

A PRECIOUS PEARL

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

And she touched it with reverent hands.

"I would not touch anything, my lady," cried Mrs. Grey.

She saw a book—almost the only one there—thickly covered with dust. It was turned over at Adelaide Procter's beautiful "Legend of Provence."

"Lady Villiers admired good poetry," she said, musingly.

She saw a pretty little satin slipper and a white lace shawl. She could not tell why, but she did not like to touch them. As she stood there she shuddered.

"I cannot tell what it is," she said, slowly, to Mrs. Grey, "but there is something in the very atmosphere of these rooms that saddens me. I wish I had not seen them—it is as though some one lay dead here. Close the rooms. I shall never want to see them again."

Some weeks after this she was in the library with Sir Roche, looking over some music when she came upon a song that she knew well—Blumenthal's "Message."

"I know that," she said, taking it up.

She saw written on it, in a flowing Italian hand, the name "Elodie." She repeated it aloud.

"What a beautiful name! Have you had a sister or cousin called Elodie?"

She wondered why he should take the music so abruptly from her hand.

"I did not know there was anything in this house with that name on it!" he cried.

"Elodie" she said again. "It is a beautiful name; it reminds me of the flow of a river. Why, you have destroyed the song!"

He had torn it into pieces and trampled them under his feet.

"I hate the song, the name!" he cried, "Do not speak of them again."

She was very quiet and subdued for some time; the scene had puzzled and troubled her.

Several other things began to puzzle her. She was the idol of half the county, but there was one family that had never called upon her, the Letsons of Barrowdale. She noticed also that they were never invited to meet them, and she wondered why. She asked Sir Roche about it more than once, but he always returned an evasive answer.

One morning she spoke of it to Lady Moreton, who was a great friend of hers.

"Why have the Letsons never called on me?" she asked.

"Have they not done so?" returned Lady Moreton.

"No," replied Audrey. "They avoid me—they never go where I go. It seems so strange."

Her quick instinct told her that Lady Moreton evaded the question and would not answer it.

"Do tell me," she said; "if there is really any reason, I should like to know it."

"I can imagine no reason," was the reply, "unless it be that they are very religious and look at life in a very serious light."

Lady Villiers opened her beautiful eyes very wide.

"That is what I like," she cried. "But I cannot understand why the fact of their being very religious should prevent them from calling upon me."

Lady Moreton looked uncomfortable. "Some persons are so strange," she said, in a half apologetic tone, "and have such old-fashioned ideas."

"I cannot imagine any ideas, be they as old-fashioned as they may, which could prevent any one from calling upon me," remarked Audrey, proudly.

That same evening Lady Villiers, putting her arms carelessly around her husband's neck, said:

"Roche, could you give a reason why so-called religious people should not visit me?"

She never forgot the flame of anger in his face.

"I cannot. Tell me what you mean, Audrey," he said.

She repeated her conversation with Lady Moreton. He cried out angrily that he would not allow the Letsons to come near them and that Lady Moreton was a woman without common sense. He did not grow calm again until, looking into the eyes of his wife, he saw no suspicion there.

CHAPTER VII.

Christmas came, and in accordance with their promise Dr. Brooke and his wife spent it at Howan Abbey. If any doubt had lingered in the rector's mind it was now dispelled; if any lingering fear, suspicion, or dread had shadowed his thoughts about his beautiful daughter, it now ceased to exist. It was plain that nothing could be more prosperous or brighter than her lot. There was no skeleton in the Villiers cupboard. After a pleasant visit, the rector went away quite satisfied as to his daughter's happiness.

Spring came, with its fair, delicate loveliness, and Sir Roche found that he would have to spend some time in town.

"I shall be sorry," he said, "to leave Rowan, Audrey. You have taught me to love the place. I feel now that it is my home, my sweet life has brightened it until it seems to me like an earthly paradise. I wonder if you will like London, Audrey?"

"I shall like any place where you

are," she answered. "It is not the place—it is you that make home."

It was a sight never to be forgotten when her ladyship the beautiful young mistress of Rowan, left the abbey for London. Sir Roche was touched more than he liked to own. The poor and the children thronged around her ladyship to say good-by to her. They wanted nothing from her—only to look once more on the beautiful face of her who was always so kind and gentle to them.

