

A MONSTROUS WRONG.

CHAPTER XXVI.

She had married him, by the counsel of her adopted mother and benefactress, without acquainting him with her true history. She had married him, believing herself to have been deceived by a monk...

She realized now, as she had never done before, her fatal weakness in yielding to Lord Glenmorris's entreaties to marry him. She had rejected him again and again, during Mrs. Calthrop's lifetime...

"I ought never to have married!" she thought. "I should have told Hugh the whole truth—before now it is too late! To what end?"

She put her bitter, remorseful thoughts from her resolutely now, as she sat by her hearth, her husband's hands clasping her hands. He did not suspect the truth—she must be careful that she should not.

"I was looking everywhere for you, Valeria," said the marquis, as she turned her face slightly from him, apparently regarding the fire. "I have not seen you since you found a visitor in the reception room."

Melcombe properly acknowledged the introduction and surveyed the young baronet with sharp and jealous scrutiny. "This was Dolores's favored lover!"

"No," said Lady Glenmorris; "but I was not quite well, Hugh. I could not return to you. It was just as well, dear. He is formerly a great friend of Lord Oswald Lennox, who is now dead."

"By the way," said the marquis, bent upon clearing his wife out of her singular mood, "I must tell you that the earl greatly admires you, Valeria. He assured me to-day that I have for my wife the most beautiful woman in England."

"The marquis remembered that he had always been anxious to know when he had spoken of his wife's parentage. For the first time, it struck him that her reticence was singular."

"How little I know of your former life, Valeria," he exclaimed. "Mrs. Calthrop told me once that you had been married, and that you were a widow. She said that your first marriage had been unfortunate and unhappy, and that she had relinquished your husband's name at his death, resuming your former name of Miss Calthrop."

"There was a special house for these wonderful exotics, but a liberal display of them was to be seen in the magnificent conservatory adjoining the drawing-room, and divided from it by a glazed sliding door, which were now ajar."

"The orchids were examined and admired. The marquis looked at the plants with a dim, perfumed smile, and wandered in the distance, finding their way back, after a long tour, to the drawing-room—all the guests saying, 'Melcombe had been here!'"

"I cannot tell him a falsehood. She could not confess the fatal truth, lest he should spurn her for the outcast she believed herself."

"What had there been in the past of his beautiful wife to stir her to such agitation as this?" "Do you love that first husband of yours so deeply still, Valeria?" he asked, jealously.

and thoroughly. You must not question me in regard to my past; you must believe all that mother told you of me. I love you and you alone. I believe now that I never loved—really loved—before I met you. Let that suffice. And let this question be set at rest between us now and forever."

She turned her face towards him. It was deathly white. Her violet eyes were blazing. Her lips were colorless. Her soul was wrought up to the highest pitch of endurance. The marquis considered at her great agitation and his conviction that her past held some terrible secret received new strength.

"It has always been my belief that there should be mutual confidence between husband and wife, Valeria," he said, and there was a sternness in his tones she had never heard in them before. "My life has no secrets from you. I think that yours should hold none from me. I will not urge your confidence now, but I will leave you to your own judgment of what is just and right and what is due to me."

"I am hemmed in!" she thought. "I can see that Hugh suspects that something is wrong, and my refusal to tell him the truth will only drive him to the heart. But I cannot tell him. And how am I to meet Melcombe? What ternity will he exact from me for his silence? What can I say to him? What shall I do? Oh, Heaven, what shall I do?"

When Gifford Melcombe, properly attired in an evening dress, which his portmanteau happily afforded, he descended to the drawing-room of King's Holm, shortly before the hour appointed for dinner, he found Lord and Lady Glenmorris, with their guests, already assembled. He greeted his host and hostess with quiet courtesy, his manner delicately conveying to the marchioness the intimation that for the present she had nothing to fear from him.

She was seated in a dinner-dress of pale blue brocade, and wore locks of jet black hair of great value. Her hair was arranged after the modern picturesque fashion, and she wore a gentle and courteous; she forgot none of the duties of a hostess, but the proud, pure face was colder and more statue-like than ever, and there was a contrast in its calmness and repose, a passion in her violet eyes that rendered them remarkably brilliant, and the cause of which none but her husband, guessed to be an unquiet heart.

Passing on, Melcombe found himself face to face with the old earl of St. Maur, who shook hands with him, and introduced him to the young baronet, Sir Basil Nugent. Lord Glenmorris had been conversing with Basil Nugent. Melcombe properly acknowledged the introduction and surveyed the young baronet with sharp and jealous scrutiny.

"This was Dolores's favored lover!" she thought. "I was not quite well, Hugh. I could not return to you. It was just as well, dear. He is formerly a great friend of Lord Oswald Lennox, who is now dead."

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"Love him? I despise his memory—I hate it!—I despise his memory—I hate it!—I despise his memory—I hate it!"

press, madam, from your present looks and air; and yet I remember—" "Hush!" interrupted the marchioness, sternly. "Spare me your reminiscences. And do not speak to me of my gain. What do you want of me? My mental and the past, Gifford Melcombe, and come to business."

