

# Her Great Love;

Or, A Struggle For a Heart

## CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd.)

"Oh, Miss Deane, good-morning! How do you do?" he said in cheery accents, and mopping his brow as he raised his hat. "I am very glad to see you. Hot, isn't it? But I've been rushing about fearfully busy. Never had a more delightful morning's work, though, never! Are you going this way, and may I come with you for a minute or two? Thank you, thank you! The fact is, I wanted to tell you one moment. Hi, Robins!" He called to a man, who lumbered across the street to him. "Robins, come up to the Hall. I want you for some work at once. In half an hour, you understand; and bring two or three other men with you. Yes, I'm awfully busy," he went on to Decima. "Lord Gaunt's sudden return has brought a rush of work upon me—quite a rush. There's such a tremendous lot to do, and in such a short time. He talks of coming down at the end of the week, and not only that, but means to stay. I'm to get as much of the Hall put straight in the time as I can, and the remainder afterward. Been engaging servants all the morning, and wiring up to London for those I can't get here, and other things. The workmen will set to work to-day, or to-morrow at latest. Lord Gaunt has given me carte blanche. He laughed with satisfaction, and mopped his forehead again. "It was, 'Do what you like, but don't bother me with more than you can help.' Just like him. A strange man you'll think him, Miss Deane, but with all his abruptness and eccentricity, one of the best-hearted men in the world." "There's to be rather a large establishment. The horses are coming down at once. I'm sure I don't know how I shall get the stables ready. And, oh, Miss Deane—I really—scarcely like to say it, for I'm afraid you'll think it presumptuous of his lordship—well, scarcely presumptuous, but—"

"What is it, Mr. Bright?" asked Decima, smiling at his hesitation and nervousness. "Well," he said, still reluctantly, "the fact is, that whenever I consulted Lord Gaunt about the house—I mean the things he would like to have done—he said, 'Ask Miss Deane; she promised to help you; I didn't.'" "Decima colored. 'If Oh, but—' Mr. Bright put his hand upon her arm with timid earnestness. 'I was afraid you would think it strange. But you wouldn't feel offended if you knew Lord Gaunt as well as I do. It's his way to say things seriously. And you promised, you know, you promised!'" "Did I?" said Decima, with a faintly troubled look in her eyes. "Yes, indeed you did. And—and see here, my dear young lady," he went on, earnestly and yet deprecatingly. "I feel sure you will understand me, and won't think me presumptuous when I remind you that you have a great responsibility in this business—I mean Lord Gaunt's return."

"I—I do understand," said Decima, but faintly. "Well, I scarcely understand it myself," said Mr. Bright, with a puzzled air; "but I can't help thinking that he would not have resolved to stay on—in fact, that he would have been off to Africa—but for something you said. I didn't catch what passed, but that's my impression. And about this promise of yours; you'll admit that—that it's most important that he should be induced to remain, to settle here. Good gracious me, it will be the saving, the making of the place, the people! It will turn this God-forsaken hole into a prosperous village. Just look round you!" He waved his hand in a semi-circle. "See those cottages? There isn't one that doesn't need repairing. Most of 'em ought to come down. They're not fit to live in. They're fever dens. There's no proper water supply; drainage awful; no ventilation. I want a score of new cottages, decent ones, put up. Lord Gaunt will do it if he settles here, and if—if you'll help him."

"If I help him?" No wonder Decima shrunk back and opened her eyes upon him. "Yes," he said, earnestly. "It's a fancy of his—call it that if you like. But isn't it your duty—yes, I'll go so far as to say your duty—to encourage him, to help me to get what I want? I'm sure you are a good, kind-hearted girl—I beg your pardon. You see how carried away I am, Miss Deane." He broke off apologetically. "What I mean is that any one of us, any one of the county people, his neighbors, any one with any sense of what ought to be—and nothing is as it ought to be here—would do what I ask you to do. You look sweet and charitable and tender-hearted. Just think! Wouldn't you do a little—no, a great deal—to see these people properly housed, to bring prosperity to the village, to find work for the unemployed, to—to save Lord Gaunt himself?"

