

A PRECIOUS PEARL.

CHAPTER XIV.

The burning summer heat had passed, the corn had been gathered in, the fruit had been plucked from the trees, and the lovely earth lay resting in the sunlight of autumn. The sea was full of deep melodies. Elodie spent whole hours in listening to its music. One bright morning she was lying quite still, watching the waves. She was so changed that she looked like another Elodie. The despair and unrest had left her; her face was calm, sweet and sad. She was worn to a shadow; but her eyes were still bright. Her true and faithful nurse—the one sincere friend to whom she owed everything—stood by her side, watching every look. No mother could have been kinder—no sister more tender. Suddenly the dark eyes opened, and looked at her.

"Audrey," she said, "I should like to see him once more—just to tell him that I am sorry for the past, and hear him say that he forgives me. Would he come if you asked him?"

There was something so wistful in the pleading voice that Audrey's eyes filled with tears.

"I am sure he will not refuse," she replied.

Least there should be any error, she went herself at once to the telegraph office, and sent a telegram to him. It ran thus:

"From Audrey Brooke, Rookdene, to Sir Roche Villiers, Rowan Abbey, King's Wynne.—Come to me at once, without fail; you are particularly wanted."

She knew that he loved her so well that if she had asked him to go to the other end of the world for her he would have done it.

The moment Sir Roche read her summons he started for Rookdene. He did not know why Audrey wanted him; but he had some vague idea that it was in relation to unfortunate Elodie. No matter what it was, he must obey her. He traveled incessantly, yet it was evening before he reached Medina Villas.

He had never seen Audrey since that terrible hour in which she had parted from him, when they had stood face to face with the story of his first marriage between them. His heart beat, his strong form trembled, and his face blanched as he stood in the little drawing-room waiting for her. She came in, tall, slender and graceful, with the same pure face, the same sweet smile, and he could have knelt and kissed the hem of her dress. When the clear light of her pure eyes fell on him a great shudder passed over him. She held out her hand to him in kindly greeting.

"You are very good to come so quickly," she said; and then there was a few minutes' embarrassed silence.

Audrey with her quick woman's tact was the first to break it.

"You will have guessed perhaps why I sent you," she said; "Elodie is dying, and she wanted to see you once more."

"Are you staying with her?" he asked.

"I have been here since June," she answered.

"How good you are, Audrey—how noble, how unselfish! Your father wrote to me and told me whether you were going, and with what idea you had begun another life."

"We will not talk about it," she said gently, "Elodie was alone in the world, and quite forgotten. I found her in despair; now she is calm and tranquil and ready to die. That is better than to have worn my life away in useless lamentation or in sullen gloom; there is something in it that fits my notion of justice. Roche, you will be very kind to her? I have learned to love her very dearly."

He looked slightly embarrassed.

"I do not see what is to be gained by seeing her, Audrey," he began, "unless you really wish it."

"I do really wish it," she said, firmly. "She will die happier for having seen you and heard you say that you forgive her."

"I will do it," he replied, "no matter what it cost me."

He sat down, and Audrey told him all about Elodie's illness, and how the doctors said she was really dying of a broken heart. At first there was no definite malady—it was the fret and fever of the unhappy soul, the grief, the despair, the baffled love, and pride, the lost ambition, that wore the fragile body away. Lately a nervous fever had set in; and of that Elodie was dying. Sir Roche was not ashamed of the tears that rained down his face, of the sobs that he could not conceal, when Audrey told him all the pathetic details of the lonely life, and how Elodie had been hoping always, that he would forgive her. There was a light not all of earth on her face, her words were sweet and wise. When she had finished speaking she said to him:

"It is too late for you to see her this evening. Roche; come back in the morning, and I will take you to her."

Without another word he took her hand, kissed it, and left her.

her eyes had a worn look. She seemed weary, yet she held out her hand with a smile to Sir Roche.

"I am so glad you are come," she said. "Elodie has been talking about you. She has not many hours to live. Come with me to see her."

