The Canadian Champion

AND COUNTY OF HALTON INTELLIGENCER.

VOLUME 27. MILTON, THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 1887. NO. 10.

Siftings of the Division Courts of the Co. of Halton.

For the Year 1887.

Place of Sittings and P. O. Address of Clerks.	Clerks.	Jan.	Mar.	May.	July.	Sep.	Nov.	Hour of Opening
1 Milton	Wm. Panton.	28	25	27	15	30	25	10 a.m.
2 Oakville	R. Balmer	12	9	4	13	7	2	10 a.m.
3 Georgetown	L. Grant	18	15	10	12	13	8	9.30 a.m
4 Acton	J. Matthews	20	17	12	"	15	10	10 a.m.
5 Campbellville	S. R. Lister	14	11	6	"	9	4	9 30 "
6 Burlington	G. C. Bastedo	11	8	3	"	6	1	11 "

General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings, with or without Jury. Tuesday 14th June, and 13th December, at 10 a.m.

County Court Sittings, without Jury, Tuesday, 4th April, and 3rd October, at 10 a. m.

County Court Sittings—Formerly Terms—Monday, 3rd January, 4th April, 4th July, and 3rd October at 10 a.m.

Judges Chambers.—Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week, except on Court days and during vacation, at 11 a.m.

Audit of Criminal Justice Accounts.—Tuesday, 4th January, 5th April, 5th July & 4th October.

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DORA THORNE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HER MOTHER'S SIN

"I met her first nearly three years ago, at Knutsford—she was out alone, and I saw her. I loved her then as I love her now. By mere accident I heard her deplore the lonely, isolated life she led; and that in such terms that I pitied her. She was young, beautiful, full of life and spirits; she was pining away in that remote home, shut out from the living world she longed for with a longing I cannot put into words. I spoke to her—do not blame her, she was a beautiful, ignorant child. I spoke to her, asking some questions about the road, and she replied. Looking at her face, I swore that I would release her from the life she hated and take her where she would be happy.

"I met her again and again. Heaven pardon me if I did my best to awaken an interest in her girlish heart! I told her stories of travel and adventures that stirred all the romance in her nature. With the keen instinct of love I understood her character, and played upon its weakness while I worshipped its strength.

"She told me of a sad, patient young mother who never smiled, of a father who was abroad and would not return for many years. Pardon me, my lord, if, in common with many others, I believed that story to be one told to appease her. Pardon me, if I doubted—as many others did—whether the sad young mother was your wife.

"I imagined that I was going to rescue her from a false position when I asked her to be my wife. She said her mother dreaded all mention of love and lovers, and I prayed her to keep my love a secret from all the world.

"I make no excuses for myself; she was young and innocent as a dreaming child. I ought to have looked on her beautiful face and left her. My lord, am I altogether to blame? The lonely young girl at Knutsford pined for what I could give her—happiness and pleasure did not seem so far removed from me. Had she been in her proper place, I could never have addressed her.

"Not to you can I tell the details of my love story—how I worshipped with passionate love the beautiful, innocent child who smiled into my face and drank in my words. I asked her to be my wife and she promised. My lord, I never for one moment dreamed that she would ever have a home with you—it did not seem to me possible. I intended to return and marry her, firmly believing that in some respects my rank and condition in life were better than her own. She promised to be true to me, to love no one else, to wait for me, and to marry me when I returned.

"I believe now that she never loved me. My love and devotion were but a pleasant interruption to the monotony of her life. They were to blame also who allowed her no pleasures—who forced her to resort to this stolen one.

"My lord, I placed a ring upon your daughter's finger, and pledged my faith to her. I cannot tell you what my love was like; it was a fierce fire that consumed me night and day.

"I was to return and claim her in two years. Absence made me love her more. I came back, rich in gold, my heart full of happiness, hope making everything bright and beautiful. I went straight to Knutsford—alas! she was no longer there! and then I heard that the girl I loved so deeply and so dearly was Lord Earle's daughter.

