

A DYING PROMISE

OR, THE MISSING
WILL

CHAPTER XXXVII.

One the clear and sunny afternoon following the great thunderstorm, Jessie, palpitating with fear and shame, passion and despair, found herself flying past unfamiliar fields, golden towns and villages steeped in golden light, in the afternoon express to London—that city of marvel and splendor, whither gravitate the greatest thinkers and workers, whose streets are paved with gold and canopied with fame; Jessie, who had never travelled express before, or been twenty miles from the native steeple, and whose fresh heart had once thrilled at the very name of London.

But she cared little to-day whether she was flying, as long as it was away from the magnetism that must soon overpower both reason and principle, and from the disgrace that smirched her fair name. From both of these she fled, with unreflecting fear, seeking only to hide herself, and instinctively choosing the vast chaos of London as the most secure place of concealment. She thought it the best field for the exercise of the art by which in her simplicity she intended to live; but the main purpose in her choice of destination was concealment. Every part of the engine tore some life out of her heart, every throb roused her of hope and strength, since every turn of those rushing wheels bore her farther and farther from the one being to whom all her nature tended with irresistible force. But this flight was her only chance of salvation, as she knew by every pang tearing her weak heart. Had she remained, there was now nothing to save her but the strength of that weary, passion-strained young heart, to which she dared not trust.

For Jessie seriously believed herself to be ruined in the sight of the world; she supposed herself to have sinned conventionally, and thus to have incurred indelible disgrace. Had not Claude said so? Yet was her frail young spirit strong enough to resolve not to sin in reality, and thus incur disgrace in the sight of Heaven and of her own accusing soul, those severest, most awful of judges. Thus she rushed blindly into exile from all that could ever make life sweet.

But though she had now crossed her Rubicon and burned her boats, she was still perpetually urged by an inward prompter to return, to give up honor and duty, soul and body to him who was dearer than all besides, whose words were celestial symphonies, whose glance was heaven, to renounce all and cling only to that sheltering embrace; even now she had but to write one word and be happy, beloved, sheltered for life. And he was wanting her! Poor deserted Claude! How base to leave him! How could anything here or hereafter weigh against his happiness? What would she not do for him? Purity—what was that but another name for selfishness? Hers, yes! but his? no selfishness there; that thought was ever victorious when her heart was most cruelly wrong. Disgraced in the eyes of men! How that pain ate into her heart as she sped through the golden afternoon, with every fibre still quivering freshly with the passion of yesterday's meeting; but the disgrace was hers alone, it could not touch him; she was glad—not blaming him—never considering that he was the author of it. Disgraced! yes, but innocent. Claude's voice, his beautiful, love-thrilled voice, still rang in her ears, still swayed the tumult within her, the magic of his presence still enfolded her, his spirit blended with hers as she was borne past the flying stubble-fields, the glowing woodlands, the sunny downs. She saw the rushing champain steeped in the tender lustre of the autumnal day, red-roofed villages, fading moorlands, soft green pastures, reddening fern and browning heather, distant hills, mist-softened, all tempered by amethystine shadows, with an unseeing eye; her mental vision was filled with Claude's face traced on the dark background of the storm, roaring through the drenched woods. Claude's face, always beautiful, and now eloquent with passion. His words kept echoing in her ears—the philosophic theories, the reproaches, the tenderness, the anger, the sorrow, the pleading! Yet above all, like the voice of God above the tumult of the storm, boomed in deep rolling thunders, "Thou shalt not," silencing all else.

How terrible was this new and untried ocean of feeling, this strong clinging of soul to soul, this invincible necessity of annihilating self and merging one's being in that of another. She had never thought that womanhood was to be entered through this fiery baptism, she would fain have remained a child. How strange to think of hard-faced, common-place matrons she knew having drunk of this intoxicating cup. Even Mrs. Plummer in this light acquired an aureole of far-off romance, strangely suited with her homely activities and russet preoccupations; had not she, too, once waited with a

beating heart for the sound of a young footstep, in the twilight?

But Mrs. Plummer, on being gently sounded on this point, gave out no tender vibrations in response, and Jessie, seeking sympathy, turned to Sarah on that last night, when her faithful old friend sat by her bedside to bear her company after the storm.

