

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

"So you have been a rich woman, Pauline," he said, turning to her. "He did not know just how far this estrangement had been intentional on her part, and he would give her the benefit of the doubt. 'I, too, have fallen on prosperous times. Now, what are you going to do? Shall I see you home? Or shall I call on you to-morrow, when you will be quieter and calmer? Or will you come and look at my little place now?'"

Then, for the first time, Pauline raised her head; and again Jack saw the expression of the carved tiger's heads as she answered her husband.

"I will not accompany you anywhere; I would sooner kill myself—for I hate you!"

The shocked clergyman would have spoken; but Pelling stopped him courteously but firmly.

"You must pardon me; but this is my affair, as you must acknowledge, and mine only." These words, to the raging woman, he went on: "In those circumstances further discussion would be useless; and only Jack, who was watching him closely, guessed what wonderful self-control he was exerting to keep himself from exposing and upbraiding the woman to whom he spoke. 'I will give you the address of my solicitor, and all future communications must be made through him.' He wrote the address on a leaf of his pocketbook, tore it out, and placed it on the table beside her. 'And now, Mrs. Pelling, may I see you to your car?'"

She rose and drew herself up defiantly, and then swept from the vestry; and Pelling followed her in polite attendance. He returned in a few seconds.

"And now, Mr. Dornton," he said, "if you will favor me with your company, I shall be glad to give and receive explanations."

After washing the clergyman "Good morning," the two men jumped into the cab which brought Pelling from the station, and drove to a hotel. They talked on indifferent subjects until they were in possession of a private room, and the waiter had finally retired, after receiving orders for luncheon in the next room. Then Pelling turned to Jack and began:

"It seems to me that you and I are fated to cross each other's paths, Mr. Dornton. I have heard you spoken of pretty often lately by Mr. Mallett, a particular friend of mine."

"Indeed?" said Jack, uncomfortably, not relishing this sudden and intentional introduction of the Malletts' name; for, since his conversation with Lord Summers, Jack felt less proud than ever of his own share in the rupture with Ethel. He had thought, too, that Mr. Pelling would not have heard much to his credit from that source.

"I see what you are thinking," Pelling observed; "but you are wrong. Mr. Mallett has spoken of you to me only as a promising man in your profession. The other matter is in my mind, and I took the liberty of finding out for myself. Now, I have a proposition to make to you."

CHAPTER XXII.

Pelling paused and looked attentively at the young man. He knew there was not much news in giving Ethel up, as he could not marry her himself during the lifetime of his wife, and, having plenty of true shame, he did not mean to make any show of the miserable pain that was gnawing at his heart; but he felt he should like to know what sort of man this was whose path he intended to smooth for him as far as lay in his power; and, while he thought of this, the memory of Ethel's face, pained and sorrowful as he saw it when she made to him her confession of love for this Dornton came vividly before him, and he knew that the greatest kindness he could do her would be to restore her lover. Presently he said, abruptly:

"You have nearly broken Ethel's heart."

Jack flushed furiously, and half rose from his chair. Pelling motioned to him to keep calm.

"I asked you to be patient with me," he reminded Jack. "My motive should excuse me to you. The pith of the whole matter is this—the engagement between you and Ethel broken off in consequence of your infatuation for my wife, or had you ceased to care for her before you met Pauline? As a man to man I ask you for a truthful answer."

"I can't for the life of me understand by what right," began Jack, hotly.

"For heaven's sake, don't waste time in splitting straws when so much is at stake!" Pelling said, impetuously. "You can't understand my right to interfere? I will explain. I love Ethel Mallett; I never loved, never shall love, never believed it possible to love; and until this morning I had the hope of making her my wife some day, when she had had time to forget you. I think my love for her gives me the right to do what I can to secure her happiness; I believe her happiness rests with you. I can't have her myself, or I do not think I could be unselfish enough to give her up. I might, but I don't think it. Now to return to our point—was your infatuation for my wife the only cause of the estrangement between you two?"

Jack was greatly impressed, as he understood now why Pelling spoke with so much effort, and he felt touched by his devotion. Added to this was the feeling of shame that had oppressed him ever since his talk with Lord Summers.

"Come—you needn't mind confessing your weakness to me," Pelling went on encouragingly. "Bless you, man, I know how Pauline can twist any man round her finger if she likes to try! I suppose she was smitten with you, and you spread her nets to snare you, and you, not seeing the snare, found yourself ensnared of her without knowing how it happened. And I dare say, if the truth were known, when the first mad burst was over, and you thought out things quietly, you would have given a good deal never to have seen her at all, and wished you had behaved differently to Miss Mallett."