"I did not dream of losing her; birth, title, and position seemed as nothing beside my mighty passionate love. I thought nothing of your consent, but only of her; and I went to Earlescourt. My lord, I wrote to her, and my heart was in every line. She sent me a cold reply. I wrote again; I swore I would see her. She sent her sister to me with the reply. Then I grew desperate, and vowed I would lay my claim before you. I asked her to meet me out in the grounds, at night, unseen and unknown. She consented, and on Thursday night I met her near the shrubbery.

"How I remember her pretty, pleading words, her beautiful proud face! She asked me to release her. She said that it had been all child's play—a foolish mistake—and that, if I would give her her freedom from a foolish promise, she would always be my friend. At first I would not hear of it; but who could have refused her? If she had told me to lie down at her feet and let her trample the life out of me, I should have submitted.

"I promised to think of her request, and we walked on to the border of the lake. Every hair upon her dear head was sacred to me; the pretty proud ways that tormented me delighted me too. I promised I would release her, and give her the freedom she asked, if she told me I was not giving her up to another. She would not. Some few words drove me mad with jealous rage—yes, mad, the blood seemed to boil in my veins. Suddenly I caught sight of a gold locket on her neck, and I asked her whose portrait it contained. She refused to tell me. In the madness of my rage I tried to snatch it from her. She caught it in her hands, and, shrinking back from me, fell into the lake.

"I swear it was a sheer accident—I would not have hurt a hair of her head, but, oh, my lord, pardon me—pardon me for heaven's sake!—I might have saved her, and I did not. I might have plunged in after her and brought her back, but jealousy whispered to me, 'Do not save her for another—let her die.' I stood upon the bank and saw the water close over her head. I saw the white hands thrown up in wild appeal, and never moved or stirred. I stood by the lakeside all night, and fled when the morning dawned in the sky.

"I killed her. I might have saved her, but did not. Anger of yours can add nothing to my torture; think what it has been. I was a strong man two days since; when the sun sets I shall be numbered with the dead. I do not wish to screen myself from justice. I have to meet the wrath of heaven, and that appalls me as the anger of man never could. Send the officers of the law for me. If I am not dead, let them take me; if I am, let them bury me as they would a dog. I ask no mercy, no compassion, no forgiveness; I do not merit it.

"If by any torture, any death, I could undo what I have done and save her, I would suffer the extremity of pain; but I cannot. My dead will be judged in eternity.

"My lord, I write this confession partly to ease my own conscience, partly to shield others from unjust blame. Do not curse me, because through my mad jealousy, my miserable revenge, as fair and pure a child as father ever loved has gone to her rest."

So the strange letter concluded. Lord Earle read every word, looking over and anon at the quiet, dead face that had kept the secret hidden. Every word seemed burned in upon his brain, every word seemed to rise before him like an accusing spirit.

He stood face to face at last with the sin of his youth; it had found him out. The wilful, wanton disobedience; the marriage that had broken his father's heart, and struck Ronald himself from the roll of useful men; the cruel neglect of duty; the throwing out of all ties; the indulgence in proud, unforgiving temper, the abandonment of wife and children—all ended there. But for his sins and errors, that white, still figure, might now have been radiant with life and beauty.

The thought stung him with cruel pain. It was his own fault. Beatrice might have erred in meeting Hugh Fernely; Fernely had done wrong in trying to win that young, child-like heart for his own; but he who left his children to strange hands, who neglected all duties of parentage, had surely done the greatest wrong.

For the first time his utter neglect of duty came home to him. He had thought himself rather a modern hero, but now he caught a glimpse of himself as he was in reality. He saw that he was not even a brave man; for a brave man neglects no duty. It was pitiful to see how sorrow had bent his stately figure and lined his proud face. He leaned over his dead child, and cried to her to pardon him, for it was all his fault. Lady Helena, seeking him in the gloom of that solemn death-chamber, found him weeping as strong men seldom weep.

