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The "Chronicle" is the only 12-Page Local Newspaper in Western Ontario.

Through Storm and Sunshine

CHAPTER XXIV.

In the interest of her half-brother, Vivien had determined to forget all past differences, and to make a friend of Lady Neslie; so one evening she said to her—
"Valerie, if you are not engaged, will you spare me a few minutes?"
"Is the lecturing lady Neslie about to begin?" thought Lady Neslie. "I will have none of it."
"It is not a very usual thing for you to seek me," she replied aloud. "I am not engaged. What do you want?"
"I want you to walk out into the grounds with me. I have something to say to you."
It was an August evening, and the warm still air was heavy with the fragrance of the tall Asclepias lilies. The sunbeams lingered with a golden light on odoriferous flowers; the roses drooped their heavy heads, and Valerie and Vivien looked so fair that Valerie had no particular reason for refusing; and Vivien led her to her own favorite nook, where the sun dial stood and the fountains played in the sunlight.

How long was it since that sunny summer morning when she had stood there dreaming of the noble deeds she would do? She lived through the scene again. She remembered her anger, her passion and dismay, when she received her father's letter; she remembered how she had inveigled against his marriage, and how, in the end, how worse than useless, all her struggles had been. How long was it since she had sat there in the sunlight? A few years—as men count time; to her it seemed that a life-time had passed. And now, she had lost all, except the guardianship of the honor of her house. But she was there to plead with the stranger who had supplanted her.

"Valerie," she said, "you will not misunderstand me. But Lady Neslie interrupted her.
"Once for all, Vivien, let me tell you, I will have no interference. Do not mistake me," returned Vivien; "I am not about to interfere. I have seen nothing that calls for interference. I was about to ask you, Valerie, whether we cannot be better friends."
Heaven knew the effort it cost that proud girl to humble herself so. She had so heartily despised the woman by her side.

"Let us be better friends," she begged. "We have but one interest in common—the welfare of little Oswald. If we live in peace and harmony, we can act so much better for him."
"What do you call peace and harmony?" asked Valerie sharply.
"Never disagreeing," replied Vivien.
"I never have wanted to disagree," said "miladi." "It was you. From the very first you always disliked me; you were always jealous of me; you would have sent me away if you could."
The beautiful face flushed crimson with humiliation; but it takes more than the spiteful words of a spiteful woman to shake the resolve of a noble mind.

"There is some truth in what you say, Valerie. I did not like you when you were vexed and sorry that my father had married you. But now that he is dead and we are alone, let me be different. I offer you what I never offered you before, my hand in true and loyal friendship. Will you accept it, Valerie? Will you let me do my best for you and for little Oswald?"
But "miladi" was suspicious. She was too ignoble herself to understand a noble motive. She became suspicious. What did Vivien want? She could not, would not, believe that it was friendship with herself. She turned abruptly to her—
"What is it you want, Vivien? Speak plainly. You must have some design or motive in this—tell me what it is."
Vivien raised her patient face to the clear blue sky before she answered.

"I have no motive, Valerie, but the wish to help you in the training and education of your son, the wish to help you make him a good man."
"In plain words," thought Valerie to herself, "she wants to have her share in the management of matters—and she shall not."
"I do not see any need for all this, Vivien," she said coldly. "I am willing enough to be on friendly terms with you, but you must understand quite distinctly that I will allow no interference. I will not yield one iota of my authority to you."
"I have no wish to usurp it. Oh, believe me, Valerie, the good of Lancelwood, the honor of our name, is all I care for! I ask you in all good faith, in all truth and loyalty, to let me be your friend, your adviser, your counselor, your right hand. I have no wish to take your place, and no wish to wrest your authority from you. I care only for the good of Lancelwood."
"What is it you want?" she said coldly. "It is something quite new to hear you talk about submission."
"I will tell you what I want, Valerie. Will you let me have some will be the first to set an example of obedience and submission to you."
Only a noble woman could have pleaded thus; but the woman listened and did not understand.

share in the training of your boy? He is to be master of Lancelwood—let him learn what will make a noble man; he is to be master of others—let me teach him self-discipline, self-control. He is quick to learn—let me teach him lessons of loyalty and truth of good faith and honor. I will never be cross with him, Valerie—I would be patient and gentle; may I try?"
"No," replied Lady Neslie; "you shall have no part, no share in the training of my boy. I will let him learn what I like, not what you like. He shall learn no cant, no hypocrisy; he shall enjoy his life. Self-control is all very well for poor people—it keeps them honest; but it is not one of the virtues of a gentleman."
"Oh, Valerie," interrupted Vivien, "do not say such things!"
But "miladi's" anger was thoroughly aroused now.

"You have triumphed over me," she said, "often and often. You have been pleased to laugh at my ignorance,

maid rose with a white scared face. "Oh, miladi, be careful," she said. "For Heaven's sake be careful. You have won too much—mind that you do not lose."
"I cannot lose—and of course I shall be careful; I must enjoy myself, or of what use would my money be?" Marie looked grave.

"Evil days will come of it, miladi," she said. "If you wish yourself and your child well you will not return to France—you will remain here and go on as you are going now."
"Which I do not intend. You can prepare my luggage as soon as you like. I shall go in a few days' time."
That same morning Vivien was surprised to hear from Valerie's own lips that she intended very shortly to go to Paris.

