

Continued from Tenth Page.

It was a forlorn chance, with the boat full of angry, resolute men alongside of them.

If the shot had killed this noble woman whom he loved, Lord Ereldonne cared little what his own fate might be; but it would be unjust to the others, who had risked so much for them both to give up while there was a spark of hope.

'What's wrong?' a stentorian voice bawled from the smack, whose dark sides could be seen looming through the gathering mist.

Bart Fletcher, a grizzled sea-dog, and his son, both chums of Joe Mills, were on the look-out, surprised and alarmed by the shots and Hilda's screams.

They had steered in towards the sound, and were now within a few yards of the boats.

'Murder! Help!'

Joe's answer rang out, as Paul Barrington again covered Lord Ereldonne with the shining steel barrel.

He was about to press the trigger when a strange thing happened.

There was a sound like thunder, and a brilliant orange and scarlet glare shot up from the top of the beetling cliffs, illuminating the sky with a red light, and making the moon look sickly and wan.

From every window of the Manor flames were bursting.

The old, dry beams burned like tinder, and the floors dropped in with the sharp, explosive crashes of an artillery battery.

The roaring of the flames, as they shot heavenwards, was an appalling, never-to-be-forgotten sound.

Clouds of sparks flew before the breeze, extinguishing themselves on the surface of the waters.

The revolver almost dropped from Paul Barrington's hand.

He stood like a statue, dumbly gazing on the destruction of the Manor, and the rest of the actors in the strange scene were stunned for the moment.

Then the wild laugh of the mad girl rang out, as, suddenly tearing herself from Nurse Jane's nerveless grasp, she leapt into the seething waters, her hands extended to catch the crimson-and-gold reflection of the flames quivering on the waves.

Lord Ereldonne held the white, still form of the woman he loved in his arms, and Joe Mills snatched at Hilda, to try and save her, in vain.

As she fell, she struck against the boat containing Paul Barrington and his companions, and overturned it.

With a gurgling cry the doctor sank, to rise once only.

His injured arm hampered him, and old Drax, who could not swim, clung to his master, with strangled yells and imprecations horrible to hear, as the salt water choked him.

Lord Ereldonne, shocked beyond measure at this unexpected terrible catastrophe, forgot that Paul Barrington was his bitter enemy, and had probably taken the life of the one dearest to him on earth.

He flung an oar towards the two struggling in the water, for, richly as they deserved it, he could not see them drown before his eyes.

But it was useless.

For an instant only he caught sight of the doctor's face—white, despairing, yet malevolent, as it swept past, upturned, on a wave.

Then the green waters closed over him and his accomplice in wickedness for ever.

An awful retribution, yet a meet one, that the sea should claim the man who had consigned more than one victim to its depths.

The blaze from the burning mansion lit up the face of the ocean, so that the minutest objects around could be easily seen; but no trace was found of the unfortunate Hilda, whose fall against the boat's side had probably stunned her before she found a merciful death.

For, the deep can be kind as well as pitiless, and it received gently in its soft bosom the helpless girl who, with the ill-lated Bella, shared in death, as at birth, the same resting place.

The two attendants succeeded in reaching the shore; but Lord Ereldonne and his party, now safely on board the smack, did not trouble to pursue them.

Adela's critical state engrossed everyone's attention; but Nurse Jane, who had some surgical experience, succeeded in extracting the bullet, which was quite near the surface, and stanching the blood.

A wight was lifted from Lord Ereldonne's heart when he heard the weak voice of the woman he loved assure him that she was out of danger—though likely to suffer for some time from the shock and the wound.

'Twice you have risked your life for me, dearest one,' he murmured, kneeling and stooping his head down to the coarse pillow where hers rested. 'My sweetheart! my darling! how can I ever repay you?' he whispered, passionately.

She gave his fingers a weak pressure, and looked up into his noble face.

'Love me well, Ralph, my own! for I have no one in the wide world but you.'

There was a long pause, broken only by the lapping of the waves against the sides of the tarry old smack.

The small dark cabin, lighted by one swinging oil lamp, with its smoked browned timbers and painted sea chests upon which were heaped a miscellaneous lumber of

nets, tackle, and men's rough garments, was an enchanted fairy palace to the lovers.

Adela's wound was bound up, and Nurse Jane—the seamen helping with rough kindness—had arranged a temporary couch in the best of the low berths for her.