He did not give her the letter, or tell her aught of Hugh Fernely's confession. He turned to her with as sad a face as man ever wore.

"Mother," he said, "I want my kinsman, Lionel Dacre. Let him be sent for, and asked to come without delay."

In this, the crowning sorrow of his life, he could not stand alone. He must have some one to think and to plan for him, some one to help him bear the burden that seemed too heavy for him to carry. Some one must see the unhappy man who had written that letter, and it should be a kinsman of his own.

Not the brave, sad young lover, fighting alone with his sorrow—he must never know the tragedy of that brief life. To him her memory must be sacred and untarnished, unmarred by the knowledge of her folly.

Lady Helena was not long in discovering Lionel Dacre's whereabouts. One of the footmen who had attended him to the station remembered the name of the place for which he had taken a ticket. Lady Helena knew that Sir Wilfred Greston lived close by, and she sent at once to his house.

Fortunately the messenger found him. Startled and horrified by the news, Lionel lost no time in returning. He could not realize that his beautiful young cousin was really dead. Her face, in its smiling brightness, haunted him. Her voice seemed to mingle with the wild clang of the iron wheels. She was dead, and he was going to console her father.

No particulars of her death had reached him; he now only knew that she had walked out in her sleep, and had fallen into the lake.

Twenty-four hours had not elapsed since Lord Earle cried out in his grief for his young kinsman, yet already he stood by his side.

"Persuade him to leave that room," said Lady Helena. "Since our darling was carried there he has never left her side."

Lionel did as requested. He went straight to the library, and sent for Lord Earle, saying that he could not at present look upon the sad sight in the gloomy death-chamber.

While waiting there he heard of Lillian's dangerous illness. Lady Helena told him how she had changed before her sister's death; and, despite the young man's anger, his heart was sore and heavy.

He hardly recognized Lord Earle, in the aged, altered man who soon stood before him. The long watch, the bitter remorse, the miserable consciousness of his own folly and errors, had written strange lines upon his face.

"I sent for you, Lionel," he said, "because I am in trouble—so great that I can no longer bear it alone. You must think and work for me; I can do neither for myself."

Looking into his kinsman's face, Lionel felt that more than the death of his child weighed upon the heart and mind of Ronald Earle.

"There are secrets in every family," said Ronald; "henceforth there will be one in mine—and it will be the true story of my daughter's death. While I knelt yesterday by her side, this letter was brought to me. Read it, Lionel, then act for me."

He read it slowly, tears gathering fast in his eyes, his lips quivering, and his hands tightly clinched.

"My poor Beatrice!" he exclaimed; and then the strength of his young manhood gave way, and Lionel Dacre wept as he had never wept before. "The mean, pitiful scoundrel!" he cried, angry indignation raising as he thought of her cruel death. "The wretched villian—to stand by while she died!"

"Hush!" said Lord Earle. "He is gone to his account. What have you to say to me, Lionel? Because I had a miserable quarrel with my wife I abandoned my children. I never cared to see them from the time they were babes until they were women grown. How guilty am I? That man believed he was about to raise Beatrice in the social scale when he asked her to be his wife. He did not think her mother was my wife, or, as he says, he would never have dreamed of proposing to marry my daughter. If he merits blame, what do I deserve?"

"It was a false position, certainly, replied Lionel Dacre.

"This secret must be kept inviolate," said Lord Earle. "Lord Airlie must never know it—it would kill Lady Helena, I believe. One thing puzzles me, Lionel—Fernely says Lillian loves him. I do not think that is true. Oh, Lord Earle, you may be proud of Lillian. She is the noblest, truest girl that ever lived. Why, she sacrificed her own love, her own happiness, for her sister! She loved me; and, when this wedding, that will never now take place, was over, I intended to ask you to give me Lillian. One night, quite accidently, while I was wandering in the grounds with a cigar, I saw her speaking to a stranger, her fair, sweet face full of pity and compassion, which I mistook for love. Shame to me that I was base enough to doubt her—that I spoke the words to her I uttered! I demanded to know who it was she had met, and why she had met him. She asked me to trust her, saying she could not tell me. I stabbed her with cruel words, and left her, vowing that I would never see her again. Her sister must have trusted her with her secret, and she would not divulge it."

