he said, with the rushing rains as choristers, the swift lightnings as witnesses, the deep organ-notes of the thunder sounding their wedding symphony? What moment could be fitter for their espousals? She must promise now and forever.

The word struck a deep chord in her breast; the supreme moment of her life had arrived. She listened to the wild storm-music so solemnly invoked, the rain trickling from the shed-roof into a pool formed by its own violence, with a sound that recalled the quiet music of the baffled water striving to climb the mill-wheel at home. Again she heard that the perpetually defeated water conquered by its persistence; she saw it grind corn for men's food and circle round the world in a wondrous endless succession of transformation; she saw the white feet of winged angels pass up the turning stair, as the heavenly beings floated upward; she heard soft strains of spherical harmony mingled with the mill-music as in her childish dream, while in the actual far-off roll of the passing thunder boomed the everlasting "Thou shalt not," against the grand simplicity of which all argument is mute.

She rose and left the dim recess, she would have gone but that he detained her with gentle force. Her slight figure was outlined on the storm-vent sky which had now no more terrors for her.

"Foolish child! What has frightened you?" he said, with infinite tenderness; "dearest Jessie, think for a moment, don't be reckless. Don't ruin my happiness, don't throw away my last hope. You are virtually bound to me, you have given me your love, you have broken with conventions, you are mine; in different ways we have compromised each other. The storm unnerves you, it makes you morbid. You know that ours is no common bond, that we are already one in heart and soul—"

"Claude, Claude, let me go!"

"You cannot, you cannot go in this storm. Stay, Jessie, stay, I will leave you, only stay in the shelter;" but she was off through the tangle of wet undergrowth and into the main road; he followed, then stopped, knowing that further pursuit would only distress her.

Just then the rain, which had died nearly away, changed to a fierce crackle of hail-stones rebounding from branch to branch and denting the bare earth where they struck; the storm gathered its dying energies for a final outburst. A blue sheet of light revealed towering cloud-masses above, colored the white hail-storm for a moment, and showed him the last glimpse of Jessie's dress before she was engulfed in the double darkness of storm and forest; and by the time he removed his hand from his dazzled eyes a fierce white zig-zag darted from heaven to earth, accompanied by a peal of reverberating thunder which seemed as if it would never end. And Jessie was under trees in the very heart of the storm!

He went back to the shed and leant against the bark stacks, intently gazing in the direction which she had taken; he was pale and had a solemn, resolute look.

"Whatever happens," he said aloud, and as if calling unseen presences to witness, "Jessie must now be my lawful wife."

The long unequal duel was at an end, but the battle was not to the strong.

When the storm had at last rolled away, and he had left his shelter, the figure of a woman issued from among the piles of bark not far from the refuge he had made for Jessie, and leant upon the rough bar which ran from pillar to pillar in front of the shed.

"You will not marry Jessie," she said, with fierce emphasis; "and you will not save Marwell Court, if it can only be done by marrying me, my good cousin."

The life-time of torture she had suffered in the last hour had exhausted her, there were dark shadows beneath her deep lustrous eyes, and her lips were firmly set.

"How can I hurt her?" she continued. "After all death is a feeble vengeance. Who would have imagined that this baby-face could play her cards so skillfully? Where did she learn how to fool men? Who gave her this insight, this intuitive knowledge of their weak points? Afraid of the storm, indeed! I said she was no ordinary girl. I was right!"

(To be Continued.)

## FORTUNE SPENT IN BUTTONS.

Two hundred thousand dollars was paid by Louis XVI. for one set of buttons for a waistcoat. This monarch had a positive passion for buttons, and in the year 1685 he spent a very large amount on this hobby. Amongst the items of his expenditure two are worthy of note: August, 1685—Two diamond buttons, 67,866 francs (\$13,500); seventy-five diamond buttons, 588,703 francs, \$115,000. It is estimated that during his lifetime he spent \$5,000,000 on buttons alone, and that at a time when the Empire of France was in a state of bankruptcy.

