

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

A NOVEL.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Without loss of time, which as the wedding day approached was so valuable, Jack wrote to Castro, the artist. There was no bewildering preface; he came to the point at once.

The Countess de L'Vevre is here, and contemplates marriage at an early date. I know her to be the subject from which the picture of "Saved" is painted. If I read aright the story that it tells, her husband, the Count, was not drowned, and possibly is yet alive. If you can find him, send him here at once, in time to prevent her unlawful marriage. If you know nothing of him, write to me, telling what you know of her life while abroad. Whatever you do, do quickly, for time is precious.

Jack sent the letter, and then quietly folded his hands to wait for an answer. How dearly the hours and days drag by when we are compelled to stand idly waiting for them to run their course. Jack calculated to an hour how long it would take for a letter to reach Italy and an answer to return. He then allowed twenty-four hours for possible delays, and nervously waited for the time to elapse. As a last resort, he made an excuse of business, and left the city. It was impossible to remain there and not visit Miss Langdon; and see her daily and treat her respectfully, he positively would not. In order to avoid suspicion on her part and the curiosity and comments of friends, he quietly wrapped the mantle of his wrath around him and departed for more congenial scenes. He insisted that St. Claire should accompany him, but St. Claire pleaded business, and said that he would remain in the city and speedily report any news that might come from Italy. With this Jack was obliged to be content, although he would fain have taken his friend with him.

Yes, St. Claire had business, important business, at home. His friend Wycliffe, the sound business man, the model husband, the upright, honorable gentleman, was wasting "his substance in riotous living." Men with whom he had dealings in Wall street knew nothing of the web which was entangling his feet and drawing him deeper and deeper into the slough of filth. It was covered with roses bought with his gold, but it was a slough of filth nevertheless. His friends knew that he was living fast, but they thought that he had the money to back him, so his credit was good for an unlimited amount, while he sat, night after night, with feverish breath and heated brow, gambling away fortune, friends and honor. Suddenly, aye, as sudden as death comes at last, without a note of warning, beggary, complete and absolute, stared him in the face. When or how he commenced, no one knew; he himself could not have told; but before he stopped to think of his danger, he was standing on the dizzy brink of the precipice over which thousands of men have plunged to their eternal ruin.

Some one is always ready to frame excuses for men who frequent saloons and gambling dens. If the man is unmarried, he was away from home and friends, out of employment, had no place to spend his evenings; if he is married, then—pitying angels stoop to hear—his wife is to blame. The devil devised that excuse, and his emissaries on earth repeat it. But in Wycliffe's case that one excuse failed. Mrs. Wycliffe was not what is termed a brilliant or intellectual woman, but she was generous and true-hearted, loving her husband with a touching confidence worthy of a better man. Wycliffe was essentially selfish, and although he admired and respected his wife, considering her a suitable head to his establishment, yet his innate self-love prevented him from appreciating her implicit reliance in her honor and integrity. She had noticed without comment the late hours at which he returned home; without comment, because she knew that he attended dinner and club parties and places of kindred resort, so that without suspicion, but always with regret, she saw him leave home for the evening.

The night came when Wycliffe knew that if luck did not turn, the morning would see him a pitiful, helpless wreck, cut loose from all chances of recovery, whirled into the dead-lock of certain discovery. Bills to a large amount would fall due on the morrow, and he must be ready to meet them, or inevitable disgrace would overwhelm him and his. When he rose to leave home that night, his wife laid a detaining hand on his arm, and said, anxiously:

"Lionel, you are ill? Your face is pale and your eyes are bloodshot. Stay at home to-night. To-morrow you will be better."

"Oh, no; I'm well enough. Business has been running behind of late, and I am worried; that's all."

"Let business go to-night and stay at home. I will willingly give up Patti and stay with you."

"Not for any consideration would I allow you to miss that treat; and besides, I have an engagement that I cannot break."

And kissing Mena, he was gone. He told the truth; he was anxious for his wife to enjoy that evening.

"God knows, it may be the last," he muttered, as he hurried on to meet his "engagement."

There were fewer than usual there that night. The gay and gallant crowd that frequented that fashionable resort had gone to see and hear the

"divine Patti." Sitting at one of the tables, with his hat pulled low over his brow and his hand shading the lower part of his face, was a man who was evidently a stranger, and who was watching with great interest the result of the game. Wycliffe lost, and lost steadily, until his opponent became disgusted and refused to play because the stakes were so small.