"Yours was a long engagement, Sarah?" she said, with a tentative wistfulness.

"Matter o' fifteen year," she replied.

"All that time!" sighed Jessie's pure young voice; "but then you knew that he cared for you, Sarah?"

"Bless you! Would chap dern't care a straa," she returned, scornfully.

"Then why were you engaged?"

"Well! there. Hreckon a thought a med sowell hae me as ar a ooman. I was handy a Zundays."

"But didn't you care?"

"Nar a mossel," she replied, with cheerful indifference.

"Then why did you marry Abraham?" she asked, in tones not without rebuke.

"Wanted to bide long wi you. That why I hitched on to en, I reckon."

"Sarah, dear Sarah! How good you have always been to me!" Jessie cried, embracing her; "dear old Sarah, I would never leave you if I could possibly help it, indeed I would not."

To which Sarah replied, with a push and a pleased growl of "Goo on wi ye," but which she never forgot.

Travelling, like the celebrated bishop, third-class because there was no fourth, Jessie did not see two men travelling by first, the sight of either of whom might have altered her fate. So she sped on to her doom, sitting all alone in the bare, cushioned compartment, boarded off like a cattle stall from the other divisions, by a partition too high for sight but not for sound. She could hear two men quarrelling in foul language, a child wailing, a woman hushing it, and quite near her seat, the clink of handcuffs on a prisoner travelling to the county jail in charge of two policemen. She seemed to have been flying on for ages deep, deep into the wide and pitiless world. Over dark stretches of fading heather they rushed in the sunset, the crimson lustre of which was mirrored in black tarns; then the day faded, and the country became tame and monotonous; here were market-gardens robbed of their summer spoil, here squalid streets—was this London? No. They thundered on with shrieking whistle and increasing speed, now a crash and darkness close to her face followed by continuous rattling and cracking as if all was over, till daylight reappeared and she saw the long serpent of a passing train winding away behind them in the dusk. Then a bewildering network of iron roads, across which many trains careered with mad speed toward each other. What subtle brain arranged their course through that intricate maze?

But what is this, looming aim, solemn and majestic in the gray and misty sky, a sky so strange to Jessie, with its thick veil, through which golden lustre seems ever on the point to stream, a sky full of romance and poetic suggestion? Slender, unsubstantial, and mist-like as are those towers piercing the mist, she knows them well. This is London at last; there are the houses of Parliament; everywhere is the sparkle of innumerable lights in the faint twilight.

The magic city, the great heart of the nation's life, with its churches, palaces, and theatres, its storied buildings and holy places, its miles of stone-hearted streets, its millions of living, rejoicing, suffering human beings, lay before her at last; but she was too crushed and troubled to heed what would otherwise have filled her with vivid interest. The train thundered into the grim, great, dirty echoing station, and the stimulating sense of vastness which for a moment touched her at the first sight of the greatest city on earth, faded in that dreary place, the smoke and grime of which suggested the sunless prisons of hell, and which was large without grandeur, and gloomy without majesty. The noises were irritating, the strange cries confused her, the bustle and hurry bewildered.

Dizzy with the unaccustomed motion and smell of smoke and oil, tired and over-wrought, she stood on the pavement, jostled by hurrying passengers and their luggage, half-frightened by the hoarse shouts of "Now missed," and "By'r leave there" of porters clattering past her with laden trucks—not knowing what to do. Parents anxiously gathering their broods about them, grave but eager business men, fine ladies with their trains of maids and footmen, middle-class ladies with numerous parcels, well-to-do gentlemen followed by servicable porters, all sorts of people, hurried by, claiming luggage, calling cabs, meeting and parting from friends. Jostled hither and thither by the crowd, she drew aside beneath the dull yellow gaslight, and waited, alone at nightfall, without one friend in all that millions of that great city. She

watched the passing tide of passengers, timidly seeking some friendly and less self-centred face to ask advice. Presently she selected a prosperous, jovial-faced fellow carrying a bag; but on addressing him, was met by a look that made her shrink back trembling. She next tried a kind, comfortable-looking matron all bags and shawls, who measured her all over with a look of cold, hard disapproval, and passed on by the side of her husband, who regarded her for a moment with blank indifference. A sense of her own helpless isolation and of the wide world's stony cruelty, weighed upon her under those chilling looks and filled her with despair.

