

A DYING PROMISE

OR, THE MISSING
WILL

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Philip was riding slowly home one evening after a duty visit to a distant village, his horse was tired, so he rode with a loose rein absorbed in such thoughts as that kind of motion favors. He was expecting, even dreading, though he did not like to own it, a letter from home; this mad dream must end then. He had just received a hint that he might be intrusted with a mission taking him from Myserebad for weeks or months. Besides the prospect of advancement this afforded him, it would take him from temptations which daily and hourly became more powerful; so he was both sorry and glad. Suddenly the sound of clattering hoofs and the startled cries of some native attendants roused him from his reverie, and turning he saw a runaway horse, ridden by a lady, thundering along the road toward him. The horse's mane and the lady's hair streamed on the wind their furious speed, the rider sat well and was pulling with all her might. He had but time to recognize in the pale face, flashing eye, and firm-set mouth, the features so seldom absent from his mind, when the clashing of elephant bells was heard, and the richly caparisoned elephant of a native nobleman, preceded by servants and carrying a gay howdah on its mountain of a back, issued from the shadow of some tall trees concealing a bend of the road and caused Miss Maynard's mare, which was new to India and terrified at these walking castles, to swerve violently and leap a low stone wall by the roadside.

Philip, who had stopped petrified at first sight of the runaway and was close by at the swerve and leap, could hear the mare's hoofs strike on the wall and the heavy double crash of her fall as her hind-quarters rose to the jump.

He turned in his saddle with sick apprehension, then sprang down and cleared the wall, on the other side of which the ground sloped steeply, and saw the mare struggling to her feet at the bottom of the little declivity, to which she had slid in her struggles after her tumble.

Ada lay at the foot of a tree; he supposed her head must have struck it in the fall. A red mist came before his eyes, he hastened blindly to her side. Her hat had fallen off, her face was quite white, her head slightly drooping to one shoulder, her arms were flung helplessly, one above her head the other abroad downward, the wild hair mingled with them; she did not stir a limb, she seemed not to breathe; he thought she was dead.

He knelt down and raised her in his trembling arms, feeling her pulse and vaguely observing that there was no blood on her, nor any sign of broken bones. He called her by her name and kissed her, and it seemed to him that some time must have elapsed before there was a little sigh, a quiver, then he saw the dark eyes open.

She raised her head and made an effort to rise, his firm clasp relaxed, and with a little help she stood on her feet and moved and felt her arms.

"Oh! there is nothing the matter" she said, with a smile and a gradual return of color. "But you, you look so pale and strange. I am so confused and giddy. My head!"

"Sit down, you are hurt," he cried. Then he placed her gently on the ground with her back against the tree, and knelt by her side and fanned her with his cap.

Their servants had in the meantime come up, water was fetched, the runaway horse caught and brought back, and Ada, who had been exhausted by her long struggle with the mare, and stunned by a blow which raised a small swelling on her head, gradually became herself again.

"I do think I must be a kind of cat," she said laughing, and looking up with a sort of shy confidence that he had never seen before. "I always come to life again, whatever happens!"

"Why will you ride that beast," he complained, "she is not fit to carry a lady."

"She is a darling. A Hindoo procession frightened her and the elephant drove her distracted." Colleen Bawn is afraid of elephants."

He took care to have the saddle transferred from the darling's back to that of his own tired horse, when he found that Ada intended to ride home, and himself mounted the Colleen Bawn, who was too much blown for any more cantrips. Ada made no objection to this arrangement, allowed him to lift her into the saddle and adjust her habit, which he did without looking up, and when this was done, and he was on the runaway, they started homeward at a walk, in the last rays of the sinking sun.

They rode about a mile and half in silence, broken only once or twice by Philip's inquiries if she was warm enough, for the air was sharpening; if the motion hurt her, all of which he did with a certain air of compunction, as if he had been the cause of

the accident; and to which Ada replied in a low tone, as if confiding secrets that must reach no other ear.

The ride seemed unending, and yet the dark trees of the Maynards' compound became visible with too cruel quickness; when he heard her low replies it was like heaven, and yet he hesitated to speak from a terror of hearing her voice.