The stranger rose and crossed over to the table and spoke to Wycliffe. His voice was broken by a peculiar lisp.

"Will you play with me? Small stakes suit me best, for I am a green hand."

Wycliffe assented, and the new game commenced. The stranger had told the exact truth; he was a "green hand." He did not play carelessly or indifferently, but as though, despite his utmost exertions, he was coming out second best. Again and again Wycliffe swept in the stakes, which were gradually growing larger, until a small fortune was piled at his elbow; but still the stranger showed no signs of weariness or discouragement. At length one of the spectators interposed.

"See here, stranger; you better give it up till your hand is steadier and your head cooler."

"Do I look excited?" inquired the man, lisping painfully, his white fingers carelessly threading his long black beard.

"No; not as I would look if I saw my money disappearing like mist before the sunshine."

And the man turned away, feeling that he had done his duty in having warned the stranger.

In a short time the stranger declared himself "broke," and thus the game was ended and Wycliffe was saved. He gathered up his treasure, and carrying it to his office, locked it in his safe.

He then went home and changed his suit for a full evening dress—it was early yet, not twelve o'clock—and joined his wife at the ambassador's ball, whither he knew she intended to go from the opera. And then he laughed and talked and danced with his lady friends, from whom, if one of them had ever won a dollar in the manner in which he had just gathered a fortune, he would have drawn back in holy horror, crying:

"Unclean! Unclean!"

The stranger had left the gambling hall at the same time that Wycliffe did, but turned in the opposite direction. He walked along slowly, his head drooped upon his breast with an air of utter dejection, contrasting painfully with Wycliffe's light, quick step and buoyant spirits. The man went on home, and opening the door, entered his apartments. He stopped upon the threshold, gazing in stupid embarrassment upon the unexpected scene. A man was stretched at full length upon an elegant fauteuil, his arms folded under his head, and his feet elevated on a projection of carved marble over the glowing grate. When the door opened, the man had turned lazily and surveyed the intruder, who walked on into the room and closed the door behind him.

"Well, upon my soul!" exclaimed the occupant of the room, raising his head and dropping his feet, "that's cool. Would you like to have this chair?"

"Yes; I would," answered the stranger, tossing aside his hat and leaning against the mantle.

"If I wasn't constitutionally opposed to exertion, I would kick you down stairs. Will you deign to inform me what right you have here?"

"The best in the world—the right of possession."

As he spoke, he raised his hand to his face and quietly removed the long, flowing beard that adorned his chin.

"St. Claire!"

"Exactly. What a quick eye you have, De Guerry."

"I was not expecting to see you rigged up like a guy. What does it mean?"

"I've been masquerading."

"May I inquire where?"

"I cannot tell you, De Guerry. It is a secret. Please don't mention my disguise."

"I would hardly pry into your secrets for the sake of disclosing them."

Jack answered with great assumption of dignity. He was wondering if his friend was getting into difficulty, that he must hide his identity under a mask. St. Claire's face was pale and careworn, and there were new, deep lines of pain around his mouth.

"Well, Jack, what brought you back so soon?"

"I'm tired out. I've walked until I'm exhausted, and thought until I'm on the verge of brain fever. If I don't hear from Castro soon, I think I shall go mad."

"Have you seen Miss Langdon since your return?"

"Don't mention that exasperating woman to me. I came in on the 10:30 express, and was driven here without seeing anyone, and here I mean to stay for a week."

"Jack, you can't stay here, fastened up like it was a country house. And besides that, De Guerry, I think that it is wrong of you to allow Miss Langdon to continue preparations for a marriage that will never take place."

"Wrong, is it? I sometimes think that I have lost the capacity of judging between right and wrong."

"I am under that impression myself, De Guerry. For if you knew justice from injustice, you would hasten to adjust affairs with Miss Langdon."

"St. Claire, you see things from the wrong standpoint. Miss Langdon needs a lesson, and I consider myself the proper person to assume the position of instructor."

In vain did St. Claire reason with him during

the time which elapsed before the day appointed for the wedding to take place. Jack was obdurate, and clung with tenacious pertinacity to his original intention of waiting to gain some tidings of the missing Count.