Yet some paces further off among the crowd were two men, each of whom was thinking of her, and each of whom would have given his life to save her from her impending fate.

"Keb, miss?" asked a porter, looking with wonder at her fair, troubled face, when at last she ventured to follow the crowd and claim her box.

"I—I don't know," she faltered, "I am a stranger. I don't know where to go. Would you be so kind as to tell me of a suitable place—quiet and respectable—to go to for the night?"

He looked at her with many shades of expression, all merging in amazement.

"What? Don't you know where yer friends live?" he asked, at last.

"I—I have no friends in London," she replied, guiltily.

"Something wrong here," he said; "you're from the country, never been in town before, T'll wager."

"No; I am quite alone in the world and I should be so much obliged if you would tell me where to ask for a respectable lodging for the night," she replied, earnestly and with pleading eyes; "I am come to town to find work. I have not much money."

He looked at her long in silence, then shouldering her light box and bidding her follow him, he went to a third-class waiting-room, where he stopped and told her to wait half an hour.

He returned punctually at the appointed time and led her up many stairs and across several platforms, a long way, till they reached a first-class waiting-room, where he stopped and told her that the woman who was in attendance was respectable and clean, and would be glad to let her have a room in her house for a moderate sum, providing she kept herself honest and respectable.

Then he took her to a dingy, thin-faced woman, who was making herself some tea with a furtive air and eating thick bread and butter stealthily.

"This is the young lady, Mrs. Barker," he said. "I must hook it now. The keb and box 'll be all right."

"It isn't much of a 'ouse for the likes of you, miss," said the woman, anxiously, "but it's clean and respectable. There's only me and my daughter, who does dressmakin' for a firm. Five shillings a week paid in advance is my terms, and a week's notice when leavin'." We takes in single men and does for them generally, but no objections to a respectable young woman as pays regular."

Jessie thought herself fortunate. Her whole capital consisted of thirteen pounds five shillings and sixpence; it had been acquired by selling two or three pictures at home, and would no doubt speedily be doubled and trebled by the same means in London; in the meantime it behaved her to be careful. She had to wait until Mrs. Barker left for the night, when the cab and box were brought by the friendly porter, whom she cordially thanked and bid good-night, offering her hand instead of money. The porter, though a family man and poor, preferred the hand and looked after the departing cab with interest. "A screw loose somewhere," he said to himself; "I'll keep a good look-out on the advertisements for a week or so."

So Jessie awoke next morning in a dingy, stuffy room in a back street of Westminster, to the beautiful music of the clock chimes, feeling as if all her previous life lay a century behind her and she had been transported to another age.

(To be Continued.)

MRS. NIPPY'S JOKES.

"I heard a good joke to-day," said Mrs. Nippy.

"Spring it," said her husband.

"When is a door not a door?"

"I give up."

"A door is not a door," said she, "when it is open."

"You mean when it is ajar, don't you?"

"Isn't that what I said?"

"No, my dear."

"Well, that's what I meant, anyway. Here's another. Why is a sheet of letter paper like a slow dog?"

"Don't know. Why?"

"Because a sheet of paper is an ink-lined plane, and an ink-lined plane is a slow puppy, and a slow puppy is a slow dog."

"I don't see it."

"It's just as plain as the nose on your face. The paper is ruled, don't you see?"

"Yes."

"And ruled paper is an ink-lined plane, isn't it?"

"Certainly."

"And isn't a slow puppy a slow dog?"

"Certainly."

"Then laugh you old stupid."

"I can't," said Mr. Nippy. "It's no laughing matter."

Chemist (to poor woman)—"You must take this medicine three times a day after meals."



PLANTING AN ORCHARD.

The first thing is selecting a good location. I would recommend high grounds and well drained says Mr. A. J. Hess. I think old ground free from forest roots is preferable for planting apple trees. The decaying roots have a tendency to induce diseases of the roots of the trees and in a short time the tree dies. The land should be in a high state of cultivation capable of producing any good crop. The ground should be broken as deep as possible; subsoiling would be better, enabling the roots to penetrate deep in the ground, giving the tree a firmer hold and doubtless longer life.