Decima turned crimson, then very pale. "I beg your pardon!" he stammered. "My feelings carried me away. But it's no more than the truth. You will save Lord Gaunt if you will only consent to humor this whim of his. I put it at its least, you see. If you refuse, it's as likely as not that he will get tired, disgusted, with the bother and the fuss, and rush off, and we may not see him or hear of him again for years; and away—puff!—will vanish all my dreams of raising the village to a decent level, and—and this, I'm ashamed to say, is more to me—of seeing Lord Gaunt settled down on his own place, and happy." He mopped his brow and furtively passed his red handkerchief over his eyes. "What do you want me to do?" asked Decima; and her voice was very still. "Mr. Bright ought eagerly at the assistant in her tone. "Just this," he said. "I've wired to London for a man to come down with patterns for curtains and—and all that kind of thing, and he will be here to-night or to-morrow. Now, I don't understand anything about them, but you will see him and tell him what to do? Lord Gaunt relies on you, and I'm sure will like anything you choose."

"But my father—I must ask him," said Decima. "That's all right," he said quickly.

"I'm going up to The Woodbines to see about some repairs—your brother has asked me about them some time ago, but of course I couldn't do anything. Last night, however, Lord Gaunt gave me full permission to do anything and everything. I'll speak to your father. I'll go at once. I shall meet you coming back. Thank you—thank you! You don't know, you can't fully understand, the service you are doing—ll c! us—these poor people—Lord Gaunt himself."

He was off before she could say a word, and she walked on, not a little troubled and uncertain. She could scarcely realize the significance of the thing she had promised. A few days ago she was just Aunt Pauline's "little girl," and now she was responsible for the welfare of a whole village—and the salvation of a man! She came to the church—the tiny church half choked with ivy—and leaning on the gate, gazed at it. Like the cottages, the whole place, it had a neglected air. The living was small the vicar an old man and poor. The man who ought to have kept it for God's house had forgotten it. And she could help him to remember it, and induce him to care for it!

She turned back with bent head, and just outside the village met Mr. Bright. "I've seen Mr. Deane," he said, with a rather bewildered and puzzled air—most persons came from an interview with Mr. Deane puzzled and bewildered. "An extraordinary man, your father, my dear young lady—extraordinary! Er—er—he says you're sure I'm said that you should do as you pleased. And you will help us, will you not?"

"I will speak to my brother—he must help me," said Decima; and she hurried on. There seemed no escaping this strange responsibility. She realized this more fully the next morning when Mr. Bright came up for her. The man from the famous decorators in London had come down. She went with Bobby, who had a morning off, to the Hall. "I hope I am doing right, Bobby," she said, as they entered and made their way through a small crowd of workmen, and the mess and lumber which they can so quickly produce. "Oh, that's all right," said Bobby, carelessly. "You and Bright and this awful swell"—as he caught sight of the gentleman from London—"can work your will and squander Lord Gaunt's cash while I smoke a cigarette in the gallery. He must be an awful flat to intrude a woman with the spending of his money, and it will serve him right if you ruin him."

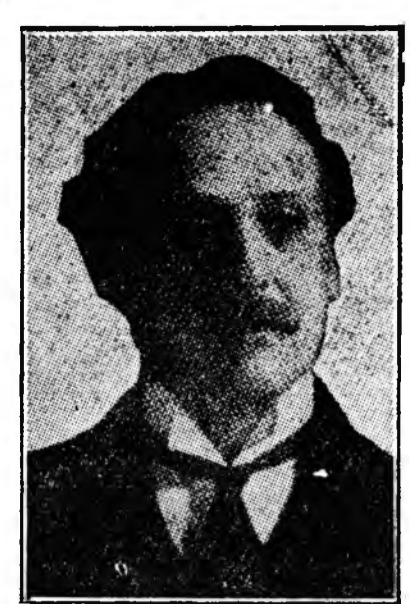
"Bobby, don't tease me, or I shall cry!" she said, smiling rather stiffly. "Oh, go on! You know you're enjoying yourself!" he retorted. The gentleman with the patterns got to business at once, and presently Decima found herself surrounded by squares of silks and satins, and tapestry, and little models of decorations. He was kind enough to advise when she was in doubt, and gracious enough to commend her taste. "Admirable, madame," he said. "You could not have done better. This room will be as perfect as I could wish, and now for the library"—he looked round the room with a compassionate air. "Not much comfort here," he said, "if I may say so."

"Lord Gaunt cares nothing for his own comfort," said Bright. "He is used to sleeping under a tent in the desert, or without a tent, for that matter. Better leave the room alone, perhaps." Decima looked round rather pensively. "Couldn't there be an easy-chair?" she said, timidly. "Certainly," said the gentleman, making a rapid note. "I know the kind of thing you'd like. A club-chair; a really easy chair, most of them are uneasy. And some new curtains. This is the kind of thing. Yes."