In the meantime, Helen was wondering why she did not hear from Jack. Not a line or a message had she received from him since he left her. She concluded to go to Mrs. De Guerry and make a pretense of laying aside her pride and feign great anxiety for Jack's health and happiness. Accordingly she attired herself in her most imposing costume and sailed majestically over to Mrs. De Guerry's. As usual, she did not wait to be announced, but passed on to Mrs. De Guerry's boudoir, where to her infinite surprise and displeasure she found Bell alone. Bell rose, and bowing ceremoniously, said, courteously:

"My mother is not at home."

Helen looked around helplessly. She had gone there expecting to find Mrs. De Guerry, and in her disappointment and embarrassment she seemed unable to retreat. Scarcely knowing what she said, she did (what people always do under such circumstances) exactly what she did not intend to do—allowed Bell to know that Jack had not written to her.

"I called to inquire if you had heard from Jack since he went away."

"I have not."

"Oh, I knew that you hadn't, but I thought perhaps he had written to your mother."

Bell raised her eyebrows with a look of such exasperating surprise that Helen could have struck her in the face.

"If my mother has received any communication from him, she has neglected to mention it."

"She probably would not mention it to you. I must see her and ask her."

"It seems a pity that he does not write to you. It must be so mortifying for you to go about inquiring after him."

Bell was disgusted with herself to think that she could be so childish as to play with Helen's weapons.

The girls were still standing, Helen grasping the gold-mounted handle of her parasol as though it had been a weapon of defense, and fairly choking with anger. The sneer in Bell's face and voice was maddening. Like a flash it brought Raymond to her mind. Now was her time. Without replying to Bell's taunt, she sank uninvited into a chair, and said, placidly:

"I will wait here for your mother's return."

"You will probably find it more agreeable to wait alone. I will retire."

"No, Miss De Guerry, if you please. I have something to say to you."

Bell looked at her inquiringly, but made no reply.

"Will you sit down?"

Bell seated herself, wondering at the nature of the communication.

"Miss De Guerry, you are deceived in a friend."

"If you refer to yourself, you—"

"I do not refer to myself. You are very careful about the character of your lady friends, but with regard to the gentlemen you do not inquire so closely."

"That is false! There are many men whom I meet in society and recognize as acquaintances—men for whom I have no respect. But other women receive them; so must I. In the selection of my friends it is very different."

"Not very different, Miss De Guerry, when you accept for a friend the most notorious rascal that is admitted to polite society."

"Your accusation is an insult, Miss Langdon! Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Mr. Raymond. Your treatment of him is an insult to all decent, honorable women."

Bell was startled; but she thought that Raymond had been so fortunate as to incur Miss Langdon's ill will.

"In what manner has Mr. Raymond offended you?"

"He has not offended me. Personally I like him, but his character is disreputable."

"I have never heard anything derogatory to Mr. Raymond's character."

"Only because you would not listen."

Helen feared that Bell would not listen to her story, so pretended that she thought others would have told her if she would have given them the opportunity.

"No one has ever attempted to say anything against him to me."

"Then they thought you knew. You are the only person of his acquaintance that does not know."

"My mother?"

"Your mother knows."

"My mother knows a disgraceful story about Mr. Raymond, and has never told me?"

"Yes. But I will tell you."

It cut Bell's pride to allow this woman whom she detested to disparage a friend; but she was determined to hear the story, and then judge for herself.

Without waiting for the assent that she feared would be withheld, Miss Langdon commenced and narrated the entire story, which did not lose anything by the malice which prompted her to tell it. Bell listened perfectly dumbfounded. Such utter depravity she had never dreamed could exist among people of intelligence and refinement. She was spared the pain of making any comment by the entrance of Mrs. De Guerry, which put a speedy termination to the conversation.

In a few moments Bell turned herself and went

to her own room to think it over. It did not take much thinking to enable her to decide on her future course with regard to Mr. Raymond. Of the truth of the story, she had no doubt. A hundred things went to prove it. Her heart rebelled against the mother who had kept the truth from her, hoping she would marry him.

That night she met Raymond and treated him with marked coolness. He tried several times to speak to her on the subject, but some one came between them. At last, however, he had an opportunity to whisper, hurriedly:

"Miss De Guerry, I have offended you. May I inquire how?"