"We cannot ask her now," cried Lord Earle. "My mother tells me she is very ill."

"I must see her," cried Lionel, "and ask her to pardon me if she can. What am I to do for you, Lord Earle? Command me as though I were your own son."

"I want you to go to the cottage," said Ronald, "and see if the man is living or dead. You will know how to act. I need not ask a kinsman and a gentleman to keep my secret."

In a few minutes Lionel Dacre was on his way to the cottage, riding as though it were for dear life. Death had been still more swift. Hugh Fernely lay dead.

The cottager's wife told Lionel how the children out at play had found a man lying in the dank grass near the pond, and how her husband, in his own strong arms, had brought him to their abode. He still lay for many hours, and then asked for pen and ink. He was writing, she said, nearly all the night, and afterward prayed her husband to take the letter to Lord Earle. The man refused any nourishment. Two hours later they went in to persuade him to take some food, and found him lying dead, his face turned to the morning sky.

Lionel Dacre entered the room. The hot anger died out of his heart as he saw the anguish death had marked upon the white countenance. What torture must the man have suffered, what hours of untold agony, to have destroyed him in so short a time! The dark, handsome face appeared to indicate that the man had been dying for years.

Lionel turned reverently away. Man is weak and powerless before death. In a few words he told the woman she should be amply rewarded for her kindness, and that he himself would defray all expenses.

"He was perhaps an old servant of my lord's?" she said.

"No," was the reply; "Lord Earle did not know him—had never even seen him; but the poor man was well known to one of Lord Earle's friends."

Thanks to Lionel's words, the faintest shadow of suspicion was never raised. Of the two deaths, that of Miss Earle excited all attention and aroused all sympathy. No one spoke of Hugh Fernely, or connected him with the occurrence at the hall.

There was an inquest, and men decided that he had "died by the visitation of God." No one knew the agony that had cast him prostrate in the thick, dank grass; no one knew the unendurable anguish that had shortened his life.

* * * * * *

When Lionel returned to the hall, he went straight to Lord Earle.

"I was too late," he said; "the man had been dead some hours."

His name was not mentioned between them again. Lord Earle never inquired where he was buried—he never knew.

The gloom had deepened at the hall. Lillian Earle lay nigh unto death. Many believed that the master of Earlescourt would soon be a childless man. He could not realize it. They told him how she lay with the cruel raging fever sapping her life, but he seemed to forget the living child in mourning for the one that lay dead.

In compliance with Lionel's prayer, Lady Helena took him into the sick room where Lillian lay. She did not know him; the gentle, tender eyes were full of dread and fear; the fair, pure face was burning with the flush of fever; the hot, dry lips were never still. She talked incessantly—at times of Knutsford and Beatrice—then prayed in her sweet, sad voice that Lionel would trust her—only trust her; when Beatrice was married, she would tell him all.

He turned away; her eyes had lingered on his face, but no gleam of recognition came into them.

"You do not think she will die?" he asked of Lady Helena; and she never forgot his voice or his manner.

"We hope not," she said; "life and death are in higher hands than ours. If you wish to help her, pray for her."

In after years Lionel Dacre liked to remember that the best and most fervent prayers of his life had been offered for gentle, innocent Lillian Earle.

As he turned to quit the chamber he heard her crying for her mother. She wanted her mother—why was she not there? He looked at Lady Helena; she understood him.

"I have written," she said. "I sent for Dora yesterday; she will be here soon."

CHAPTER XLIII.

On the second day succeeding that on which Dora had been sent for, Beatrice Earle was to be laid in her grave. The servants of the household, who had all dearly loved their beautiful young mistress, had taken their last look at her face. Lady Helena had shed her last tears over it. Lord Airlie had asked to be alone for a time with his dead love. They had humoured him, and for three long hours he had knelt by her, bidding her a sorrowful farewell, taking his last look at the face that would never again smile on earth for him.