So it went on for hours, amidst the clatter of the workmen's hammers and the click of chisels, the tearing of paper, and the slapping of the whitewash brushes. "But—but will not all this cost a great deal of money?" said Decima. The gentleman smiled. "Well, rather a large sum, perhaps," he admitted; "but a mere nothing to his lordship; eh, Mr. Bright?"

Mr. Bright nodded cheerfully. "Money's no object," he said. "Don't be in the least alarmed, Miss Deane." Decima got away at last, and went home. She had a little headache, and felt bewildered and uncertain. "If Lord Gaunt should be displeased," she said to Bobby, "I should die with shame!"

"Not you," he remarked. "Nobody likes of that, especially young women. Now, if it were I who had had the ineffable cheek to pull a man's house to pieces and spend a fortune in sticking it together again—"



Lord Gladstone, The Governor-General of South Africa, where the race problem has become acute.

sence has been deplored, and how fervently it is hoped that he may remain in our midst. And notwithstanding the weakness of the grammar, the editor expressed very fairly the general sentiment. It is a misfortune for such a place as Leafmore to be closed, and the country rejoiced in the news of Lord Gaunt's return. Already it was announced that he would be asked to re-establish the pack of hounds which had been put down at his father's death; and the mothers of eligible daughters looked at their girls thoughtfully and speculatively, as they reflected that Lord Gaunt would be the best part the county had held for some years past; and Leafmore was a very desirable residence, and would need a mistress.

Mr. Bright got Decima down to the Hall nearly every day, and asked her advice upon every change that was being so swiftly wrought there; and Decima was so engrossed that she had quite forgotten the dinner-party at The Firs until, on the Tuesday morning, Bobby remarked: "I wonder whether the governor means going with us to-night. If so, I shall have to order a fly; otherwise we could walk."

"Oh, I had forgotten it," said Decima. "I'll ask him;" and she ran into the laboratory. Mr. Deane gazed at her with an absent air. "Dinner—Firs—Mr. Mershon? Ah, yes—yes. Yes, I remember. Of course, of course! I am to show him those drawings of the electric storage. Where are they—where? I put them somewhere for safety—where?"

Bobby "dug him out" at seven, and by a quarter to eight brought him into the hall dressed in his grotesque evening-suit. His neck-tie, notwithstanding Bobby's care, had already worked under the left ear, and he had ruined his shirt-front irretrievably by clutching the roll of drawings against it. Bobby glanced up at Decima despairingly as she came down the stairs. "Look sharp," he said in a tone scarcely lowered, for Mr. Deane never heard any remark unless it was addressed directly to him, and not always then, "or he'll reduce himself to the likeness of a rag-bag before we get him there. I say, what a swell you are!" he added, taking her by the shoulders and regarding her with reluctant fraternal admiration.

And, indeed, she looked like a dainty flower in the dimly lighted hall. She wore one of the dinner-dresses Lady Pauline had made for the visit to London; a soft gray, as usual, but fitting the slim, graceful figure exquisitely. It was open a very little at the neck, and it had an air of soft splendor which struck even Bobby. "Kindly mention to the admiring crowds, as we go along, that you are my sister, will you?" he remarked. "I feel rather proud of you."

She put her arm round his neck; but he dodged her with: "Ah, would you! Never, never attempt to cuddle a man when he has got a three-inch collar and a white tie on! You'd ruin them. Come on! Hi, father! where are you going?" for Mr. Deane was shuffling toward his beloved den. "This way, going to dine with Mr. Mershon, you know. Get in and hold him tight, Decie!"

When they reached The Firs, a footman in brilliant too brilliant—livery opened the door of the fly; another stood in the hall—a handsome hall enough, with palms and statuary; but how different to the hall at Leafmore!—and flinging open the drawing-room door, announced them with a pompous air. Decima was almost dazzled by the over-lighted, overglit room. Its newness was everywhere—in the decorations, the furniture, the pictures. It "seared one's eyes," as poor William Morris used to say. Decima was aware presently that a lady was standing in front of her. She was past middle age, with her hair streaked with gray, with a thin figure and a pale face, in which timidity, almost fear, was plainly expressed as she glanced from Mr. Mershon to Decima and back again. Mr. Mershon, in too well-fitting an evening-dress with the too large diamond stud, came up.