"How they love you, Audrey!" said her husband, as the train steamed out of the station. "I am almost jealous of them."

"You might be jealous of one," she replied, "but not of a crowd."

He raised her hand to his lips.

"My darling," he said, "I love you with such a pure and perfect love that jealousy is not possible to me."

They talked so happily and lovingly little dreaming of the tragedy that would be played before they saw Rowan Abbey again.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fashionable London opened its arms to receive Lady Villiers. She was not presented at court, but she never asked the reason. It was sufficient for her that Sir Roche had not mentioned the matter.

One lovely morning in May Lady Villiers sat alone in the drawing-room of her London house. Sir Roche came in with a pleased smile.

"Audrey," he said, "I have met an old friend of yours who is anxious to renew her acquaintance with you."

She looked up at him.

"I did not know that I had any old friends in London," she said; "they are all new ones."

"Lady Rockhaven claims to be an old one."

"Lady Rockhaven?" she repeated. "Why, that is Bertha Hamlyn's name! Is she in town?"

"Yes, and very desirous of seeing you. I like Lady Rockhaven herself very well; but she has a clique of friends for whom I do not care. I would not allow her to introduce any of them, here, if I were you, Audrey. They are most of them very fast, and talk loudly about horses and so forth, if they do no worse."

On that same day Lady Rockhaven called, and professed great delight at seeing Audrey again. Lady Rockhaven had made a position for herself, but it did not quite satisfy her. She wanted to climb higher, and it struck her that in beautiful, wealthy Lady Villiers she had found the medium.

Shortly afterward a ball was given at Rock House and Lady Rockhaven and Sir Roche and Audrey attended it. During the evening Lady Villiers was talking to the Countess of Northendon when a lovely, golden-haired woman, most exquisitely dressed, crossed the ball-room on Lord Rockhaven's arm.

"Who is that?" asked Lady Villiers.

"What a beautiful face! What a lovely woman! Who is she?"

The Countess of Northendon shrugged her white shoulders.

"That is the fault I find with Lady Rockhaven. She will not keep her balls select. That woman has no business here. I am not a prude, but I do not care to meet such people."

"Who is she?" persisted Audrey.

"She is Lady Glenarvon now, I suppose. She was Lady Tirwell some time since."

"Why has she changed her name?" asked innocent Audrey.

Again the countess shrugged her shoulders.

"My dear Lady Villiers," she said, "do you never read the divorce cases?"

"Never," answered Audrey, emphatically.

"Surely you must have heard of that one—Tirwell versus Glenarvon?" It has been discussed at every breakfast table and in every club in London. I never did nor could understand the right or wrong of the matter; all that I know is that Lady Tirwell disappeared under a cloud. Now Lady Glenarvon has suddenly appeared, and she is received everywhere. She has never been to court. The line must be drawn somewhere; and I do not think any divorcee would be welcomed there."

Lady Villiers was listening with great attention.

"Divorcee!" she repeated. "You do not mean to say that that beautiful lady has been divorced?"

"What else can I mean? Lord Tirwell is abroad somewhere, and she has married Lord Glenarvon."

Audrey looked up in such wonder that her companion was struck.

"Do you really mean," she said, "that that lady has two husbands living?"

The countess laughed.

"You are so delightfully simple, my dear Lady Villiers. Of course she has not two husbands, the law relieved her of one and she took another."

"The law could not; no law could—divine law forbids it!" cried Audrey.

"It is monstrous! I did not think such things were permitted in a Christian land."

"You are new to the other world," said the countess, half sadly. "I read and hear of divorce cases continually. I could tell you stories of divorce that would frighten you—of false swearing, of conspiracies, of persecution—of women with broken hearts, of men with ruined homes."

"Why do people receive such women?" asked Audrey. "I would not. There are no words stronger or more sacred than these. Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder; there can be no doubt as to what is the 'right course.'"

into the handsome face of her hostess. "I must decline, Bertha; I do not wish to make Lady Glenarvon's acquaintance. I beg you will not mention her to me; I decline decidedly to know her."

Perhaps Lady Rockhaven's temper had been a little ruffled; she looked very impatient.

"May I ask why?" she said.

"You know why, Bertha; and allow me to add that I wonder you should make such a woman your friend or invite her to your house."

"Will you tell me why, Lady Villiers?" she said. "I have a great desire to hear the reason."