They respected the bitterness of his uncontrollable sorrow; no idle words of sympathy were offered to him; men passed him by with averted face—women with tearful eyes.

Lord Earle was alone with his dead child. In a little while nothing would remain of his beautiful, brilliant daughter but a memory and a name. He did not weep; his sorrow lay too deep for tears. In his heart he was asking pardon for the sins and follies of his youth; his face was buried in his hands, his head bowed over the silent form of his loved child; and, when the door opened gently, he never raised his eyes—he was only conscious that some one entered the room, and walked swiftly up the gloomy, darkened chamber to the bedside. Then a passionate wailing that chilled his very blood filled the room.

"My Beatrice, my darling, why could I not have died for you?"

Some one bent over the quiet figure, clasping it in tender arms, calling with a thousand loving words upon the dear one who lay there—some one whose voice fell like the strain of long forgotten music upon his ears. Who but a mother could weep as she did—who but a mother forget everything else in the abandonment of her sorrow, and remember only the dead?

Before he looked up, he knew it was Dora—the mother bereft of her child—the mother clasping in her loving arms the child she had nursed, watched, and loved for so many years. She gazed at him, and he never forgot the woeful, weeping face.

"Ronald," she cried, "I trusted my darling to you; what has happened to her?"

The first words for many long years—the first since he had turned round upon her in his contempt, hoping he might be forgiven for having made her his wife!—She seemed to forget him then, and laid her head down upon the quiet heart; but Ronald went round to her. He raised her in his arms, he laid the weeping face on his breast, he kissed away the blinding tears, and she turned to him—

"Forgive me, Ronald—forgive me! You cannot refuse in the hour of death."

How the words smote him! They were his own, recoiling upon him. How often had he refused his mother's pleading—hardened his own heart, saying to himself and to her that he could not pardon her yet—he would forgive her in the hour of death, when either he or she stood on the threshold of eternity!

Heaven, had not willed it so. The pardon he had refused was wrung from him now; and, looking at his child, he felt that she was sacrificed to his blind, wilful pride.

"You will forgive me, Ronald," pleaded the gentle voice, "for love of my dear child? Do not send me from you again. I have been very unhappy all these long years; let me stay with you now. Dear, I was beside myself with jealousy when I acted as I did."

"I forgive you," he said, gently; "can you pardon me as easily, Dora? I have spoiled your life—I have done you cruel wrong; can you forget all, and love me as you did years ago?"

All pride, restraint, and anger were dead. He whispered loving words to his weeping wife, such as she had not heard for years; and he could have fancied, as he did so, that a happy smile lingered on the fair face of the dead.

No, it was but the light of a wax taper flickering over it; the strange, solemn beauty of that serene brow and those quiet lips was unstirred.

Half an hour afterward Lady Helena, trembling for the result of her experiment, entered the room. She saw Ronald's arms clasped round Dora, while they knelt side by side.

"Mother," said Lord Earle, "my wife has pardoned me. She is my own again—my comfort in sorrow."

Lady Earle touched Dora's face with her lips, and told what her errand was. They must leave the room now—the beautiful face of Beatrice Earle was to be hidden for ever from the sight of men.

* * * * * *

That evening was long remembered at Earlescourt. Lady Dora Earle reward took her rightful position. She fell at once into the spirit of the place, attending to every one and thinking of every one's comfort.

Lillian was fighting hard for her young life. She seemed in some vague way to understand that her mother was near. Lady Dora's hand soothed and calmed her, her gentle motherly ways brought comfort and rest; but many long days passed before Lillian knew those around her, or woke from her troubled feverish dream. When she did so, her sister had been laid to rest in her long, last home.

* * * * * *

People said afterward that no fairer day had ever been than that on which Beatrice Earle was buried. The sun bright and warm, the birds were singing, the autumn flowers were in bloom, as the long procession wound its way through the trees in the park; the leaves fell from the trees, while the long grass rustled under the tread of many feet.