They went together. Sir Roche had never seen the hapless lady since the night of the ball at Quorn House. He remembered his last glimpse of her—she saw her again—a pale, shadowy, dy-fiant look; the lustre of her diamonds; the sheen of her brilliant dress. Now he saw her again—a pale, shadowy, dy-fiant look; the lustre of her diamonds; the sheen of her brilliant dress. Now he saw her again—a pale, shadowy, dy-fiant look; the lustre of her diamonds; the sheen of her brilliant dress.

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She was startled at first. She raised her thin hands and tried to hide her face from him; but Audrey drew them away.

"Be kind to her, Roche," she whispered; "see what she has suffered."

He did as she wished. He stooped forward and kissed the thin, wasted face.

"Elodie," he said, "I am sorry to find you so ill."

"My sin has killed me, Roche," she answered. "How good you were to come to me! I want to hear you say that you forgive me."

Her face flushed as she continued: "I should like to get up and kneel down before you to beg your forgiveness; but I cannot. Listen to me for a moment. Roche, I never meant to do wrong—I had never even thought of it. It was not deliberate or intentional—it was not, indeed, I was thoughtless; but I was not wicked, and I have repented until my sin has killed me. Say you forgive me, Roche."

He laid his hands on the golden head.

"I forgive you even as I pray Heaven to forgive you."

"Will you call me 'wife' once more, Roche—once more, for I loved you very dearly?"

He looked at Audrey, and there was a moment's silence. Then Audrey went up to him, with the same bright light on her face.

"Do what she asks you, Roche," she said gently.

And he, bending over the white face, said:

"My dear wife!"

The two that stood near her, will never forget the flush of startled joy on her face.

"Thank you, Roche. May I die with my head upon your breast?"

Then she took Audrey's hand and kissed it.

"It is to you, oh, true and dear friend," she said, "that I owe all!"

Two hours afterward the noon-day sun was pouring a flood of light into the room, and the music of the waves was borne on the wind. The end was very near. The doctors had gone away; and Elodie lay dying, with the truest friends woman ever had near her.

Once they had bent over her, thinking her eyes closed forever; but a sun-beam fell across her face, and she opened them. She was dying, as she had asked to die, with her head on her husband's breast, and Audrey by her side. Suddenly she looked up at him and smiled, and with that the spirit took its flight.

Sir Roche was not ashamed to weep bitter tears over her—to accuse himself of being hard and cold—to fold the tired hands over the quiet heart—while Audrey stood by weeping. Presently she looked at her.

"I should like to thank you in her name, Audrey," he said.

But she held up her hand.

"I will have no thanks," she returned. "I have simply done my duty."

She took her place by the side of the dead.

"Roche," she said, gently, "I want you to give me your hand."

She took it in her own, and laid it on the still breast.

"I want you," she added, "to promise me two things."

"I will promise you anything you ask," he replied.

"Promise me first, that on her grave-stone you will place the name of your wife, Elodie Villiers."

"I promise," he answered.

"Secondly, here in her presence, promise that you will send back to that man his miserable money; that you will tell him that the woman whose life he blighted is dead; and that, fearing his money might bring a curse with it, you have sent it back. Will you do that?"

"Most assuredly I will," he replied.

"You are right in this, Audrey, as you are in everything else. I will do it at once."

Then Audrey bent down and kissed the dead face.

"My work here is done," she said; "I will go home. And you, Roche, who have recognized her in death, you will give her the last honor you can pay her. Elodie," she cried, laying her fresh sweet lips on the dead ones, "Elodie, now I shall not fear to meet you hereafter!"

She went home—her work there was done—and Sir Roche remained. He paid all honor to Elodie. He did not take her back to the stately mausoleum where so many women of his race slept. She was buried in the pretty churchyard by the sea at Rookdene, and on the white marble monument was inscribed the simple words:

"In loving memory of ELODIE, LADY VILLIERS, Aged 25."

In death, though not in life, she found her lost name again.

A year passed, Audrey spent it at home, Sir Roche in restless wandering, wondering always whether he should ever win for himself again that precious pearl of womanhood. He was afraid to ask Audrey to return to him.

