

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

A NOVEL.

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CHAPTER XXI.

As Castro entered the room, Jack stepped forward to meet him, his face, more than his words, expressing his unbounded pleasure in seeing his guest.

"Castro, I am glad to see you." A simple greeting, often spoken, usually meaningless, but with Jack meaning all that those words could convey.

Castro did not heed his sincerity; he was thinking only of himself. He strode toward Jack, and clutching his outstretched hand in a vice-like grip, exclaimed, hoarsely:

"Am I too late?" "No. You are just time."

As Jack answered, he pushed a chair toward Castro, who sank down in it utterly exhausted. Looking around, he discovered St. Claire, who had remained a passive spectator of the scene.

"St. Claire! You here? It is well. We will talk together."

Although Castro understood and spoke English well, yet he always expressed his thoughts in short sentences.

"De Guerry, commence and tell me all you know about her."

"I think it would be wiser to wait till you are rested. How long have you been in the city?"

"I came from the steamer here; but I had time to rest on the trip over, and I am very anxious to hear what you have to tell me."

"There is but little to tell you, except that Miss Langdon was to have been married day after tomorrow. Do you know if the Count of L'Fevre is alive?"

"He is."

"Where is he?" "He is here. I am the Count of L'Fevre."

Jack sprang to his feet.

"Great God! You the man she tried to—"

"Murder? Yes; I am the man."

Jack sank back in his chair, his face a perfect study. He hesitated a moment as if undecided what to say, then settled the matter by whistling clearly and coolly two bars of an appropriate hymn. When he had finished, Castro turned to him, saying, anxiously:

"Will you tell me whom she is—was going to marry?"

"Yes, Count of L'Fevre, I will tell you. I am her other victim."

"You, De Guerry! You love her, too?"

"No, you are mistaken. I can think of no sentiment farther removed from love than the feeling I entertain for Miss Langdon."

Castro raised his hands, palm outward, as if to avoid a blow.

"Don't! You must not speak disrespectfully of her. She is my wife."

"Your wife! That woman is not worthy to—"

Castro's hand had covered his mouth, and he interrupted, brokenly:

"I cannot hear you. I know that she has wronged you, but you must remember that she believed me dead."

"And I also remember that she had the best of reasons on which to found her belief."

"Yes; God knows you are right. But if I can forgive her, you certainly will."

"Forgive her? When she knows that I would not marry a widow to save her soul from perdition! Forgive her? When she did not have faith enough in me or respect enough for herself to tell me that she was once another man's wife! Forgive her? Never!"

St. Claire interfered now, in time to prevent the hot words from growing into a quarrel.

"De Guerry, is it not best to drop that part of the subject now, and listen first to Mr. Castro's story? That is, of course, if he has no objections to telling us."

"I will tell you, certainly," answered Castro, his brow contracting and his lips quivering with feeling. The love he bore for that woman and had buried so tenderly from human sight must be uncovered to the unsympathizing gaze of strangers. His chin was dropped upon his breast and his voice was low and broken as he commenced.

"As you know, I am an Italian by birth and education, but my parents being wealthy, I had the advantages of a very thorough English education. It was the ability to speak and understand her native tongue that first introduced me into the good graces of Helen Langdon. She came to Italy with her brother, a wild, worthless young fellow, who, even for the sake of the sister he idolized, would not refrain from tarrying too long at the wine. But in spite of Langdon's inferiority, Helen's fair beauty and great wealth soon elevated her to a position coveted by all the dark-eyed beauties of Florence. My father was dead, and I was now Count of L'Fevre. My mother and sisters became intimate friends of Miss Langdon's, and in a short time I was her most devoted slave. You know that Italian ladies are guarded by society conventionalities that American girls know nothing about. Helen treated me much the same as she did my sisters, to their everlasting astonishment and disgust. They have never forgiven her for what they considered lack of modesty and maidenly reserve. We both misjudged