The swift-coming Indian night had already fallen when they drew rein before the veranda, so that they could scarcely see each other.

"I must lift you," he said, when she would have taken his hand to spring; "you must not risk any jar."

Then she passed in without any good-night, and while the eyes were again changing the saddles, Philip explained to Colonel Maynard why he had been riding the Colleen, and then rode off on his own horse.

He sat still in his room for some time, not even trying to shake off the intoxication of the last hour. Why should he? It would have to be got rid of soon enough, and it was something to have lived that hour.

Home letters had arrived; he was in no hurry to open them; was there not a life-time to consider them in, and only this one brief hour to taste the exhilarating sparkles of that one draught of deepest happiness in? Why, he had held her like a child, in his arms, had kissed her unrebuked—but one hour since, and must the chill, hard agony of duty come so soon walking between them? His hands still thrilled with the anguish pleasure of touching the thick tresses of dark hair, when helping her to gather the disordered mass together, and his heart still ached with the reproachful memory this soft touch called up of the day of his father's funeral, when Jessie covered his face with the golden mantle of her own curling hair, and comforted him in his need. And Jessie and he were alone in the world, together, now as then, bound forever by a solemn promise to dying ears.

The unopened letters lay on the table before him, their white faces offering a perpetual mute reproach; but the low rich sounds of Ada's voice were still in his ears, and he still felt the throbbing of her returning life beneath his hand; he buried his face in his hands and saw the long eyelashes slowly parting and the wonder of the dark eyes in the sudden flash of returning consciousness. She looked so happy. He would give the whole world that Ada should not love him, yet it would be like death to know she did not. At last he plucked his hot face from his hands, pushed back his ruffled hair and stood up. The letters were few, there was none from Jessie, and he was glad, he would feel like a traitor if he read a letter of hers just then. They were business letters, some on Jessie's account, one on his own, he read them studiously, hoping to cool the fever that consumed him. The last was from a friend, it had the Marwell post-mark, and was in Mr. Ingleby's handwriting.

"Old Ingleby," he cried, "if he were but here for one half-hour!"

Yet what would Mr. Ingleby think if he could see into his heart? Many a time he had asked his advice, both as boy and man, from the days when he went to tea in Mr. Ingleby's rooms and wondered to see a grown man eat so many slices of bread and jam, until the landlady one day told him it was because he had given his dinner away to some poor man or woman, and grumbled that there was no pleasure in looking after the comforts of such a discomfortable gentleman. He opened the letter, foreboding no evil and read:

"Dear Randal: You will wonder why in the world I am writing to you, and when you have discovered the reason perhaps will wonder why I did not write before, unless, indeed, you rate me a meddler in other men's concerns."

He read on and turned red, still on and turned pale, and when he had finished, his face was gray contracted in lines of pain.

His blood throbbled in his ears with a dull sound like the old familiar throb, throb of the mill, he saw the dark water break to diamond-dust in the slow wheel, smelt the homely scent of corn and meal, saw the kind faces in the sunshine and firelight, and remembered all the pleasant peace of his youth. The yearning, unspoken tenderness, as of some dumb animal, in Matthew Meade's eyes, seemed to follow him everywhere through all those boyish scenes the mingled appeal and trust in his dying eyes stabbed him to the heart with perpetual poignancy; again he felt the tremulous fingers relax their hold on the clasped hands of Jessie and himself, and chill his marrow with their icy touch. How young, how utterly alone and defenceless Jessie was! And he had not understood the half-articulate cry in her letters. He would read that last letter offering release again. But he could not; he had torn it up.

Yet he had not torn up Ada Maynard's last letter before Lucknow, though it was quite illegible, darkly-stained as it was with blood.

There was no sleep for him that night, a great part of which he spent in writing letters and arranging papers and things of value.