"I left many dear friends there," said "miladi," "whom I should like to see again."
Vivien wondered if she remembered refusing to invite these same friends during Sir Arthur's life-time, but she said nothing. She had long since discovered that words were useless. Valerie was unusually gracious.

"While I am away," she said, "I should be really glad, Vivien, if you would take charge of Oswald. I know that I can trust you with him."
"You may safely trust me," was the grave reply. But Vivien did not feel as hopeful as she would have felt some time before; the child's evil habits were becoming so confirmed that she almost despaired of correcting them.

Lady Neslie looked up with a laugh in which there was a note of contempt.
"On my return I shall expect to find a grand moral reform," she said. "I suppose my boy is anything but what you would like him to be. For my part I admire his spirits and his talents. I hope you will not contradict him, Vivien."
"I will be kind to him, but I cannot promise to indulge him foolishly. Valerie, did you never read these words, 'Give thy son his way, and he shall make thee afraid?'"
"No," was the laughing reply. "I do not have to for anything of that kind. I give but two requests of that kind, to teach my boys saws or to sing psalms, and 'miladi' went away with laughing disregard of Vivien's flushing indignation face.

Lady Neslie went to Paris that same week, and to Vivien it seemed as though the sweet spirit of peace had settled over her. An impulse came over her, when Valerie drove away, to have all the windows opened, as though the very atmosphere of the Abbey were charged with her mocking spirit. She felt that through every room she must have a fresh current of air.
Once more she was alone in her father's house, and but for the noise of the young heir, the terrible past would all have seemed a dream to her. Once more she was mistress of the house where she had ruled so long, and the only drawback was that "miladi" would return. Vivien waited one or two days before she tried to do anything with the child. Then she invited him to go out for a long walk with her.

"May I slide?" he asked, looking anxiously at her.
"Yes," and what is more, Oswald, I will ask Mr. Dorman to teach you to skate. You will like that."
Bribed by these promises, the little Sir Oswald, consented to go; and during their walk Vivien tried to lay the groundwork of her plan, to awaken in the idea of truth and honor, of loyalty and honesty. He was terribly deficient—the result of her questioning alarmed Vivien.

"Did you ever say your prayers?" she asked.
"No, mamma, found Mrs. Corty teaching them to me once, and she said it was all nonsense."
The boy seemed to have no reverence for sacred things. She was literally at a loss how to talk to him.
"What shall you do when you are master of Lancelwood?" she asked him.

"I think," said Lady Neslie to her maid, "that I may safely lessen some of my grief now."
"In what way, 'miladi'?" asked Marie.
"I may safely mix a little gray with my black, and then gradually subside into a becoming shade of lavender."
"I hope you will be careful, miladi. I have noticed that the English people are very particular about their mourning; any impropriety in that respect would be—"
"I do not want a lecture," said Lady Valerie, haughtily. "Do what I tell you. Relieve that somber black silk with a little gray. It is six months since Sir Arthur died, surely that is long enough for crêpe."
There was wonderful familiarity between Lady Neslie and her maid, Marie took the silk dress in her hands and began busily to trim it with ribbons of soft shining gray.
"Marie," said Lady Valerie, "I am going to Paris."
The maid looked up almost in alarm. Her ladyship continued—
"My fortune is made and secured. I have plenty of money, and I shall be mistress of the Abbey for fifteen years. I think now I may enjoy my life."
"You have had nothing but enjoyment," said the maid.
"Miladi," laughed contemptuously. "Do you call such a life as this enjoyment? I do not. English people do not even know what the word 'pleasure' or gayety means. I call a carnival enjoyment; I call this life of restraint and conventional imprisonment. I long to find myself in sunny Paris, where I can do more as I like."
Marie shook her head gravely.
"It is not my place to lecture, miladi, but I hope you will be careful."
"I have nothing to risk or lose now," said Valerie. "I have made my comp. I am going to be very gracious. I intend during my absence to place Oswald under Miss Neslie's care—she will be delighted."
"The best thing you could do would be to put him entirely under Miss Neslie's care—begging your pardon for the lie's care—you are not at all adapted for training a child."
"Miladi" laughed good humoredly. "It is very possible," she replied, "but I shall go to Paris, and you must not be surprised if you find that I bring some of my friends back with me. I am tired of these all English. I want some one to make me gay." Her words had a strange effect. The

"I shall eat all the grapes and peaches myself, shoot the birds, and whip the stable-boys," was the prompt reply.
The more she conversed with him, the greater became her dismay—he had so few qualities. He seemed to have inherited his mother's disposition. Hard, stern training and good teaching might make him different; but these things Vivien knew he could not have. Evil indeed would be the day when Lancelwood became his.

She found also, that although he was six years of age, he did not even know his alphabet. There was a battle every morning in the nursery when the nurse tried to teach him his letters, and he always came off victorious. Vivien was grieved and distressed.

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ed; matters were even worse than she had feared. When she returned with the child to the house, she went at once in search of Gerald Dorman, and told him.

"It is not often," he said, "that a mother is so completely blind to her child's interests; it must be that Lady Neslie keeps him ignorant on purpose that she may have the more influence over him. A good tutor would, in some degree remedy the evil, if one could be found who would take a true interest in the child's welfare."
Vivien's noble face brightened as she looked at him.
"You have anticipated what I came to say," she said, with a gracious smile. "I dare not engage a tutor for the boy; if I did, Lady Neslie would discharge him at once on her return. But, if you, Mr. Dorman, would take him a few hours every day, we might do something with him."
To be continued.

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