"You know the reason; I have just heard it. That person whom you call Lady Glenarvon—oh, shame Bertha, that you should make me say it! her rightful husband living abroad; she is a divorcee!"

"This is amusing," laughed Lady Rockhaven—but for the moment she hated the woman who she felt was right. "You, my dear Lady Villiers, decline to know Lady Glenarvon because she is a divorcee! This is one of the jests of the season."

"I do not see that it is a jest."

"But I do. What a capital story to tell everywhere! People who live in glass houses should not throw stones."

"I do not live in a glass house," said Lady Villiers proudly. "I would rather have died a thousand times than have gone into a divorce court."

Lady Rockhaven seemed suddenly to recollect herself. "Of course I know, Audrey, that divorce courts were not made for such as you; but, all the same, I would not, were I in your place, say too much against divorce."

"I shall never speak of it without reason, and I shall tell the truth," she said.

"What excuse am I to make to Lady Glenarvon?" asked Bertha.

"Make no excuse; I am quite willing to abide by what I have said. Why should you or I seek for false excuses? Why frame a pretense that she must see through? I think she has acted wrongly, and I decline to know her."

CHAPTER IX.

Lady Villiers was standing in the crushroom of the Royal Italian Opera. She had been the observant of all observers during the night. Once, on looking around the house, she saw Lady Glenarvon watching her intently; she was on the opposite side, looking very lowly in a marvelous costume of black and silver. Several gentlemen were in the box with her; and it was evident that Lady Glenarvon was amusing them greatly by some anecdote she was telling.

More than once their eyes met, and Lady Villiers flushed with annoyance; she was merciful always in her judgments, but to her pure and innocent mind there was something revolting in the idea that a woman over whom such a shadow hung should set herself up in high places to receive the homage and admiration of men.

As she stood in the crushroom Sir Roche looked at the fair face of his young wife. He mistook the sadness for fatigue.

"You are tired, my darling," he said. "If you do not mind my leaving you for a few moments, I will try to get the carriage at once."

She liked afterward to remember that she had looked with a loving smile into his kindly eyes—that as he released her hand he had held it lovingly in his grasp—for after that hour the world was never the same to her again.

As she stood there a group of people passed her. She had a confused notion of white silk, of black and silver, of pearl gray brocade brushing past her as a slip of folded paper was thrust into her hand, she could not tell by whom.

"You threw down the gauntlet!" a silvery voice hissed in her ear; but when she turned around no one was near her—the group of ladies had passed.

She looked at the paper. "Read this when you are quite alone," was written in large letters across it. In a moment it occurred to her that it was some begging letter from one who wanted help—she had many such; she placed it in the pocket of her dress, and resolved to read it when she reached home.

Sir Roche had promised to spend an hour at his club with a famous traveler who had just returned from a long exploring tour in Africa. When he saw the pale, tired look on his wife's sweet face, he said:

"Audrey, I shall not go to the club; I will go home with you."

"But she would not hear of it."

"I heard you promise Mr. Miles," she said, "and you must go."

He drove with her as far as the club, and sat with her hand in his. He kissed her face, and said that he must take more care of her, that he must not go so much. And, when the carriage stopped at the club, he kissed her lips and said, laughingly, that he would a thousand times rather go home with her than hear of Miles' exploits.

Some instinct made her bend forward and say:

"Kiss me again, Roche."

He kissed her again, little dreaming that it was for the last time.

He ascended the broad flight of steps, thinking of the sweet face, the tender lips, the dear voice, and almost wishing Miles still in Africa, while Lady Villiers drove home.

She did not open the note until her maid left her and she was quite alone. Then she unfolded the paper and read the cruel words that stabbed her gentle heart.

"The writer of this advises Lady Villiers not to say anything more on the subject of divorces, as she is making herself and her husband a jest at which all London laughs. The writer can hardly imagine Lady Villiers to be under such circumstances, but if it should be so, Lady Villiers had better get a copy of the Times, for Thursday, the 17th of April, 18—, and among the reports of the divorce cases she will find one that will not only surprise her, but will close her lips for the future on all such subjects."

To be Continued.

IN A TIGER'S CLUTCHES.

AN INDIAN OFFICER'S ADVENTURE IN A JUNGLE.