With sympathetic tact she had deputed Lord Ereldonne to watch by Adela, while she went to help the men prepare some coffee and a simple meal.

No one had much appetite after the awful scene they had all witnessed, and the tragic death of poor Hilda.

But Nurse Jane's best points came out on emergency, and she promptly set to work to make everyone on board comfortable as possible, aided by her sweetheart, Joe Mills, who followed her about admiringly with the bright tin coffee-pots and blue delft mugs.

The skipper, at Lord Ereldonne's wish, arched to the directions to run for Whitby.

Adela's tender heart was torn by anxiety about the fate of poor Cordelia Joy and the others left behind at the Manor.

Had they perished in the flames? She earnestly trusted not; but knew no rest till, touching at the next port, Ereldonne went on shore and brought a copy of a paper with a full account of the disaster.

It contained much that was surprising, and also explained many things which had puzzled them both.

Adela gave a dry of relief on reading that all the inmates were saved, with the exception of Mrs. Drax and poor Mrs. Arabin in whose room the fire originated.

Dr. Barrington had been away, but returned unexpectedly on receiving from the said lady a letter hinting that an escape was meditated by one of the inmates.

He came back, to find Lord Ereldonne and his attendant, also a sister, of weak mind, who lived with him, missing, and started at once in pursuit of the fugitives.

The confusion consequent on this discovery was supposed to have given Mrs. Arabin the opportunity of setting the house on fire—whether by accident or not remained unknown.

And this mystery was never solved, though an attendant, who escaped from the flames, declared at the inquest that she had heard the deceased threaten on more than one occasion, when angry with Dr. Ives—of whom she was very jealous—to burn the Manor to the ground, and perish with it.

'She was very bitter against Miss Deane, and seemed to think the doctor would try to run away with her. The night Dr. Barrington came back she was terribly upset, and I hardly knew how to control her. I don't know how she could have got hold of any matches—but we were all at sixes and sevens that night; it is just possible she might have stolen a box of wax vestas out of the housemaid's closet in the corridor during the confusion.'

This was Nurse Esther's evidence.

She was a grim, sour visaged woman; but Adela had known her to be straightforward.

In talking the matter over by the light of the newspaper accounts, the lovers guessed nearly the truth: that the unhappy woman had labored under some strange mistake, thus bringing about her terrible doom.

But they felt that an avenging power, greater than that of man, had brought to its destruction the dark house of mystery on the cliff.

For many years its blackened ruins remained, a ghastly beacon to passersby, who, hearing the strange superstitions connected with it, would shudder and pass on quickly.

And ever at the base of the tall cliffs, the dark blue ocean stretched its wide expanse—deep, mysterious, inscrutable.

Adela shuddered, as she gazed at the sea.

Ereldonne and Joe Mills had improvised a rough couch on deck, where she lay, Ralph sitting by her side through the long golden hours.

'I used to love the sea,' she said, with a shadow on her face; 'but it seems terrible to me now.'

'I can understand that well, dearest,' answered Ralph, pressing her thin white hand to his lips. 'I share your feeling to a certain extent, for it has taken from me one I tenderly loved. You are too large-minded and generous, my Adela, to be jealous of my poor little girl-wife, Bella, so I may tell you freely that I did love her, with the unreasoning passion of a hot-headed boy, though I know now our natures were so dissimilar we might never have been really happy together. But my love for you, Adela, is that of a man who knows he has found a haven of rest, or a beacon-tower to guide him through the perilous waters of life. If the sea has taken one treasure from me, it has, at least, paid its debts in bestowing another, infinitely priceless.'

'Hence, in spite of sad memories, I can look on its blue waves with gratitude and tenderness still. Look! he continued, pointing over the water. 'Have you ever seen anything more beautiful than that?'

The moon had risen, and a broad path of silver quivered and trembled on the face of the deep blue expanse.

As the lovers gazed at it, entranced, two small ships, their outlines sharp cut against the soft light, were lying motionless just where the rays touched the water.

'There, Adela, is a symbol of our love,' said Ereldonne, gently. 'We have both passed through the burden and heat of the day, and now have come to anchor together. Ay, dear one!—together, till death us do part!'

Adela's heart was too full for words, and for a time a deep silence fell on them.

It was broken by Nurse Jane, who brought them some good news.

Her round, florid face had a deeper colour than usual, and she fingered her apron shyly.