"My half-sister, Mrs. Sherborne," he said. "She has come to run the house for me." As he spoke, he shot a sharp, half-savage glance at her, and with a nervous quaver in her voice, Mrs. Sherborne said: "I—I am very glad to see you. Will you come upstairs and take your cloak off? I—I will go with you."

# WHEN YOU'RE THIRSTY TRY 'SALADA'

Iced Tea with a slice of lemon in it. It will refresh you wonderfully and besides it's invigorating and absolutely pure. Allow the tea to steep for five minutes and then pour off into another vessel to cool gradually. Never use artificial means of cooling until ready to serve; then add sugar, ice and lemon.

## On the Farm

Why Spraying Is Necessary.

Past and gone are those days when large crops of perfect fruit, uninjured by curculio, codling moth or scab, could be harvested without thought of sprays and spray pumps, of lead arsenate or paris green, of lime-sulphur and Bordeaux mixture, and of other treatments for the troubles which contest the modern fruit grower's success, writes Mr. J. G. Sanders.

In the early days, young orchards required but little care after planting, other than occasional cultivation, until in due time the perfect, unblemished fruit was gathered. A gradual change has taken place with the introduction and dissemination of new insect pests and plant diseases, until now spray apparatus and materials are absolutely necessary.

These changing conditions have taught us a strong lesson of the possibility of even more disastrous introduction of pests. There are still many serious pests in foreign lands which have not become established in our country, but doubtless will be sooner or later if systems of rigid inspection of imported plant material are not soon inaugurated. An insect or disease which is unimportant in its native land, may become a serious menace when placed under new conditions and environment, where climate is favorable and natural enemies are lacking.

The awakening of the entomologists and the public in general to the danger of introducing serious insect pests and fungus diseases was caused more largely by the introduction of San Jose scale than any other one factor. No other insect has caused so much expense and legislation as the San Jose scale (a harmless insect in its native home in central China), which infests a wide range of fruit trees as well as many ornamentals. If there had been no inspection service during the last fifteen or more years, this pest would now be found in every county and township in Canada where deciduous trees are growing. The damage caused by this tiny insect was early recognized by entomologists and means were sought to prevent its spread. But before adequate means of control were discovered it had gained a foothold in many sections of some of the country, and in spite of all precautions has gradually spread.

What is true of fruit trees is also true of shade trees. Take, for instance, the injury to our beautiful birch trees by insects. Such a general destruction of birch trees in ornamental planting has occurred in the last four or five years throughout some sections that the attention of a great many people has been attracted to the loss. Several theories have been advanced for the gradual dying of the birch trees, but the real cause is the bronze colored beetle.

The small white larva of the bronze birch-borer burrows just beneath the bark, eating its way irregularly around the trunk and

limbs of the tree in the sap-bearing layers, leaving winding galleries of castings and cutting off the flow of sap beyond the point attacked. On the younger branches these winding galleries are revealed by the corresponding ridges on the exterior of the limb.

No adequate remedy has been found to combat this pest, although a heavy coating of whitewash applied in spring before egg laying begins might prove a valuable check. It is always advisable to cut out and burn all infested limbs very early each year before the adults emerge.

Until this serious infestation passes over, it is not advisable to plant any birches, for loss of the tree is almost sure to result.

### Disinfecting Cow Stables.

Disinfectants cannot destroy germs if they do not come into direct contact with them. Disinfectants should be applied in sufficient quantity thoroughly to saturate the surfaces, after the adhering particles of dirt are removed. In the application of the disinfectant in cow stables, it is well to use a broom or stiff brush and thoroughly scrub the floor, feed troughs, stanchions and lower parts of the walls. The solution can be applied to the ceilings and upper parts of the side walls with a spray pump, and must be carried into any crevice and recess into which dirt can enter.

### AUSTRALIA LOSING SETTLERS

Remarkable Decline in Immigration From Great Britain.

There has been a remarkable falling off in emigration from Great Britain to the Australian colonies during the present year, according to the steamship companies concerned in this traffic. It is put down to the present high level of wages and the continued trade boom which give men employment in England. Despite this, however Canada continues to get a very large number of emigrants from England and Scotland, so there are probably other causes for the decrease in the Australian figures.

This loss in traffic has been felt rather seriously by the steamship lines running to the South Sea. Last year there was a tremendous demand for passages to Australia and New Zealand, and to meet the trade the steamship companies increased the accommodations on each vessel and also put on new steamers. To-day the ships are running very light, even on reduced schedules.

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