Pronounced Upon by a Tiger and Carried Off by the Beast, Yet Living to Tell the Tale—A Chance Meeting with a Native Hunter and a Little Service That Saved His Life.

"It is one thing to hunt the tiger and quite another thing to have the tiger hunt you. When 'Stripes,' hunting on his own account, pounces on a man the victim has a poor chance for his life. That there are few men who can tell of such an experience is needless to say," said Capt. E. A. Arbuthnot. After the cigars had been lighted a guest who had known him twenty years before in India had pressed him to tell the story of his tiger adventure there and the Captain had consented.

"The thing occurred in the Dabrah Doolah district in Assam, where I had gone with the idea of becoming a tea planter," continued the Captain. "The beginning of the adventure, to tell the story completely, was my meeting a shikari named Dassa Balhua on the morning of the day when I fell in with the tiger. The word shikari, you will understand, means native hunter, a tiger hunter in particular. I was on my way that day to look over a tract of jungly land which I thought of buying and clearing for cultivation, when on passing Dassa Balhua's house I saw him sitting in the doorway and he was in a peck of trouble.

"His old East Indian Company's army musket, the gun with which he hunted, was lying across his lap, and he was

FUMBLING AT THE LOCK.

He wanted to get into the jungle that day, and here was his gun hammer out of gear, so that when he pulled it back it would not catch and stay at full cock. I saw at once what was wrong with the lock, and chancing to have with me a watchmaker's file, I set the thing right in five minutes. Balhua was very grateful, and I rode on, leaving him carefully loading the gun. I don't wish to get ahead of my story, but will say here that my stopping to help Balhua out of his trouble was the means of saving my own life that day.

"This meeting with the shikari occurred about an hour after daybreak. I went on my way, and by the middle of the afternoon I had seen all I cared to of the tract of land I came to view, and was ready to return to my bungalow. Of the two servants who accompanied me I had left one with my horse a mile back, where there was some shade and grass. The other, who was with me, I sent to the man in the rear directing that they bring the horse round by the road to a point where I would meet them. The man started off on a run, and after watching him out of sight, I took my way along a jungle path toward the point on the road where I had appointed to meet them.

"The jungle growth through which the path led was made up largely of bamboo grass taller than my head, interspersed with the grass were clumps of bushes, low-topped korinda trees, and here and there a taller tree. Now that I was alone the thought came to me that I should feel more comfortable if I had kept my rifle by me, for, it being rather heavy to carry, I had left it with the servant, who had charge of the horse. But I was not much disturbed by

ANTICIPATIONS OF DANGER.

As I strolled along the path, taking my time, for I expected to have to wait for my men at the roadside.

"The thing came suddenly, without warning. There was a strange movement of the grass and bushes a few feet away to one side of the path, the tall grass parted to left and right in a furrow that came straight toward me, there was a loud, deep-throated roar—and the tiger had me. I was standing stock still staring at the moving grass, for there was no use in running away, as he came out on me. There was one glimpse of paws, jaws, and white breast all plunging for me, and then I was flat on my back in the path, with the tiger crouching upon me, his claws set in my left shoulder and right side. The long feelers at his nose brushed my face as he set his teeth into my shoulder in one sharp, crushing bite, apparently to make sure that I would lie still.

"If the tiger had been alarmed, or wounded, if he had overtaken me running away, or had I struggled—I should have been killed out-right. I certainly expected nothing else, but the tiger, not repeating the bite, lifted his head as if listening. Some sound in the road may have made him fearful of losing his prey for seizing me by the shoulder he swung me clear of the ground and started away through the jungle in long, swift leaps. I weighed at the time 135 pounds, and the tiger carried me along as easily as a cat would carry a squirrel.

"It will probably sound strange to you, although a similar experience has been related by others, when I say that from the moment the tiger leaped on me I felt no pain from teeth or claws. Neither did I, after once the brute had seized me, feel any keen sense of fear, although perfectly conscious of all that was going on and of what seemed the certainty that I should be immediately killed. Perhaps the best expression of my condition while I was in the tiger's power would be to say that I was in a hypnotic state, for I can compare my sensation with nothing else.

"The tiger ran perhaps fifty yards, then stopped, laid me down and crouched, watching me. Presently he picked me up again and started on through

the jungle, this time walking, bearing me along with my legs dragging upon the ground. Coming to an open space he laid me down, and, backing away for a distance of two or three yards, lay crouched.