"I shall be married to Dick next week!" "I thought you said you'd be the last person to marry him!" "Well, I hope I shall be!"

## FARM-FIELD AND GARDEN

### TESTING CREAM.

A correspondent of Hoard's Dairyman asks the following questions, which are answered by Prof. E. H. Farrington.

"How can the creamery arrive at the cream patron's test if one day his cream may test 30 per cent., another 20 per cent., or 40 per cent? A composite sample is taken each day. Then this cream after being weighed, is put in the cream vat. The can must be rinsed out. We don't want that water in the cream vat, so it is put into the milk vat for the cream patron's fellow patron to have as skim milk."

"How can a correct test be taken? Cream will rise and get heavy on the surface. This cream question is one of the most important ones we have to deal with at butter factories."

When such cream as this is waiting for the gathering wagon, the driver pours it into his cream weighing pail, then back to the farmer's can, repeating this operation at least three times, he then hangs his weighing pail on the scales, fills it with the cream, records the weight in the proper place in his book, and takes a sample by means of a long, slim tube which is put down into the cream until it touches the bottom of the weighing pail, standing in a vertical position. This tube will be filled to the height of the cream in the pail and by closing a cork in the top of the tube the cream inside of it may be lifted out by taking out the sampling tube and emptying it into a glass bottle having the name or number of this patron thereon.

### THE AMOUNT OF CREAM

taken as a sample will depend on the length and diameter of the sampling tube, but if tubes of the same size are used for sampling cream in weighing pails of the same size, the samples will always be the same fractional part of the different lots of cream and it will consequently make no difference whether one lot of cream tests 10 per cent. and the next 30 per cent. of fat, the samples will fairly represent the cream from which they are taken. The samples taken at the farms by the driver are delivered by him to the buttermaker at the creamery. Here they are poured (after inspection) into the composite sample jars at the factory, and a test of such a composite sample ought to give perfectly satisfactory results.

You say that the can rinsings at the factory are not put in the cream. I do not see any objection to adding them to the vat, if the water used is perfectly pure and there is not an excessive amount of it. A little pure water in your cream ripening vat, will not hurt the butter, neither will it interfere with an accurate calculation of the dividends.

The weights and tests of the cream will show how much fat there is in the cream delivered to a factory in a given time (one month) and the creamery books should show what was received for the butter. Then, after subtracting the expenses of running the factory from this butter money, the cash left is to be paid the patrons. Divide the money by the total weight of butter fat in the cream from which the butter was made, and the figure obtained will be the price per pound of butter fat that the factory is to pay its patrons for that month. Each patron's check is made out for the amount of money shown to be due him, by multiplying his weight of cream by the average of the tests of the composite samples, which will give the pounds of butter fat in the cream, then by multiplying these pounds of fat by the price per pound, as obtained above, you will have the amount of each check.

### SHEEP BENEFIT PASTURES.

The addition of five or six head of sheep for each cow will tend to increase the productivity of a very weedy pasture, nearly, if not quite, to the extent of the amount consumed by the sheep. After a few years, when the weeds have been exterminated, the relative number of cows may be increased, but of course the proportion of cows to sheep, as well as the total amount of stock that can be profitably kept upon a given area, will depend upon the nature of the soil and the vegetation, the locality, the climatic conditions, and so forth.

Some sheep could be profitably kept upon nearly all farms. They will not only serve to keep the pasture free from weeds, but they will also prove excellent scavengers for clearing up stubble fields after harvest and the odd corners on the farm. And moreover, they will yield a handsome profit on the investment as well as providing the most wholesome kind of fresh meat for the farmer's family whenever it is desired.

A mistake often made by farmers who start in with a small flock of sheep to act as scavengers is to buy anything that anyone else may choose to call sheep that has little wool on its back and will eat weeds, and then treat them as meanly as their appearance seems to deserve. This does not pay. Good blood, individual merit, and good care are as

necessary for profitable sheep raising as with any other kind of stock.