During the year he had written to her, but five or six times; and they were merely friendly letters; yet his whole soul was longing for her—he could find no rest by night or by day for thinking of her.

At last he summoned up courage, and went to Holmesdale. The rector and his wife received him kindly; but they looked grave when he asked to see Audrey and to see her alone.

She must have expected him; for she betrayed no surprise—she offered no comment. She went to him in the library, where so many years before she had read the words of the marriage service. She looked up at him with a smile, that seemed to him unusually sweet.

"You have come for me, Roche," she said, "I am willing to go back with you."

"Mamma," she said a few hours afterward, "will you give me my wedding ring? I shall want it to-morrow morning."

And on the morrow they went through the solemn service together again.

Audrey wished that the whole story should remain unrevealed, but it did not. On the contrary, it found its way into the newspapers, and all England was touched by it.

For the newspapers told it all—how she had given up wealth, home, love and luxury for conscience sake; how she had devoted herself to one who was more unhappy than herself; how she had nursed the hapless lady through a long illness, had soothed her death, had reconciled her to Sir Roche, and thus had, humanely, saved her. They called her a pearl among women—they wished that more were like her.

Then she took her place again in the great world. A good influence seemed to emanate from her—the spell of goodness and purity lingered round her—only kind words and thought could live in her sweet presence. Before her evil and wickedness seemed to fly.

Bright haired children grew round her; but neither she nor Sir Roche ever forgot Elodie. They went every year to her grave, and the only time that Lady Villiers ever thought her husband harsh was one July morning when they stood by Elodie's grave together. The man who had charge of it had planted white ascension lilies upon it.

THEY CAN SING.

Royal Personages Who Have Melodious Voices.

Few outside the intimate court circle at Berlin are aware that the Kaiser has a very fine barytone voice, and that he is exceedingly fond of singing German and English ballads, which he does with a good deal of expression and feeling.

His performances in this direction are restricted to the evening which he spends with his family, none but the intimate friends and nearest relatives being admitted to the imperial circle. On such evenings as these the hours between dinner and bedtime are devoted to music, the Empress being a remarkably clever pianist, while whenever Prince Henry is present he produces his violin, on which he is a far more accomplished performer than even his Uncle Alfred, the second and sailor son of Queen Victoria.

The Emperor never sings unless either his wife or his brother consents to accompany him, for singing is one of the few things—perhaps the only one—in which he is not absolutely sure of his superiority, and it is probably precisely on that account—that is to say, in consequence of his diffidence—that he really sings in a very pleasing manner.

It is King Oscar, however, who possesses the finest barytone voice in Europe, and experts have declared that had he been forced to sing instead of to reign for a living he would have surpassed every professional barytone now on the stage. Queen Margherita of Italy is passionately fond of singing and of music, but her husband, King Humbert, like King Leopold of Belgium, abominates the very sound of music, which grates upon his nerves.

None of Queen Victoria's family professes to have a sufficiently good voice for singing to encourage him to perform solos. But they are all glad to join in singing, no matter when or where, and their voices are easily distinguishable above those of the remainder of the people singing. I never have been able quite to make out whether this is due to the peculiarity of their accent or if it is attributable to the fact that owing to their royal rank they have a right to pitch their voices higher and louder than any one else.

Queen Victoria's third daughter, the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, belongs to choral societies in London and Windsor which give public concerts. In these the Princess takes an active part. Nothing is more inspiring than to hear the Prince of Wales singing on Sunday at church at the top of his voice his favorite hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," the rolling "rs" giving it something essentially militant and military.

So the white lilies were taken away. But Audrey soon forgot that one instance of sternness. No husband was kinder, more devoted, better than hers. They loved each other with a true and perfect love that no man could put asunder.

"Take them away," said Sir Roche, "you may have roses, or passion flowers, or any other flowers that bloom but not these."

She looked up at him.

"Do you say that, Roche?" she asked.

"They are out of place, for one thing, Audrey. Another reason, they are your favorite flowers, and I do not like to see them there."

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(The End.)

WORKING AT NIGHT.