Nor did Ada Maynard sleep much; she was too happy, and the necessity of living over the day's events was too imperative. Philip's face bending over her, the gray eyes wide with terror and alight with love, painted itself perpetually on the dark curtain of the night. She had seemed to pass, with the shock of her fall, out of the limits of life into the illimitable shadow of nothingness; whence she was called back by the stormy expression of a strong, deep love, to find herself cradled like an infant in loving arms, enfolded and supported in utter helplessness and peace in the power and tenderness of a great and enduring passion. It seemed to her fancy that life would never have returned to her but for the magnetic potency of that other strong young life upon it; the deep pulsations of the heart on which she rested seemed to have set her own arrested pulses beating afresh, the charm of the fairy prince's kiss had awakened her from the sleep of death.

"Young Randal seems to be Ada's good genius," her father said; "he is always on the spot in the nick of time."

"There is evidently a fate in it, Ada," Mrs. Ross added; and even Mrs. Maynard murmured something about romance, mingled with an interdiction on Ada's riding any more without her father's brother—which she had only done that day in consequence of Wilmot's failing to turn up at the appointed hour.

Would Philip appear at the ruined temple to which they were to make a party that day? was Ada's first thought on waking and rising with the earliest peep of dawn. He had been asked to join them and had promised to ride over in the afternoon, if not on duty, as he knew he would be in the early part of the day. She hoped he would not come, and yet she knew that she would be grievously disappointed if he did not.

They set forth in the beautiful cool morning, intending to reach their destination before the midday heat although at this season it might be borne, and by salamanders like Philip Randal, enjoyed. Ada's ayah had never known her mistress so concerned about her dress before; first one gown was tried and then another, this ribbon was taken and that discarded, flowers were chosen and then thrown away, because they would be faded before noon. But when these ceremonies were at last ended and Ada hastened, a little late, through the garden to the water side where their little yacht was awaiting them, it was not the neat fresh morning costume just received from home that caused Mrs. Maynard to exclaim:

"Really, Ada, I had no idea that hat and dress were so becoming!" but some spiritual cause, which at once fired and etheralized her face.

She received the attentions of attendant cavaliers with rather more of the accustomed hauteur which at once charmed and provoked them, and caused more spiteful things to be said of her than anybody in Myserebad, especially by a certain young civilian who was considered the most eligible bachelor at the station; she grew more and more preoccupied as the day wore on. Tiffin was served and eaten, and wise and elderly people rested in the shade to admire the prospect and smoke; the foolish young ones went off in twos and threes to explore the ruins or stroll by the water.

"He is not coming," she said to herself, declining to join any of these small parties and taking a chair by the side of her mother, who was made up in a comfortable lounge for a graceful, and as she trusted imperceptible, siesta inside one of the tents that had been erected by servants sent on before. But she listened still, and soon the color flashed over her face, her heart began the rapid drum music young hearts make at such times, and she drew a little closer to her now sleeping mother, as she heard the quick canter of a horse echo from the road and over the turf, and wished he had not come, and wondered why she had been so stupid as not to wander away with the others.

And yet when Philip had dismounted, given his horse to a servant, and walked to the encampment, speaking to the wise and sometimes drowsy lingers in the shade as he passed them, Miss Maynard chanced, singularly enough, to be just issuing from the tent with that calm and unembarrassed air which is expected of ladies on social occasions, and he of course stopped to speak to her.

"I was staying with mamma, but she is gone to sleep," she said, the low liquid tones which so charmed him; "the rest are exploring the temple."

"Come with me," he replied, "I came on the chance of seeing you alone. Let us find some place where we shall not be interrupted."

The princess air became apparent in the glance Miss Maynard directed upon Philip's haggard face and down-bent, preoccupied eyes, when it softened into a gentle smile and she reflected that a soldier—a really great soldier—as Captain Randal was one day to be, might be brusque even on such an occasion as this.

"Have you seen the waterfall?" she returned. "It would be pleasant there to-day. I don't want to climb over all the ruins after yesterday's bruising and jolting. I feel as if I had had a good beating."

"Ah! yes," he returned, abstractedly, "it was a nasty fall; yes."

"The fall was unpleasant," she said, with a demure air, reflecting upon the agreeable manner in which she had been picked up, and they walked silently on, skirting the rocky eminences on which the ancient temple was built and passing beneath some trees which grew down to the water's edge, where their yacht lay at anchor, passed and repassed by native boats plying up and down the broad river in the bright sunshine.