her actions. They thought her coarse and ill-bred, and I thought that she loved me. Well, to tell in a few words what I was many weeks in deciding to do, I asked her to marry me. It was not because I doubted her affection for me or my unchanging love for her that I hesitated to take that fatal step. Under the free institutions of America, where a man can come and go, unhampered by estate and family claims, you can have only a faint understanding of the meaning, in Italy, of marrying a wife out of the pale of a select few, and unapproved by your family. As I said, I asked her to marry me, and I was surprised when she requested a few days in which to consider the matter. I thought that, knowing my family would object to the union, she shrank from placing me in such an embarrassing position. Now I know that she shrank from giving her hand in marriage where her heart could never go. Like many other American girls, she sold herself for a title—a title which she soon lost. As my wife and the Countess of L'Fevre, my mother and sisters were compelled to treat her courteously, and they soon learned to love her as well as the wife they had selected for me.

"We had been married but a short time when my brother, the eldest child, the heir to the title and estates, whom for years we had supposed to be dead, came back and claimed his own. He was the 'black sheep' of our family. He was half grown when I was born, and I can just faintly remember the consternation and sorrow in our home when he ran away. After a few months, we heard that he was dead, killed in a gambling saloon. I was raised as the heir, yet I but speak the truth when I say that by far the bitterest thought to me in parting with the possessions I had so long regarded as my own was that they would be wasted, squandered at the gaming table, and my mother and sisters reduced to poverty. We were away from home, in Germany, my wife and I, when the tidings reached me of my brother's return. Some dim, vague foreboding of my wife's displeasure induced me to resolve to break to her as gently as possible the news that I was no longer Count of L'Fevre, but only Mr. Castro."

"Then your name is Castro?"

"My name is Castro, certainly. The time I selected to tell Helen was when we were out walking. I had made a pretense of a desire to sketch a cliff in our neighborhood, and, equipped with the required paraphernalia, we sallied forth. With a sinking heart, for, as I said, I had a presentiment of her anger, I told her that my eldest brother had returned from his self-imposed banishment, and that we, she and I, must 'render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's.' She did not speak for several moments, but stood motionless, actually petrified with surprise and horror. Then she turned to me, her frame quivering and her eyes on fire.

"Why did you never tell me of this before?" she exclaimed.

"Because we never doubted the report of his death," I replied. "There lies in the family vault at home a coffin marked with his name and age."

"All goes to him? Title, estate, money, jewels—all?"

"Yes. All is his."

"And who are you?"

"I am heir apparent, next in succession, provided," I added, tauntingly, for her words stung me, "provided my brother never marries and has no heir."

"Her hands clasped convulsively, and her eyes had a lurid, red gleam that frightened me.

"Where will you get the money to support the expensive tastes and habits you have acquired?"

"With my pencil and brush," I answered, coolly. "I was too proud to tell this woman, who cared nothing for me, that I was still able to support her in luxury."

"And I have married—not the Count of L'Fevre, but Mr. Castro, the painter!"

"She fairly hissed the words in her rage and contempt, and I answered, without the faintest trace of excitement in voice or manner:

"Exactly. Mrs. Castro, you have been unfortunate."

"As I spoke, I laid down the articles I had been carrying, and sauntered to the edge of the cliff to look down. I stood there, wondering how the woman who had worn the title so short a time could value it so much more than I, who had known no other name. I thought that perhaps, after all, it was for my sake that she cherished resentment against my brother. Filled with sorrow and shame at my cruel words, I concluded to go back to her, confess my fault, and beg her forgiveness. I raised my head, half glanced back, and saw her directly behind me, with a face like a beautiful fury, and her awful purpose shining in her eyes. Before I could speak or move, I felt a sudden shock, and reeling, catching at space, I fell over the rocky cliff into the angry waters below. Slight as the warning had been, it was sufficient to enable me to partly dive, so as to break the force of my fall. A moment I struggled in the waters, then a huge wave caught and dashed me into a little shallow nook, far under the cliff, which the succeeding waves did not reach. The place afforded me no safety, only temporary release from immediate death. I had clung to a Craig till my fingers were stiff and feelingless, and had decided to let go and drop back into the water, when suddenly above the roaring and lashing of the waves a man's voice was borne upon the cold air.

"Hold on a little longer! Help is coming!"