Jack jumped up, his face beaming, and wrung Pelling's hand.

"I could not say it myself, but that is really just how it has been, with me. I am not good at expressing my feelings; but I know you are behaving very well to me—much better than I deserve—and I thank you. And now what do you wish me to do?"

"Go right away for a few months. Write to me now and again, and I will take care that Miss Mallett hears whatever is likely to be of use to you. Give her time to forget the indignity you have

have anything to do with me, and that she is now in Paris."

"If I were you I should go to Paris, too."

"I suppose I ought—in fact, I know I ought—and I have tried to make up my mind to go; but I cannot."

For an instant he dropped his head upon his hand, and a great rush of pity set Ethel's heart beating oddly. He pulled himself together with an impatient exclamation.

"What a bore you must think me!" he said, quickly. "Let us drop the subject. If I ever find you can help me in any way, I will come so you at once. As things are now, the less said the better. And so you are to possess the wealth which Pauline has forfeited? I am very glad—very, very glad—on all accounts but one."

"And that is?"

"It will make Dornton's task harder."

The blood rushed over Ethel's face, and she said, "I don't know what you mean," she said.

"I mean that Dornton was beguiled by my unhappy wife, but doing as he did, that he was not master of his own actions, and that he would give a very great deal to be assured of your entire forgiveness. He has loved you all through his mad folly. He told me so himself on the very day of the wedding, before he could have known anything of the change in your worldly affairs; so, when you think of him in the future, you must not believe he was governed by mercenary considerations."

"Thank you for your kind defense of him," she responded, rising as her father entered the room. "I will remember to do as you say," and she turned gayly to the door. "And now let me introduce you to Sir Geoffrey Malling of Mallingford Park."

A few weeks later Ethel and her father were settled at Mallingford. All the necessary legal formalities had been gone through, and the county families had called upon Sir Geoffrey and his daughter. Lord Summers had suggested that the baronet should have a public reception; but Sir Geoffrey had sternly and emphatically opposed any such demonstration. So father and daughter had come down and been met at the railway station by the family carriage, and had gone quietly to their respective rooms, after shaking hands with a few of the old servants whom Sir Geoffrey remembered in his father's time, and had eaten their first dinner at Mallingford as if they had just returned from a short visit. (To be continued.)

COTTON COMES FROM CUBA.

Great Possibilities of the Island in This Direction.

The Cuban steamship Paloma, which has arrived from Carrienas and Matanzas, Cuba, brought four bales of cotton of seventy-five pounds each, says the New York Post. They are samples of the second crop of cotton raised on the island. Two years ago, when the price of cotton soared, attempts were made in various parts of Cuba to start cotton growing on a scale large enough to be competitive. Although not entirely successful, the results have been rather gratifying than otherwise. It has been demonstrated by experience, it is said, that cotton of the finest quality—long staple sea island—though brought from 23 to 25 cents a pound and yields something over 500 pounds an acre, can be grown in any part of the island of Cuba or the Isle of Pines, particularly the latter place.

On the other hand, however, the boll weevil, the cotton plant's deadly foe, is found in practically every district where cotton is grown, and has effectively prevented the crop from assuming any considerable proportions.

An article in the Cuba Review and Bulletin suggested a remedy for this trouble. Cuba has one distinct advantage over the South, it was pointed out, in that during a part of the year there it is impossible for the weevil to work. During the rainy season, which comprises the months of July and August, September and October, the heavy rains and extreme heat keep the weevil from damaging the plants, so that if the crop were planted by the first of July instead of in April, as in the Southern States, by the time the boll weevil begins to work, in November, there would be a good crop on the producing plants. It is estimated that by this method of raising cotton the yield should be, of the long or short staple, from one to one and one-half bales to the acre. Of course, for the succeeding four months—the dry season—the weevil would have full sway; but with one crop already matured, the planters would not be so badly off.

Until some method of getting around the weevil has been tried and found successful, though, it will be impossible to get men to invest large sums of money in the business, according to the paper quoted, especially while there are such sharp sugar and tobacco enterprises to embark in. Nevertheless, the possibilities in cotton growing, as indicated in everything else in Cuba, are declared to be enormous, as the fluffy bolls can be raised anywhere in an area the size of the State of Pennsylvania.

THE TRUE INDIA.