Melcombe could not know how her soul thrilled with bitterness, keenest at the sound of the old name she had discarded with her old life eighteen years before. He could not know the memories it evoked, of the old mother who had been so stern to others yet so tender to her, of the elder brother whom she had stung with shame and agony of love, and of the awful blow that had exiled her from all these and made her an outcast and a wanderer in the world.

"I do not. I have assured you on that point already. What should I gain by your disgrace and expulsion from your home?" demanded Melcombe, in his low, smooth voice. "I was deceived, your reputation, your position, all you hold dear; but I am disposed to be your friend."

"Upon what terms? Do you want money?" "I am hemmed in!" she thought. "I can see that Hugh suspects that something is wrong, and my refusal to tell him the truth will only drive him to the heart. But I cannot tell him. And how am I to meet Melcombe? What ternity will he exact from me for his silence? What can I say to him? What shall I do? Oh, Heaven, what shall I do?"

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JOHN McDONALD. Frederickton, Jan. 1, 1883. CHEAP SALE!! WHITTIER & HOOPER. Edgcombe's Block, York St., and are ready for customers.

Special Bargains are now offered to Traders. The Goods damaged at the late fire have been marked at VERY LOW PRICES.

63 HALF CHESTS ENGLISH CONGOU TEA. A late importation, will now be sold at a reduction of 25 per cent.

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AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY. Attention is called to the following Reduced Rates for carrying MONEY and other valuables by the Office of the Company.

J. & J. O'BRIEN. Queen Street, Fredericton, N. B. JANUARY 1st, 1883. LEMON'S VARIETY STORE. ESTABLISHED 1844.

CARRIAGE and SLEIGH FACTORY! King St., - Fredericton, N. B. R. COLWELL, Proprietor. CARRIAGES, WAGGONS, SLEIGHS and PUNGS.

NOTICE. THE FIRM OF FRASER, WETMORE & WINSLOW has been dissolved by the appointment of the Hon. Judge of the Supreme Court, the undersigned will carry on a co-partnership business as FRASER, WETMORE & WINSLOW.

AYER'S Cherry Pectoral. No other complaints are so insidious in their attack as those affecting the throat and lungs.

A. L. BELYLEA, Attorney-at-Law, INSURANCE AGENT. Next door below Messrs. Gregory & Blair, Queen St. July 1st, 1882-1879.

J. D. HAZEN, Attorney-at-Law. OFFICE: - GOY'S BLOCK, Queen Street, Fredericton. July 1st, 1882.

IRON. Iron, Iron, JUST RECEIVED: NINE and a half Tons Best Refined Iron. For sale low, Z. R. EVERETT.

Fire Steel. JUST RECEIVED "Parlaton" via 458 SUTHER STREET. For sale low wholesale and retail. JAS. S. NEILL.

CANT DOGS. 100 PUVIE CAT DOGS, all complete ready for use. R. CHESTNUT & SONS. ONE case Mrs. POTTS' IRON. Z. R. EVERETT.

1883 EXHIBITION 1883 An Exhibition will be held in ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, Commencing on Oct. 2nd, 1883, open to Exhibitors from every part of the Dominion.

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JAS. R. HOWIE. HAS RECEIVED HIS SPRING AND SUMMER CLOTHS, and respectfully invites the inspection of customers to his large and well selected stock of

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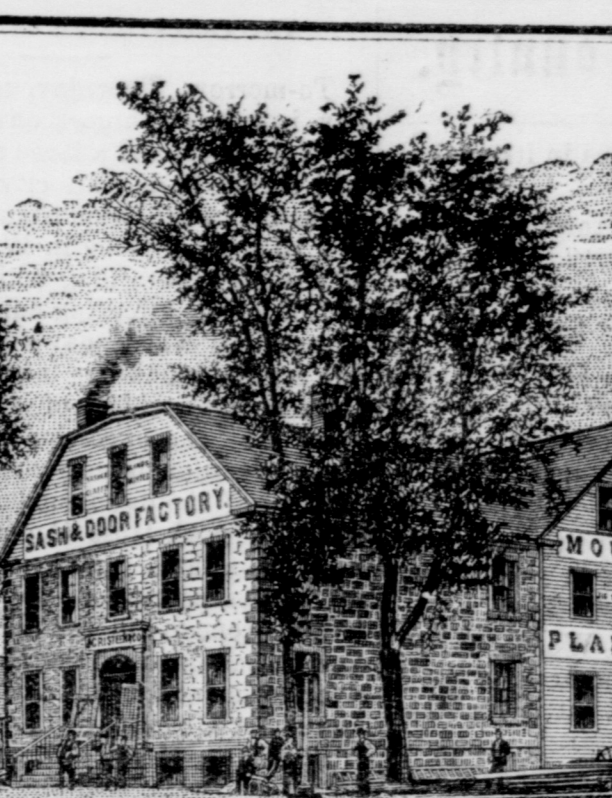
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