"It was comparatively easy retaining my hold

after that, and in a few moments the men came up and took me away. As soon as they laid me down in the boat, everything grew dark, and blessed unconsciousness came to my relief. For two months my life was a blank, and during that time I was carefully nursed by German women, who cared for me as if I had been a friend instead of a stranger. When I recovered, I went back home. My brother was dead, my wife was gone, and, having all, I had nothing. They told me how my wife had grieved for me; that my home held so many painful associations for her that she had gone back to America. They were mistaken. I came here, but she was not here. I devoted every moment of my spare time to painting that picture. I exhibited it here and in England, in a vain hope that she would see it or hear of it and know that I was alive. I did not see her brother, for I thought that he would aid her in avoiding a man whom she hated. The first time I heard of her was when Mr. St. Claire recognized her in it. By that time I had despaired of finding her in America, so concluded to go back home. Of course I heard nothing from her there. It was therefore with mingled joy and pain that I read your letter and knew that my search was ended."

Castro's voice died away, leaving the room in solemn stillness. There were no comments to be made; all was explained. Castro raised his handkerchief and wiped the heavy drops of perspiration from his brow.

"De Guerry, you have not told me how you knew that I was interested in—Miss Langdon."

Jack glanced questioningly at St. Claire, who nodded affirmatively.

"I received my information from Mr. St. Claire."

Without waiting for Castro to question him, St. Claire narrated as briefly as possible all that he knew of the Countess of L'Fevre, omitting to mention that he had been a witness to the scene which came so near costing Castro his life. When he had finished, Castro turned to Jack.

"Mr. De Guerry, I suppose that you have some definite plan arranged upon which to act. How am I to inform the lady of my presence?"

"I have a plan which I hope will meet with your approval. I had feared that I would not hear from you in time to put it into execution. Day after to-morrow, as I told you, is the time set for the wedding. Until that time, I propose to keep your existence a secret. Then at the appointed time we will go to the house together, you and I—the man she married and the man she intends to marry."

Castro made no reply for a moment, then said, slowly:

"It will be a terrible blow; but she deserves it, and you are the only person who has both the right and the desire to inflict it."

The man's words signified disapprobation of Jack's conduct, even while he did not consider that he had the right to interfere with his plans. Jack was angry.

"Perhaps, Count of L'Fevre, you can suggest something more feasible."

All touch of sarcasm was lost upon the Italian as he replied, deliberately:

"No, I cannot. I am in your hands to do with as you think best."

This answer was somewhat mollifying, and the conversation continued more smoothly. St. Claire noticed that the hour was late, and excused himself, leaving the Count Jack's guest for the night. As St. Claire went slowly homeward, a familiar figure brushed past him hurriedly. He called aloud:

"Wycliffe!"

But the man went on hurriedly. Quickening his pace, St. Claire overtook him.

"Wycliffe, what are you doing here this time in the night, or morning, rather?"

Wycliffe looked around, his face white and desperate in the gas-light. He spoke to St. Claire angrily for the first time during their acquaintance.

"I might with propriety ask you the same question."

"I am going home from De Guerry's rooms."

"And I am attending to my own business."

"A bad business, Wycliffe. I thought that you had given it up."

"St. Claire, to what do you refer?"

"I refer to gambling."

Wycliffe shrank back, appalled by St. Claire's voice and words.

"Wycliffe, do you know where this will lead to?"

"St. Claire, we are friends. We will remain friends so long as you do not interfere with my private business, and no longer."

You did not tell me, so I had no opportunity of helping you. I took that means of giving you the money, hoping and believing that it would be your last game."

"St. Claire, I intended that it should be. When I left the hall that night, I vowed never to touch cards again, but the fascination is too strong. I tell you men don't give up that vice. Your money shall be repaid to the utmost farthing."

"If I had wanted the money, I never would have played with you. Keep it. I shall never use one dollar of it."

"I would return it if it turned me and my family homeless into the street."

"Wycliffe, you scorn my advice, you reject my friendship, thrust from you my affection, yet the time will come when you will remember with bitterness of heart your words of to-night."

St. Claire turned and walked away in the darkness. His words seemed prophetic. The next time Wycliffe spoke to St. Claire he would have given his hope of heaven to have blotted out that interview.