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"To me India is the land of romance, the land of high ideals," says A. C. Christina Alvarez in the open court. "A silence deep and wondrous; ancient temples, deserted buildings, an innate sense of poetry, art and beauty of her people, to which they give expression in stately forms, grace of movement and picturesque groupings; souls seeking their own beyond the realm of matter—and over it all the shadows and the whispers of a holy past—this is the India that I have seen; this is what has appealed to me, and this I have tried to portray. Not the India of the tourist of a few short months; not the India of the merchant who seeks to fill his coffers at the expense of the much-abused native; nor yet the India of him who would rob her of her ideals and implant his own instead; but the India that is found by silent hours passed at a ruined building; by the contemplation of a shrine; by listening to the sound of the silver anklet on the floor; by watching the deep, the fathomless silence of her sacred rivers, where the law of her teachings becomes concrete fact; the India that dwells in the heart of every true son of the soil, and to uphold which her daughters have labored and suffered—that is the true India that has lived and will live evermore."

He Lasted Well.

They were in the family portrait section of the gallery, and it seemed to Miss Gollylight that her English visitor was deeply impressed. In some extraordinary way, which Pauline will explain, the whole of the Mallingford property comes to him in the event of Pauline's marrying under twenty-five without her guardian's consent; so, you see, we are going to be very great people, and he has brought me not so well born as papa, and the late baronet was so angry when he heard of the marriage that he disinherited papa, who at once changed his name and worked hard to keep his wife. I hope you are not angry with us because we are going to take away your wife's wealth. Of course that is only nonsense! I know you are not angry; I've heard you say often how glad you would have been to share what you have with her."

Progress.

"How are you coming on with your new system of weather prediction?"

"Well," answered the prophet cheerily; "I can always get the kind of weather all right, but I haven't quite succeeded in hitting the dates exactly."—Washington Star.

Bored There.

"Didn't you used to board with us up to Mrs. Gaddy's?" asked the thin-necked man.

"Yes," replied Brightman, curtly.

"Why, don't you board there still?"

"Because I was."—Philadelphia Press.

A CLEAR CASE.

"I am surprised!" announced Doctor Brownley, as he laid down the letter he had been reading aloud. "If it hadn't been for the high recommendations the Daytones gave that boarding place, I'd have gone down to Appleton with Lewis myself, to make sure that he had the right surroundings. I tell you, when a boy that's always been used to home ways goes off to college, it's hard lines to put him into a place like that!"

"Think of it!" picking up the letter and reading again. "Not a thing on the table I can eat; the worst bed I ever tried to sleep in; altogether the most desolate place I ever struck!"

"Lewis is no hand to find fault with his food, either," chimed in the motherly voice.

"And I thought he could sleep anywhere," added Sister Hetty. "Think how good he is about being tucked up on a couch when the house is crowded!"

"I shall go down there to-morrow, and take those people unawares," decided Doctor Brownley, sternly. "I am paying them enough so that they can afford to make the boy comfortable, at least."

The next day a determined-looking man presented himself at the door of that Appleton boarding house. He was welcomed by a gracious hostess, who informed him that the noonday dinner was just served, and at that moment Lewis Brownley came up the steps, wearing a long face, which deepened visibly at sight of his father.

They were immediately ushered into an attractive dining room, where, as the meal progressed, Doctor Brownley grew more and more puzzled. After dinner his son led him up stairs into a large, charmingly furnished bedroom.

"Well, Lew," Doctor Brownley exclaimed, as he looked about, "what did that letter of yours mean, anyhow? This is certainly a fine room, and that dinner was delicious! Tenderest chicken I've tasted in many a day! Everything well cooked, clean linen, shining silver, flowers on the table, delightful people!" Here he paused long enough to walk to the bed and examine it. Then he went on: "Good springs and hair mattress—everything clean and dainty. What on earth made you call this a 'desolate place'?"

The seventeen-year-old freshman stood in the middle of the room with a blank face. Apparently he was casting about for an answer. At last, with the air of one brought to bay, he crossed to the door and opened it.

"Father," he said, with tragic emphasis, "look at that door!"

Doctor Brownley looked closely. "What's the matter with it?" he queried.

"See how thin it is!"

"For a full minute the astonished father surveyed his tall, solemn-eyed boy. Then, with a sudden illumination, he said, quietly:

"Lewis, it is a good thing you showed me that door. I understand it all now."

"Oh, do you?" in tones of great relief.

"Perfectly. Son, you're homesick!"

—Youth's Companion.

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