Its Effect Upon the Health of Women and Girls.

It may seem incredible that there is a large and growing body of women who work regularly all night. But it is only necessary to reflect that all the department stores, railroad depots, office buildings, and other skyscrapers in the large cities are scrubbed by women at night, to verify this statement.

The telephone girls in the offices of the great dailies work at night; and in one of the great electrical works, which employs more women than any other manufacturing establishment in Illinois, girls are engaged regularly from 6 at night to 5 in the morning 13 weeks of every year. The effect of this work upon the health is ruinous, for the girls do not acquire the habit of regular and sufficient sleep by day, but work, as the say, "on nerve," using stimulants for the purpose of keeping awake.

ALARMING DEGENERACY IN ITALY.

Out of every 100 young men inscribed for military service in 1896 in Italy scarcely 42 were found fit for service, 49 were either held over till the following year or rejected altogether, while the remaining nine represented the deserters. Italian sociologists ascribe the causes to the backward condition of hygiene in remote localities, poor food, bad schools and the complete absence of an organized system of gymnastics for youth.

BERLIN'S FIREMEN.

In Berlin the firemen wear water-jackets with a double skin, which they are able to fill with water from the hose. If the space between the two layers becomes over-filled the water escapes through a valve at the top of the helmet and flows down over the fireman, like a cascade, protecting him doubly. The smoke helmets, largely used in Germany, Austria, Holland and Italy, enable the wearer to breathe and see at his ease in a smoke-laden atmosphere. In some instances the apparatus includes a means of telephonic communication with the street below.

EXPLAINED.

Mrs. Hymen—I am afraid you do not think as much of me, Charles, as you used to. I can remember when you declared I was worth my weight in gold.

Mr. Hymen—That's what I still say, but you must remember that you have lost at least twenty pounds the last year.

WANK RESULTS.

What's the matter between Hump and his wife?

He's been smoking the cigars that she gave him for Christmas in the house and the odor makes her deathly sick.

GREATEST THINGS IN THE WORLD.

The richest princess in the world is the Crown Princess Louise Josephine of Sweden and Norway, married to the Crown Prince of Denmark.

The best educated queen in the world is her majesty of Italy. She speaks, besides her own tongue, French, German, English and Spanish, and studies such subjects as theology, biology, geology and botany.

The richest man in England is the Duke of Westminster.

The largest brain on record was that of Oliver Cromwell. It weighed a little over sixty ounces.

The highest price ever paid for a poem was 6,000 golden crowns paid to Sannazaro by the citizens of Venice for his eulogy on their city—a poem of six lines only.

The Chinese dictionary compiled by Pa-ut-she, 1103 years, B.C., is the most ancient of any records in literary history.

The Rhind manuscript now in the British museum, is the oldest intelligible mathematical work extant that has ever been deciphered.

The oldest rose bush in the world is at Hildeheim, Germany. Charlemagne planted it more than 1,000 years ago, in commemoration of the embassy received from Haroun at Rashid, the caliph.

The oldest tree in the British Isles is the Brabourne yew, in Kent 3,000 years old.

The Crystal palace, Sydenham, accommodates more people than any other building in the world. It will hold 100,000 people.

The oldest city in the world is Nippur, the "Older Bel" of Babylon; the foundations were laid 7,000 years B.C. The ruins have lately been unearthed.

Spain has more sunshine than any other country in Europe, the yearly average being 3,000 hours.

The largest fund expended yearly by any country on behalf of its army is that of Russia, the latest military budget of which amounted to £42,500,000.

There are more theaters in Italy than elsewhere in the world.

The largest telegraph office in the world is in the general postoffice building, London, over 3,000 operators being employed.

SPEED OF METEORS.

Meteors rush through space at the rate of 26 miles a second. They are not usually larger than a pebble, and on striking the earth's atmosphere they dissolve instantly into gas.

SOCIAL JOYS.

What is a spread, Uncle Aleck?

Well, a spread is so called because the man who gives it has to spread himself all over town to raise the money to pay for it.

PURELY CANADIAN NEWS.