(To be continued.)

The records show that during the four years of President Hayes' term thirteen persons were arrested for hanging about the Executive Mansion, eleven of whom were sent to the asylum. Among the number were two women—one a very wealthy young lady from Indiana, and another an older woman, both of whom were under the hallucination that President Hayes had sent after them to marry them. The former, who exhibited no signs of mental derangement, actually got into the President's room and surprised him very considerably by telling him that she had received his letter asking her to come on and be the mistress of the White House; that she had always been anxious to be known as "the first lady in the land," and that the sooner the legal part of the ceremony was performed the better she would like it. The President bade her take a seat and wait until he returned. Slipping outside, he informed one of the officers, who begged her to go into one of the lower rooms, for the reason that marriages were not performed in the private offices of the Mansion. She was taken to police headquarters. Senators Voorhees and McDonald, of Indiana, vouched for her respectability and an officer was sent to her home in Indiana, the lady paying all the expenses of the trip.

The recently devised "self-leveling berth" is claimed to be the only invention yet brought forward which effectually removes the cause of seasickness. Its peculiarity lies in the application of what is known as the universal joint, upon which the berth is poised, and which is directed in its motion by a crescent-shaped weight, thus securing a perfectly level surface, no matter at what angle the vessel may pitch and roll; it is also controlled and regulated by India rubber springs, preventing any tendency to jump up with a sudden jerk. The contrivance occupies no more space than an ordinary berth, requires no expensive setting or adjustment, interferes in no way with the usual sleeping arrangement on board ship, and can at once, if desired, be transformed into a fixed berth. In a word, admitting the fact that seasickness is caused by the sufferer being forced by the law of gravitation out of his normal position, the invention, being on the universal joint principle, enables a passenger to maintain a horizontal position uninfluenced by the vessel's motion.

A NEW DEVICE OF VILLAINY.—The criminal element is constantly at work inventing new and unheard-of schemes of villainy. One of the devices inaugurated a year or so ago is that of selecting some person advanced in years and putting a number of insurance policies, in different offices, upon his life. The reader will probably remember the first case of this kind which occurred in the East some months ago. The man whose life was insured was murdered by the insurers in order that they, holding the policies, might obtain the amount of the insurance. Transactions of this kind, it is said, are becoming common in Western Maryland and Pennsylvania. Two or three instances have recently occurred—one in which, by the death of an old and decrepit colored man named Bell, in West Maryland, the insurers came into possession of \$200,000. The worst feature about this new practice is, that the person insured, if in good health and manifesting a disposition to lengthen out his days, is liable to be suddenly made way with.

A Mormon woman, Mrs. Hampton, has been telling a Chicago reporter that when the Mormon women are getting married, a white dress with a flowing cape is worn. During the ceremony this cape is over the bride's face until the groom lifts it. When the wife dies she is buried with this cape on her head, and when she is laid in her coffin the cape is thrown over her face. The teaching of the Mormon leaders is that she cannot be resurrected until the husband raises the cape from her face; that if he is satisfied that she has been a faithful and obedient wife, he will raise this cape and she will be resurrected, but if not satisfied he will refuse to do so, and she cannot be resurrected. One of the most common threats, she said, by which her husband used to compel her to obedience, was that if she didn't obey him, "she should never be resurrected."

LARGE CAVE.—Ed. DePeatt describes the cave which he explored last week, as well worth a visit. It is about eight miles from William creek, Josephine county, a wagon road running to the head of the valley, and a good trail thence to the cave. It consists of a series of subterranean caverns or chambers through which a person can walk for some 400 or 500 yards from the entrance, and there are still other chambers beyond, the entrances to which are too small to admit a person, but could be enlarged sufficiently, it is thought, by a little labor with pick and hammer. It is remarkable that such a natural curiosity has not been visited by more of the people of Southern Oregon.—Ashland Tidings.

A Chinese mother at Fresno, Cal., bandaged her little girl's feet, after the fashion of her country, and for several days the cries of the sufferer were heard throughout the mining town. Then a mob of indignant miners broke into the house, cut off the bandages, soaked the feet in liniment, and threatened to hang the woman if she renewed the process.