'Mills says as how we shall sight our destination to-morrow morning. He's got an aunt living there, and—and, if you won't wait us any longer, we think of getting married as soon as we can.'

'An excellent idea,' said Ereldonne,

smiling. 'So good in fact that we mean to follow your example. No, we shall not need you when once on shore, as we are going straight to some friends; but ask Joe to come up, for I should like to say something to you both.'

In a few minutes the worthy sailor stood, chuckling sheepishly, and fingering his cap, before Ereldonne and Adela.

In a few words, which went straight to the hearts of both Joe and Jane, Ralph expressed his gratitude to them for their services.

He and Adela had debated long as to the best method of rewarding these, and Lord Ereldonne had decided to settle an income of two hundred a year on the couple for life, and, in addition, to buy a fine fishing-smack for Joe.

When he imparted this decision to the worthy pair, their delight and thankfulness knew no bounds.

'There's one favor I should like to ask—no offence,' said Joe, pulling at his forelock. 'I should like to call that there boat the Lady Hilda—that is, if you ain't got no objection to that same.'

'Certainly, my good fellow,' said Ereldonne, 'and we both thank you for the compliment.'

When the sailor and his sweetheart had left them, Ralph drew Adela towards him and kissed the cheek where a deep rose flush mantled.

'Lady Adela!' he repeated, softly. 'I like to think how soon that title will be yours, dearest. You will become it well.'

In spite of the sad and terrible experiences, Adela and Lord Ereldonne had gone through at Redcliffe Manor, the two could not rest, until they had learned the fate of those whose darkened lives had been passed within its walls.

Search was made for the bodies of poor Hilda and Paul Barrington, but they were never found.

The wide blue sea still rolls above the nameless grave of its myriad victims, guarded as it always will, the secret of its depth, till the Day of Judgment.

The rescued patients were removed by their friends to other homes, where the Professor and Mr. Millicamp eventually recovered, and thus pass out of our story.

Poor Cordelia Joy's health was seriously affected by the shock of the fire, and she died soon after her courageous rescue by Dr. Ives, who crossed Adela's path again in later years as a prosperous, middle-aged London specialist much run after by elderly spinsters, and widows, as he remained a bachelor.

He retained to his dying day a profound admiration for Paul Barrington, always deploring his chief's tragic death, the true circumstances of which never transpired.

And neither Lord Ereldonne nor Adela thought it worth while to disclose to him, or to anyone else, the real nature of the man who had been called with such terrible suddenness to his last account.

And this for the sake of the ill-fated Bella, who, though as unlike him as night from day, was Paul's sister, thus linking the dead to Ralph with a tie which could not be ignored.

After this glimpse into the future, we will return to the lovers, speeding towards Whitby, with its quaintly-clustering houses and grand, warm-hearted northern people.

Good Squire Salby and his wife received them with a hospitable enthusiasm neither can forget.

By the aid of the former, Lord Ereldonne's wounds were redressed. He found himself once more master of the broad lands and ancestral old-world home, to which he was proud to take his beautiful bride, Adela, the fairest, noblest woman whose portrait graced the long picture-gallery of his ancient line.

He would fain have sought out and pardoned his brother Cosmo, giving him means wherewith to lead a better life, trying to believe that Paul Barrington's evil influence had led him astray.

But such generosity was beyond the comprehension of so mean a nature, and, fearing just punishment, he fled to foreign lands, like Cain, an outcast till his death.

Constance Villiers and Adela became the most devoted of friends.

On the day when the marriage chimes pealed from the grey church tower of Whitby, and Adela, radiant in bridal attire, walked up the aisle on the arm of Mr. Salby, she wore a lovely diamond pendant at her neck, of which the two girls and Lord Ereldonne alone knew the meaning.

It was a sparkling crown, composed of stones of the purest water, with an enamel band of the palest blue, bearing an inscription in gold lettering—

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The disease, Locomotor Ataxia, with which Mr. Archibald was afflicted is considered the most obstinate and incurable disease of the nervous system known. When once it starts it gradually but surely progresses, paralyzing the lower extremities and rendering its victim helpless and hopeless, enduring the indescribable agony of seeing himself die by inches.

That Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills can cure thoroughly and completely a disease of such severity ought to encourage those whose disorders are not so serious to try this remedy.

The following is Mr. Archibald's letter:

'Faithful to Trust Die if Needs Must,

It was an old motto of the house of Ereldonne.