INTERESTING ITEMS ABOUT OUR OWN COUNTRY.

Gathered from Various Points from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The machinery for the Cameron Island mine has arrived in Rat Portage. A. G. Irwin, assistant secretary of the Montreal Board of Trade has resigned.

Point Edward citizens have petitioned their Council to sink a test gas well.

Rosland's latest voters' list shows 1,218 voters in the metropolis of the Kootenay.

Regina Board of Trade will help advertise the Prince Albert route to the Klondike.

Sixty-four canneries were operated on the Fraser last season, and the pack broke all previous records.

Edmonton is rapidly filling up with prospectors, who will start for the Yukon as soon as spring opens.

James Paul, a 17-year-old Rosland boy, shot himself because his mother reproved him. He will get better.

Jas. McCreary has resigned the principalship of the West Ward School, Peterboro'. He will travel a petrified man.

Miss Mary Haywood of St. Thomas, became despondent on Sunday and took a dose of toothache medicine. She will recover.

The Quebec Exposition Company has decided to buy Gowans' farm and transform it into a permanent exhibition grounds.

W. J. McLeod, warden's clerk at the Kingston penitentiary, has been appointed steward at the Dorchester penitentiary.

Dan McNaughton, who was accidentally killed by a gunshot while hunting in British Columbia, was a native of Lancaster, Ont.

Rev. J. W. Spirwell has left Woodstock for New Westminster, B. C., where he will be principal of the Columbia Methodist College.

A Canadian Pacific brakeman was blown off the top of a train near Scham last week. He lit in a snow bank and escaped uninjured.

A deal for the sale of eighteen canneries on the Fraser has fallen through as the English syndicate say the capital is drifting toward the Klondike.

James Grant, of Stewart, is rejoicing because an unmarried brother has left an estate in Oregon valued at \$5,000, and he is one of the six who will divide.

The Merchants Cotton Co. of Montreal, have decided to place their goods with the wholesale trade and manufacturers direct through a special selling department.

Alfred Robert Angers, former clerk of the Court of Appeal at Quebec who has been a novice at the monastery of La Trappe, has taken his final vows as a brother of the order.

The Le Roi mine has nearly completed its contract to supply 75,000 tons of ore to the Trail smelter. In future all ore will be shipped to the company's own smelter at Northport.

Quail are numerous in the neighborhood of Brantford. A railroad train killed over a score last Wednesday night. But then everyone who goes shooting quail can't carry a railway train with him.

A stranger tried the trick of substituting a paste diamond for a real one in a St. Thomas' jewellery store, but the clerk discovered the fraud in time to make the swindler give up, though he escaped himself.

A Gore Bay constable has been carrying on an indiscriminate shooting of dogs. Christmas day he shot a valuable canine belonging to the mail dog train and now the municipality is the defendant in a suit for damages.

A carload of live hogs from Listowel went through the Sarnia tunnel on Thursday, consigned to the Chicago stock yards. It was the first importation of Canadian hogs for slaughter known by the United States customs officers.

The latest verdict in the celebrated Turner vs. St. Clair Tunnel Co. was given at Port Huron the other day. It was \$2,200 for the plaintiff. Turner lost his hearing while working in compressed air during the construction of the tunnel.

SOME FAMILIAR NAMES.

Lake Michigan signifies in the native tongue "a weir for fish."

Java is a native Malay word signifying "the land of nutmegs."

Asia comes from the Sanskrit Ushas, signifying "land of the dawn."

Conchetic in the Indian form was Quaintukut, meaning "the country of the long river."

Egypt expresses the Hebrew for "the land of oppression," alluding to the bondage of the Israelites.

Africa traces its origin to the Phoenician after, a black man, and the Sanskrit ac, the earth, a country.

Lake Erie is the lake of the "wild cat," the name given to a fierce tribe of Indians exterminated by the Iroquois.

AN APPETITE DESTROYER.

I had no appetite for breakfast this morning, said the bookkeeper, as he came in and took off his coat.

Out late last night? queried the assistant manager.

That wasn't it. I found my head lull beside my plate.