Buy a few good, pure bred, registered sheep of any one of half a dozen of the standard breeds, treat them right, and they will do the handsome thing by you. They will earn their keep during the summer by destroying weeds, but they must have good care and feed during the winter. When a considerable number of sheep are retained and pure breeds cannot be obtained at satisfactory prices, good grade ewes will do, but nothing but registered rams of high individual merit should ever be used.

Such a flock of sheep of appropriate size will in a few years exterminate the weeds and greatly improve the grass of any good native pasture. Top dressing with manure and sowing bluegrass upon the bare spots will also be found beneficial. If, however, the native grasses are too badly run out, it may pay better to break the sod and crop it for two or three years and then seed it down again.

### CARE OF THE MOWER.

Before starting the machine see that it is all in order; knife sharp, sections tight, nuts tight, and pitman moving smoothly without striking anywhere. Use plenty of oil of the best quality, and see that the oil cups are not so badly clogged as to keep the bearing dry.

The driver should note carefully the sound of the machine from time to time, investigating any usually buzzing or rattling. The inner end of the knife is most likely to be dull because difficult to grind properly and the sections should be touched up with a file if necessary. It pays to have two knives so that a new one can be put in at any time without waiting for grinding, and it is well to have a third knife, new, for reserve in doing extra difficult mowing. Old knives may be set aside for use in mowing weeds, sprouts, etc. The track cleaner should be carefully adjusted so that the hay previously cut will not interfere with the knife.

### CLEANLINESS IN THE DAIRY.

In traveling over the country and visiting the dairy farms in the summer time, nothing has impressed itself so much on the writer's mind as the necessity of cleanliness, writes Mr. J. H. Brown.

There are so many ways in which milk may be infected with bacterial germs that are detrimental to its welfare, that it keeps a dairyman hustling to get ahead of the germs.

In these days of pasteurization there are some dairymen and hired men who think that if the milk is going to be pasteurized anyway, when it reaches the creamery or city dealer in market milk, it makes no difference whether any good care is given the milk or not.

The writer has actually seen one man spit on his hands right over the milk pail, while sitting on the milk stool, and just before sailing in at milking time. He was chewing tobacco and used the juice instead of milk for lubricating his hands. His excuse was that "all this 'ere milk is pasteurized before it is used." It is a fact that pasteurizing covers a multitude of sins on more than one dairy farm in the country.

Cleanliness in every detail is the most important point to be constantly impressed upon the dairyman and his help, in their daily duties in and around the stable, milk room, and everywhere milk is handled or stored. Cleanliness must be looked after in all the details of milk manufacture and in

### HANDLING MARKET MILK.

Every dairyman knows that better butter can be made in the private dairy, as a general rule, simply because one man, or one woman, usually has charge or personal control over the whole process, from the feeding of the cows to the marketing of the finished product.

Every patron of a creamery, no matter what his relation to the company may be, financially or officially, will always find it to his interest to see that his milk is furnished daily at the creamery in the best possible condition.

A disregard of any of the details which assist in furnishing pure, clean milk, every night and morning, always affects the quality of the whole of that day's supply of milk at the factory, and the cream and butter taken therefrom is also likewise affected.

The cows should be kept just as clean as possible. There is hardly any necessity of keeping cows with filthy flanks, belly, and teats. It costs barely nothing, except a few boards, a little time and energy, to fix the stalls or stanchions in any old cow stable, so that the cows cannot get soiled. Of course, some cows will soil themselves if they are obliged to almost break their necks to do it. In such a case it might be better to give the butcher a chance to do the "breaking" provided he is willing to pay a fair price

Theatre owners in London are being notified to make the necessary changes in their buildings called for by the theatre by-law, which will be rigidly enforced.

"Did he marry the girl who could paint things on crockery ware?" "No, he married one who could cook things to put into crockery ware."

A woman's admiration for a painting usually runs to the frame.