The rich level country spreading beyond the further bank was now only caught in glimpses through tree-trunks and beneath canopies of leaves, a flock of green paroquets fluttered out above their heads, other "strange bright birds" of that unfamiliar land flew by, and a strange lizard, with a brilliant throat, flashed across their path; the dark masonry of the old temple was lost sight of; though the feeling of this decayed witness of a hoary creed, its gloom and grandeur, and the majesty with which it traced itself upon the cloudless sky, remained with them.

Their path now rose a little, and soon they found themselves by a tumbling, plashing cascade, which swept with many a light wreath of spray down the rocks into a dark pool overhung with graceful bamboos beyond which the river came in sight again; and they saw buildings on the farther bank, sentinelled by palms, those trees so typical of the languid, graceful East. Surely, all their lives long they would remember those drooping palms beneath the broad, bright Indian sky.

"I don't know how to tell you," Philip began at last, when they stopped, Ada sitting on a rock past which the water rushed with a white flash and a sound like the mill-water many times doubled, and he leaning against the rocky wall a little lower down. "It is bad news from home."

She looked up; the light died out of her face at what she saw in his.

"Oh!" she replied gaspingly, remembering the bad news he had received on that night of their first meeting at the ball, "but there is only Jessie left."

"Only Jessie," he echoed, looking gloomily down at the swirling waters.

"I am so sorry," she said, in a voice so charged with sympathy and tenderness that it cut him to the heart; "she is not—ill?"

"No. Oh, no!—Ada, I have done wrong, very wrong, I never told you—or anyone—all about Jessie. It never occurred to me that it mattered. Still, I think I should have told you, if we had been a little longer together, because you were— you seemed interested in my life, and—it is so pleasant to have sympathy from you. Not that I ever dreamed that it could in any way affect you."

"Surely what affects my friend affects me," she said, accentuating the word friend.

"That is why I told you nothing; we were sworn friends," he replied. And then, in a few words, he narrated the story of the death-bed betrothal and of the proposed marriage deferred by the Mutiny. His relations with Matthew Meade and all the rest of his story, even his guardianship of Jessie, she knew already, but something had always kept him from speaking of his engagement; perhaps the subject was too distasteful. And when he did speak of Jessie, his manner was always that of an affectionate elder brother. Ada was under the impression that she was still a child. So probably was Philip; for him, she was always the little playmate of his boyhood, the undeveloped slip of a girl, who had bid him farewell nearly two years ago.

(To be Continued.)

About the ...House

SOME GOOD PICKLE RECIPES.

The pickling season is at hand, and in every well regulated home the housekeeper is "doing up things" for winter consumption: Here are a few well tried and excellent recipes:

Stuffed Peaches.—Rub the down off medium sized peaches and take out the stone, leaving the peach whole. Soak over night in salt water, then fill the centre of each with grated horseradish mixed with a little celery seed and a bit of ginger root. Tie each peach with a bit of white darning cotton, pack in a stone jar and cover with a hot spiced and sweetened vinegar. They are very nice to eat with meat.

Sweet Cucumber Pickles.—Wipe the cucumbers and pack them in jars. To each gallon allow a handful of salt, and pour on boiling water enough to cover. Let stand 24 hours and then repeat four of five mornings, or till the cucumbers taste of the salt. Drain well. Put three pints of vinegar in a kettle with four cups of brown sugar and a tablespoonful of mixed spices sewed in a muslin bag. Boil and pour over the cucumbers. Repeat every morning for two or three times, then pack in jars or crocks, heat fresh spiced vinegar and pour over them and seal.

Tomato Sweet Pickle.—A peck of green tomatoes and a dozen onions. Slice both; add half a pint of salt and let stand twenty-four hours; drain thoroughly, then put in a kettle with two pounds of brown sugar, half a pound of mustard seed and an ounce each of allspice, cloves, ground pepper and ground ginger. Add just enough vinegar to cover and cook slowly till clear.

Another Green Tomato Pickle.—Slice a peck of green tomatoes, sprinkle with salt and let stand twenty-four hours. Wash with clear water, then boil till tender in vinegar and water, using equal proportions of each. Then scald in spiced and sweetened vinegar, using sugar and spices to taste. These are delicious.