"I cannot tell you now; but come to me to-morrow."

She did not deny that he had offended her; but, as she had said, explanation was impossible then, so he bowed silently and left her, with the intention of seeing her early the following day.

[To be continued.]

CAN YOU TELL?

Can you tell why four-fifths of the young ladies prefer a brainless fop to a man with brains?

Can you tell why nine-tenths of the young gentlemen prefer a giddy butterfly of fashion to a woman of good sense?

Can you tell why men who cannot pay small bills can always find money to buy liquor and treat when among friends?

Can anyone tell why it is that some mothers are always ready to sew for the distant heathen when their own children are ragged and dirty?

Can anyone tell how men live and support their families who have no income and no work, when others, who are industrious, are half starved?

Can anyone tell how young men who are always behind with their landlords can play billiards night and day, and always be ready for a game of cards when money is at stake?

Can anyone tell why it is that when a man of wealth shoots down another in cold blood, the jury always bring in a verdict of "not guilty" of murder in the first degree?

Can anyone tell why it is that a woman of wealth can violate almost every law of virtue, decency and morality, and still be sought after, courted and honored by the nabobs of society, while a poor but honest girl who deviates ever so little from the path of virtue is shunned and abhorred by these same nabobs?

Can any one tell why it is that nine out of every ten of the criminals who die on the gallows, no matter how dark the deed for which they are executed, go straight to heaven, according to their spiritual advisers, while a majority of these same spiritual advisers would have us believe that even an infant, dying without baptism, is doomed to everlasting torment?

TUNISIAN PROVERBS.

"The foot goes where the heart leads."

"Be a lion and eat me; but do not be a wolf to defile me."

"If the ass is invited to the wedding, it is only that he may carry the wood."

"Work for thy character until it be renowned, then it will work for thee."

"Each kind is good for its own kind."

"He has no bread to eat and he is looking for a wife," signifies: Be not ambitious when your means are limited.

"The woman to whom fortune does not come says that her husband is bewitched."

"It is the crier himself who has lost his ass," is used in speaking of those who cannot do for themselves what they can do for others.

"What the grasshoppers have left the little birds have eaten," means that misfortunes never come singly.

"He went to the sea and found it dry," means that a cowardly man will always fail in his undertakings.

"His fortune has turned into nails and straw," refers to a prodigal.

"He eats the fruit of the paternal garden, and yet insults his ancestors," refers to ingratitude.

"One horseman does not make the dust-cloud." This signifies that the work of one man cannot produce very great results.—Paris Figaro.

SMOKING IN THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN.—The woman who does not require of a man the form of respect, invites him to discard the substance; and there is one violation of the form which is recent and gross, and might well be cited as a striking illustration in the decay of manners. It is the practice of smoking in the society of ladies in public and private places, whether driving, or walking, or sailing, or sitting. There are *preux chevaliers* who would be honestly amazed if they were told they did not behave like gentlemen, who, sitting with a lady on a hotel piazza, or strolling in a public park, take out a cigar, light it, and puff as tranquilly as if they were alone in their rooms. Or a young man comes alone upon the deck of a steamer and blows clouds of tobacco smoke in their faces, without even remarking that tobacco is disagreeable to some people. This is not, indeed, one of the seven deadly sins, but a man who unconcernedly sings false betrays that he has no ear for music; and a man who smokes in this way shows that he is not a gentleman.—Harper's Magazine.

As an item of "interest" to those of our readers who rush heedlessly into debt, we may mention the fact that in 1869-70 H. L. Yesler, of Seattle, borrowed \$45,000. A few days ago he settled his account and found he had paid \$101,000 interest money, besides refunding the principal. It is easy to get in debt, but getting out is quite another thing.—Olympia Courier.

Here is an excellent recipe for making an infidel: Train up a child to look upon Sunday as a day of frigid austerity, force it to listen upon that day to three sermons of a dry and uninteresting character, make hymn and Scripture learning a task rather than a pleasure, and you are rearing a very promising young infidel.

The correspondent who wants to know who are the aesthetes is informed that they are idiots who haven't yet been committed to an asylum.—New Haven Register.

Joanna Miller said she wept on reading some of his own poems. Right! So should we, if we had