The first thing is selecting the trees. Doubtless we have all at some time in life had the experience that inferior articles are dear at any price. I know of nothing to which that is more applicable than the apple tree.

I prefer yearling trees, both apple and peach. The apple is then a straight switch free from limbs and can be easily taken up without mutilating the roots. See that your trees are healthy, free from disease and straight bodied. A crooked tree is an eyesore to start with and oftentimes if planted the bark is liable to blister at the crook, should the crook be to the southwest from the summer's sun. The wound gradually spreads until the tree dies. As to the time of planting, circumstances should largely control us. We usually have more time in the fall for planting and the ground is in better condition.

SPRING AND FALL PLANTING. Spring planting is all right under favorable circumstances, but we often have the extremes either too wet or dry. Should the season be wet, planting must be delayed until the trees have started foliage and fibrous roots, thus giving them a setback if not killing them. On the other hand, should the season be dry, the ground is porous, dries out rapidly and the tree dies from lack of moisture.

All things considered I would recommend fall planting. It is true they must be protected from the rabbits. The easiest and cheapest protection I know of is a thin, box lath coiled around the tree. Trees should be planted about 2 inches deeper than they grew in the nursery. All mutilated roots should be cut off smooth so as to heal as quickly as possible. The hole should be dug large enough in setting the tree so as to place the roots in their natural position, allowing them to extend in all directions so as to brace the tree.

As to the distance trees should be planted, that will depend upon the varieties of apples. Ben Davis, Wine-sap, Rome Beauty; late varieties of apples should not be planted less than 30 feet apart. Earlier varieties may be planted closer. Always set the tree leaning a little to the southwest as the prevailing winds come from that direction in the summer and will have a tendency to lean the tree if planted straight. When the orchard is planted with yearling apple trees, as I have previously mentioned, I would decide on the height of heading the trees.

Uniformity should be one of our aims when it can be easily done in shaping the tree. Take a measure and cut trees back to same height, care being taken to cut near a bud so wound will heal readily. Should it be cut some distance from the bud, the part above the bud perishes and is liable to injure the tree. When the buds have started, go over your trees carefully and rub off surplus sprouts with the thumb. Care should be taken to so start limbs as to have the tree well balanced. I prefer a number of limbs coming out from trunk of tree to a fork; it makes a stronger tree.

AND BETTER BALANCED.

It is necessary to cut limbs back for awhile so as to have short, stocky, stout limbs. Should the limbs have a tendency to run down, cut so as to have the bud above. That will elevate them, vice versa. I prefer low heading for many reasons. The limbs are a protection to the tree from the summer's sun and the winter's cold, rendering it less liable to be shaken by the winds and making the gathering of fruit much easier. The old proverb "a stitch in time saves nine" is applicable to pruning and caring for trees. Go over your orchard occasionally in the spring and summer and rub off all surplus sprouts. It will be an advantage to the tree, leaving no wounds to heal. One hour's work then will be equal to a day next spring.

I think it best not to trim fruit spurs too far up the limbs, as that brings the weight too much on the ends of the limbs, causing them to break. An orchard should be cultivated until it is five years old. I do not think it advisable to cultivate later than the middle of July. Too late cultivation stimulates growth and early cold weather is liable to damage the tree by the wood not being matured.

After five years of cultivation the trees should have the full benefit of the ground, sowing to clover and cowpeas to maintain the fertility of the soil. Quite a profit may be made by running hogs in an orchard, grazing the clover and peas, making the land more fertile and it is an advantage to have faulty fruit, eaten up, thus destroying many insects.

Manure or fertilizer if used should be well scattered around the tree. The fibrous roots will take up the strength. Should it be piled around the tree the fibrous roots will not leave the tree. I do not think it advisable to sow grass in an orchard. A tree sod-bound, seldom amounts to anything. The cultivation of an orchard, especially plowing it, is likely to hill up around the tree and it should be leveled down. In plowing an orchard care should be taken not to bark trees or plow too deep. I think one of the best tools with which to cultivate an orchard is a cutaway harrow.

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