Fruit Sweet Pickle.—To seven lbs. of fruit—pears, plums, peaches or cherries—after it is prepared allow four pounds of sugar and one pint of good cider vinegar, one and a half ounces of stick cinnamon, and half an ounce of whole cloves, with a few blades of mace. Boil the vinegar with the spices (in a little bag) and the sugar, pour on the fruit, let stand two days, then heat the vinegar again, put in the fruit and cook gently till clear. This also is a particularly good rule which has been often tried and found "O. K."

Tomato Soy.—Take a peck of ripe tomatoes, eight tablespoonfuls of mixed mustard, four of salt, two of ground black pepper, half a tablespoonful of ground allspice, and four red pepper pods. Cook slowly, three hours, then strain through a sieve, add a quart of vinegar, simmer ten minutes, then put into small bottles, cork and keep in a cool place. This is finely flavored and will keep.

Canned Tomatoes.—Scald ripe tomatoes and skin them; place them in a porcelain-lined baking pan as you would biscuit and set in a moderate oven. When the juice boils between the tomatoes take from the oven, fill the cans and seal immediately. Keep in a dark place, after tightening the cans as for any fruit.

HINTS TO HOUSEKEEPERS.

Cans that have been discolored or that have been used for any purpose aside from their legitimate use, should be put into the wash boiler with water enough to cover them. Add pearline enough to make a strong suds and boil twenty minutes.

Here is something new as a discourager of mosquitoes. We do not vouch for it, but it is easily tried. Dissolve a piece of alum the size of a marble in a bowl of water and wet face, hands and neck with it. It is asserted not a mosquito will come within hailing distance.

Soap ruins the appearance of painted or varnished woodwork. It may be necessary to use it occasionally, but it should be done quickly and lightly, and be well rinsed off.

A torn place in a lace curtain can be neatly mended by wetting a piece of net of similar sized mesh in boiled starch and applying it over the torn place. When partly dry press with a hot iron and it will stay in place. By running a thread around it the patch will stay in place when the curtain is washed.

A little kerosene and no soap in the water with which windows are washed is said to give the best results. Soap, they claim, makes glass streaked.

Opening canned fruit an hour or two before using, that it may regain the excluded oxygen, improves the flavor. It should be turned at once into an earthen dish.

Lining a bureau drawer with paper fitted by folds into the corners is an easy way of preventing the dust from setting in the joinings. On each sweeping day, or at such other times as best suits one's individual convenience, the papers may be renewed.

Avoid sleeping in an undergarment that has been worn during the day. If the change from woolen underwear to a cotton nightdress produces a chilly sensation, then provide one of soft, light flannel.

WHEN JOHNNY GOES MARCHING AWAY.

George Kennan has described in the Outlook how the Japanese soldier goes to war. Mr. Kennan had started toward the railway-station in Yokohama to see a body of troops embark for the front. Before he had gone far he saw a crowd advancing along a side street to the music of a band.

He thought it was a company of recruits, but his interpreter said: "These no troops, these friends go give soldier banzai."

Mr. Kennan continues: "As the procession turned into our street I saw that it was composed largely of bareheaded men in the dark blue dress of a trade girl. In the midst of the crowd, under the biggest of the red-rayed Japanese flags, marched a single man in uniform; and this solitary soldier was being escorted to the station by a procession of a hundred and fifty or two hundred men and women with five large scarlet or purple flags, a long white streamer inscribed with Japanese characters, two square transparencies of white cotton cloth and a band of music." It is clearly of such enthusiasm that Japanese victories are wrought.

FAMOUS LADY MOUNTAINEER.

By far the most expert lady mountaineer in the world is Mrs. Fanny Bullock Workman. In the Himalayas she has climbed to an altitude of 22,568 feet. On the same occasion her husband broke the world's record for men by 311 feet, by climbing 23,394 feet up a mountain 24,470 feet high. Mrs. Workman is of medium height, and there is nothing in her appearance to suggest the strength she has displayed in some of her wonderful feats.