Lord Earle and Hubert Airlie were together. Kindly hearts knew not which to pity the, more—the father whose heart seemed broken by his sorrow or the young lover so suddenly bereft of all he loved best. From far and near friends and strangers gathered to that mournful ceremony; from one to another the story flew how beautiful she was, and how dearly the young lord had loved—how she had wandered out of the house in her sleep and fallen into the lake.

They laid her to rest in the green church-yard at the foot of the hill—the burial-place of the Earles.

* * * * * *

The death-bell had ceased ringing; the long white blinds of the hall window were drawn up; the sunshine played once more in the rooms; the carriages of sorrowing friends were gone; the funeral was over. Of the beautiful, brilliant Beatrice Earle, there remained but a memory.

They told afterward how Gaspar Lawrence watched the funeral procession, and how he had lingered last of all in the little churchyard. He never forgot Beatrice; he never looked into the face of another woman with love on his own.

It was all over, and on the evening of that same day, a quiet, deep sleep came to Lillian Earle. It saved her life; the wearied brain found rest. When she awoke, the lurid light of fever died out of her eyes, and they looked in gratified amazement upon Lady Dora, who sat by her side.

"Mamma," she whispered, "am I at home at Knutsford?"

Dora soothed her, almost dreading the time when memory should awaken in full force. It seemed partly to return then, for Lillian gave vent to a wearied sigh, and closed her eyes.

Then Dora saw a look of wild alarm cross her face. She sprang up, crying—

"Mamma, is it true? Is Beatrice dead?"

"It is true, my darling," whispered her mother gently. "Dead, but not lost to us—only gone before."

The young girl recovered very slowly. The skilful doctor in attendance upon her said that, as soon as it was possible to remove her, she should be carried direct from her room to a travelling carriage, taken from home, and not allowed to return to the hall until she was stronger and better.

They waited until that day came, and meanwhile Lady Dora Earle learned to esteem Lord Airlie very dearly. He seemed to find more comfort with her than with any one else. They spoke but of one subject—the loved, lost Beatrice.

Her secret was never known. Lord Earle and Lionel Dacre kept it faithfully. No allusion to it ever crossed their lips. To Lord Airlie, while he lived, the memory of the girl he had loved so well was pure and untarnished as the falling snow. Not even to her mother was the story told. Dora believed, as did every one else, that Beatrice had fallen accidentally into the lake.

When Lillian grew stronger—better able to bear the mention of her sister's name—Lord Earle went to her room one day, and, gently enough, tried to win her to speak to him of what she knew.

She told him all—of her sister's sorrow, remorse and tears; her longing to be free from the wretched snare in which she was caught; how she pleaded with her to interfere. She told him of her short interview with the unhappy man, and its sad consequences for her.

Then the subject dropped for ever. Lord Earle said nothing to her of Lionel, thinking it would be better for the young lover to plead his own cause.

One morning, when she was able to rise and sit up for a time, Lionel asked permission to see her. Lady Dora, who knew nothing of what had passed between them, unhesitatingly consented.

She was alarmed when, as he entered the room, she saw her daughter's gentle face grow deadly pale.

"I have done wrong," she said. "Lillian is not strong enough to see visitors yet."

"Dear Lady Dora," explained Lionel, taking her hand, "I love Lillian; and she loved me before I was so unhappy as to offend her. I have come to beg her pardon. Will you trust her with me for a few minutes?"

Lady Dora assented, and went away, leaving them together.

"Lillian," said Lionel, "I do not know in what words to beg your forgiveness. I am ashamed and humbled. I know your sister's story, and all that you did to save her. When one was to be sacrificed, you were the victim. Can you ever forgive me?"

"I forgive you freely," she gently answered. "I have been in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and all human resentments and unkindness seems as nothing to me."

"And may I be to you as I was before?" he asked.