Who more fitly might wear it than the woman who had been ready to face unknown peril at the despairing prayer of a stranger who trusted her?

Adela had braved death, she had found life; nay more, the best of all things—love, enduring, unchangeable.

Her riches and proud position did not make her hard and arrogant.

She was ever ready to help those in bitter need or sorrow, remembering the day when she had wandered homeless and penniless, a wail of the great city.

One afternoon, she was sitting in her luxurious carriage, at the door of their house, with her two lovely children, Ralph and Muriel, waiting for her husband to join them.

'Look mother at that woman; she keeps the keeps watching us all the time, with such an unhappy hungry face. May I give her something? See, over there, pointing to a pitiful wreck of humanity, with ragged skirts, and a thin shawl drawn over her shoulders.

Her pinched face was wolfish with want, her claw-like fingers outstretched eagerly. Some vague recollection made Adela pause as she was about to put a shilling into the women's palm.

'Surely I have seen you before?' she asked gently. 'Where, I do not remember; but I know your face.'

The women cringed, as if to ward off a blow, an expression of fear came into her bearded eyes.

'I did not know your ladyship or I would not have spoken,' she whined. 'It isn't likely as you can forgive me, of course. Oh you need not call the police; I will be off.'

But Adela laid a restraining hand on her arm.

'We will go indoors,' she said, kindly and compassionately. 'If you have anything to say to me in private, we shall be quieter there.' Then, as her husband appeared at the door of the library, whither she had taken her strange visitor: 'Ralph, will you come in for a moment?'

Lord Ereldonne obeyed, a quizzical smile on his face, his hand already in his pocket.

He indulged his wife in her many works of charity, as in everything else, though he suspected her of often being imposed upon.

The beggar, still more frightened, continued her whining protest in answer to an interrogation of Adela's.

'Yes, my lady, you are right; I am Martha Slater, though as you can see, I've come down in the world. I may as well make a clean breast of it.'

'I stole that bracelet and put it in your box, for I wanted to get you out of the place, the old lady was so set on you. But I was punished, for things never seemed to go well with me after; and I did not get a farthing, for my mistress died without a will. My savings were soon gone, and I took to drink,' callously. 'I don't care if it kills me; it's better than starving to death.'

Ralph's face had grown stern and dark during this recital, and Adela could see he was inclined to deal severely with the woman.

The matter ended, however, by their making her accompany them to the hospital, where she was compelled to repeat her statement to the authorities.

Lady Ereldonne contrived to slip a gift of money into her hand, begging her to try and reform; but though she appear-

ed abashed and contrite, Adela feared the case was anything but a hopeful one.

'Dear Lady Ereldonne, I can't tell you how deep our sorrow, our shame is, that so dreadful a mistake should have been made,' stammered the obsequious matron, following Adela out to her carriage. 'I do not know what we can do to make amends; but, if there is anything—'

She paused, arrested by the strange expression on Lady Ereldonne's face.

'There is nothing,' Adela replied, coldly, for she was disgusted by the coarse truckling flattery of this woman, who, not many years before, had turned her away, friendless, homeless, to face the world alone. 'If you regret the past, which I freely pardon, prove it by giving a helping hand to those who know life's bitterness, as I knew it once.'

'I cannot forgive that woman,' said Lord Ereldonne, sternly. 'Adela, you are better far than I.'

A sweet smile lighted up her face, chasing the last shade of sadness called up by memories.

'Dear Ralph, your love for me makes you say so; but I do not find it very hard. Think—if it had not been for that terrible time, we should never have met.'

He pressed her white hand passionately to his lips, for he was still her lover, though they had been married seven years.

'My wife, you are an angel upon earth,' he said, reverently.

But, softly as the words were spoken, baby Ralph, who was jealous of a conversation in which he had no share, heard them.

'Well, if she is, I'll just get nurse's big scissors and cut off her wings; then muvver will never, never go away and leave us,' he said, confidently.

They all laughed, and, as the carriage rolls away homewards through the golden September sunshine, we bid them farewell.

THE END.

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'What are you reading about?' asked the man with a wise manner.

'The stock market,' replied the youth.

'Don't do it.'

'But I never put up any money; therefore I can't lose.'

'It makes no difference. You're likely to become one of those people who tell how much money they would have made if they had only done what they came pretty near doing, because they didn't see how things could go otherwise. And then even your best friends will wish sometimes that you would bet your money and lose it and keep still about it.'—Washington Star.

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