WATCHING ME INTENTLY.

after the manner of a cat that plays with a mouse.

"From the position in which I lay I could look straight into his yellow eyes and could see the curling in and out of the tip of the supple tail. These as with every second I expected the tiger to leap upon me and tear me there crashed in the jungle's stillness, the loud report of a gun, close at hand. I saw the tiger leap to his feet, whirl toward the sound, and he roared once as he reared himself almost upright on his hind legs; then fell over on his side struggling.

"It was from the old firelock that I had set in order that morning—the East Indian Company musket of Dassa Balhua that the shot had come which saved my life. The shikari had found the path the tiger was accustomed to take in going from his den to the nearest watercourse to drink. In a thick-leaved tree overlooking this path he had built a platform, and from this he had watched daily for a chance to shoot at the brute. Waiting here this day he saw the tiger come into view from an unexpected quarter dragging me along by the shoulder. When he saw the tiger drop me in the open space and lay himself down at a little distance away, the shikari fired at him, aiming at the head, for he knew that if not killed outright the first act of the brute would be to kill me. The tiger, struck in the ear by the heavy bullet, died almost in his tracks.

"After the shot was fired I lay still, not feeling sure that the tiger really was done for, until I saw Dassa Balhua come toward me from the tree. When I lifted my head the shikari was started for he had thought that I was dead. But he came to me and lifted me by the shoulders so that by turning my head I could see the tiger lying stretched on his side.

"He can trouble you no more, sahib," said the shikari. "The tiger is dead."

"The shikari opened my jacket and examined my wounds, and then went down to the road to intercept my servants. By the time he came back with them my wounds were getting painful. While one of the servants rode to the nearest bungalow for men and a litter I lay, watching the shikari skin the tiger. It was a young animal, full grown, with a glossy, beautifully marked skin, and terrible teeth and claws. With the skin and the Government bounty and the hundred rupees that I gave him Dassa Balhua had no reason to complain of his day's fortune. I was taken out of the jungle that night, and to my home the next day. I had a bad shoulder, with fever, that kept me laid up for three or four weeks, and I did not regain the full use of my right arm for years. But I think I got off well."

BELOW GROUND IN LONDON.

New Things to be Tried on the New Under-ground Railway.

In addition to the present rapid transit facilities in London a new electric under-ground railway is projected, which is expected to be in operation in four years from the present time. The route is in the heart of the city, and the trains will run sixty feet below the sidewalks. A syndicate has been formed and £3,500,000 has been raised, a sum supposed to be sufficient for all expenses of construction. The total length of the line is about six miles, and the tracks will be laid in double tunnels having an internal diameter of eleven feet six inches. These, together with the lift, shafts and the station tunnels, of which the internal diameter will measure twenty-one feet, will be made in iron segments, no brickwork being used.

An advantage claimed for the double tunnel system is the means it affords of good ventilation. When two lines run in one tunnel, it is almost impossible to secure this, but a train running in a single-line tunnel acts as a piston, driving the air before it and bringing a fresh current along its wake. Another subsidiary advantage is that the two tunnels need not necessarily be on the same level. The lines can, independently of each other, slope downward in leaving and upward in approaching stations, with a consequent saving of power and wear on the breaks, while in passing under narrow streets, where there is not sufficient room for the tunnels to be placed side by side, they can be constructed one above the other.

Each train will consist of seven cars, which provide seats for 336 persons, and the headway between trains will be two minutes and a half. The road is not intended to compete so much with the present "underground" as with the omnibuses and other surface vehicles.

ICELAND TO HAVE A CABLE.

It is intended next summer to lay an ocean cable from the northern end of Scotland to Iceland, taking in the Faroe Islands on the way. This enterprise arouses much interest among men of science, because Iceland is filled with wonderful, natural phenomena and particularly because it is thought that meteorological stations connected with the proposed cable may be able to enlarge our knowledge of the course and peculiarities of storms crossing the ocean.

A REASSURING NAME AT LEAST.

Mrs. Handout—Here is a piece of loaf-cake. I hope you will like it.

Groggy Grugan—I hope I will, leddy, ef it's ingredients are as delicious ter de taste as its name is ter de ear.

THE RUSSIA

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