"That is another question," she said. "I cannot answer it now. You did not trust me, Lionel."

Those were the only words of reproach she ever uttered to him. He did not annoy her with protestations; he trusted that time would do for him what he saw just then he could not do for himself.

He sat down upon the couch by her side, and began to speak to her of the tour she was about to make, of the places she should visit—carefully avoiding all reference to the troubled past.

Three days afterward Lillian started on her journey to the south of France, insisted upon by the doctor. Lord Earle and his wife took charge of their child; Lord Airlie, declaring he could not yet endure Lynnton, went with them. Lady Helena and Lionel Dacre remained at home, in charge of the hall and the estate.

One thing the latter had resolved upon—that, before the travellers returned, the lake should be filled up, and green trees planted over the spot where its waters now glistened in the sun.

No matter how great the expense and trouble, he was resolved that it should be done. "Earlescourt would be wretched," he said, "if that fatal lake remained."

The day that the family left Earlescourt, he had workmen engaged. No one was sorry at his determination. Lady Helena highly approved of it. The water was drained off, the deep basin filled with earth and tall saplings planted where once the water had ebbed and flowed. The boat-house was pulled down, and all vestige of the lake was done away with.

Lionel Dacre came home one evening from the works in very low spirits. Embedded in the bottom of the lake they had found a little slipper—the fellow to it was locked away in Dora's drawer. He saved it to give to her when she returned.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Two years passed away, and the travellers thought of returning. Lillian had recovered health and strength, and, Lord Earle said, longed for home.

One bright June day they were expected back. Lionel Dacre had driven to the station. Lady Earle had laid aside her mourning dress and sat anxiously awaiting her son. She wished the home-coming were over, and that they had all settled down to the new life.

Her wish was soon gratified. Once again she gazed upon the face of her only and beloved son. He was little changed—somewhat sunburnt, it is true; but there was less of the old pride and sternness, a kindly light shining in his eyes and a kindly smile playing round his lips. There was, too, a shade of sadness that plainly would never leave him; Lord Earle could never forget his lost child.

Lady Helena looked anxiously at Dora, but there was no cause for fear. The rosy, dimpled beauty of youth had passed away, but a staid dignity had taken its place. She looked a graceful, amiable woman, with eyes of wondrous beauty, thickly veiled by long lashes, and a wealth of rippling black hair. Lady Helena thought her far more beautiful now than when the coy smiles and dimples had been the chief charm. She admired, too, the perfect and easy grace with which Dora fell at once into her proper place as mistress of that vast establishment. The pretty, musical voice was trained and softened, the delicate, refined accent retained no trace of provincialism. Everything about Dora pleased the eye and gratified the taste; the girlish figure had grown matronly and dignified, the sweet face had in it a tinge of sadness one may often see in the face of a mother who has lost a child. Lady Helena, fastidious and critical, could find no fault with her son's wife.

She welcomed her warmly, giving up to her, in her own graceful way, all rule and authority. Helping her, if any way she required it, but never interfering, she made Dora respected by the love and esteem she always evinced for her.

But it was on Lillian's face that Lady Helena gazed most earnestly. The pallor of sickness had given way to a rosy and exquisite bloom. The fair sweet face in its calm loveliness seemed to her perfect, the violet eyes were full of light. Looking at her, Lady Helena believed there were years of life in store for Ronald's only child.

There was much to talk about. Lord Earle told his mother how Hubert Airlie had gone home to Lynnton, unable to endure the sight of Earlescourt. He had never regained his spirits. In the long years to come it was possible, added Ronald, that Lord Airlie might marry for the sake of his name; but, if ever the heart of living man lay buried in a woman's grave, his was with the loved, lost Beatrice.

Lionel Dacre knew he had done wisely and well to have the bed of the lake filled up. In the morning he saw how each member of the family shrank from going out into the grounds.

He asked Lord Earle to accompany him, and then the master of Earlescourt saw that the deep, cruel water no longer shimmered amidst the trees.

TO BE CONTINUED.