

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

'I would rather die than he should know I played the spy on him and that woman. Yes, Rupert, I will be your wife, and—Take me home, cousin,' she added faintly. 'I—I—' Her eyes closed, and she fell fainting into his arms.

# CHAPTER VII. LIFTING THE VEIL.

With his face buried in his hands, Charles Norton sat on a table littered with the usual odds and ends of an artist's studio.

He had sat there motionless for more than an hour trying to realize his misery. Iris had forbidden him to visit her! Iris was lost to him! What could have happened? How had he offended her? What had he done to deserve this death sentence to all his hopes?

He could not answer the questions he asked himself over and over again.

The shock had numbed his brain.

He could not think.

Like a tortured animal he could only feel.

'Charlie, Charlie, what is the matter?' He felt a hand on his shoulder, and, looking up, saw that Clara was standing beside him, her eyes full of wonder and pity.

'Matter!' he cried wildly. 'Oh, Miss Wilmot—Clara, you are kind hearted, you have had experience of the world and know so much more than I do. Perhaps you can explain why Iris has treated me like this? I shall go mad, I think, if I can't find a clue. I have done nothing—nothing. I only telegraphed to say I could not take her to the water-color exhibition yesterday because you made an appointment for the afternoon.'

Clara was very pale, but she kept her self-command.

'Tell me first, who is Iris?' she said quietly.

'Iris? She is my soul, my dream, my love. I have gone on loving her more and more each day, and she said she loved me, too, and we were to be married some day, when I was rich enough to make a home for her.'

'One moment!' Clara said faintly.

She crossed to the dais, where, on a small table, stood a carafe and a glass.

She poured herself out some of the water and drank it slowly.

When she returned to where the young artist had thrown himself into a chair, her face, though very pale, was calm.

'Now tell me all about Iris, and what she has said or done or written to put you in this state.'

Very confusedly at first, but, after a little, more clearly, Charlie told her his love story.

How Iris's father had helped him to go to Rome to study, how the Lodge was always open for him to go to, how his affection for his cousin had grown into passionate love, and how happily the last few weeks had passed.

'And she has written forbidding me ever to see her again,' he exclaimed. 'See!' and he snatched an open letter from the table, 'she says, "Nothing would have made me believe you false but my own eyes. Nothing you can say can alter my determination never to see you again. If you call, the servants have orders not to admit you. If, after I am married, we ever meet in society, we meet as strangers." My God! what can she mean? Who can she be going to marry if not me?'

'Poor Charlie!' Clara murmured, looking down on him with tender pity. 'And you love her so very much?'

'She is more to me than my very life.'

'You have to thank an enemy for this. Let me think.'

She left him, and went and stood before her portrait.

But, though her eyes were fixed upon the picture, she hardly saw it.

Her heart was wrung with love, and hatred and fear, each in turn striving for supremacy; but at length love conquered.

Her face was drawn, and she looked every day of her thirty years as she returned to where the man she loved sat, his head sunk upon his chest, brooding over his misery.

'Charlie, will you trust me to find a way out of your difficulties?'

He started to his feet, surprise, doubt, hope in his eyes.

'Do you mean that you can bring Iris and me together again?' he cried. 'Do you mean you can sweep away the cloud which hides her from me, and that all will be just as it was? Oh! do this, and I will love you far better than anyone in the world after Iris.'

She smiled sadly, and pushed back a lock of hair that had fallen over his eyes.

'You must trust me,' she said, 'for twenty-four hours, and promise me neither to try and see Miss Meredith, nor write to her. Stay quietly here. If you will promise this, I think I, in my turn, can promise to put things right for you.'

'I will promise anything you like, but twenty-four hours is so long. I shall go mad unless you can give me some little ray of hope.'

'Have I not promised to make things right for you, you foolish boy?' she answered. 'You must have faith. At five o'clock tomorrow you may call at Loworth Lodge.'

'But the servants won't admit me—she says so.'

'She has been deceived—imposed upon. Go to Twickenham tomorrow at five, and no one will refuse you admittance; if they do, bribe the servants or press your way in. Iris will forgive you.'

He seized her hand.

'You have given me new life,' he cried. 'But shall not I see you again before I go?'

She shook her head.

'I am leaving town directly I have seen to this affair of yours,' she said. 'You will not want another sitting for my portrait is all but finished. I will send you one of my photographs if you like, and that will aid you, and perhaps you will keep it, and when you and Iris are friends again, you will both of you think of me not unkindly, when you chance to look at it.'

'And now, Charlie, you must cheer up. Twenty-four hours is not very long to wait for happiness. One thing more: if Rupert Norton comes here say nothing of this interview. Get rid of him as soon as possible, and say as little as you can. Above all, answer no questions. And now, good-bye; I will send you a cheque most likely tomorrow, but I wish the picture to remain with you till it is exhibited. Good-bye.'

'He took both her hands and kissed them.'

'And you are sure I may hope?' he asked.

'Quite sure,' she answered, suddenly turning away. 'Good-bye, Charlie, and don't forget me, quite.'

Slowly, and as if each contained six hundred instead of only sixty minutes, the twenty-four hours passed.

The next day was bright and clear, and the garden at the Lodge was looking its best.

An awning was spread across part of the terrace, and under this Iris was seated, some fancy work in her hand, whilst Rupert lounged against the marble balustrade.

At a little distance, for he liked to bask in the sun, Mr. Meredith was seated, looking through a portfolio of old engravings.

'My dear Iris, as your father is not particularly engaged, suppose I go and have a chat with him,' Rupert said, in a voice, calculated not to reach the old gentleman's ears. 'I think it is only right to tell him of our engagement without delay.'

The girl looked up with lack lustre eyes. 'You can do as you like,' she said. 'I suppose he must be told sometime.'

'Of course. And as you wish certain people to know you are not heart-broken, our wedding ought to be soon. By the way have you thought where you would like to go—France, Italy, Spain? It's all the same to me. I am your slave, and only live but to do your bidding.'

'I have no choice,' Iris answered. 'Yes; I think I should like to see the old school again. I was happy there, though I did not know it.'

'Very well, then, that is agreed to as a starting-point. Afterwards we can wander as the fit takes us. And now, dear, I think I will do as I said, and speak to your father.'

He was moving away, when a servant appeared and approached Iris.

'A lady to see you, miss,' he said. 'She would not give her name, but said it was important that she should see you at once.'

'There must be a mistake, Barker,' the girl answered. 'No doubt it is my father she wishes to see.'

'No, miss. The lady—'

He did not finish, for Iris had risen, and, looking round, the man beheld the lady he had admitted standing behind him.

'Miss Wilmot!' Iris exclaimed.

The lady bowed her head.

'If you will dismiss the servant, I will explain what must appear to you, Miss Meredith, my most extraordinary conduct,' she said quietly.

'And now,' she went on, as the man withdrew, 'a very few words will make everything clear to you, I will listen.'

'Miss Wilmot, I really cannot,' Iris began.

She had drawn herself up at the sight of her rival, and her blue eyes were as hard as steel.

'Pardon me, it is for your own happiness that I speak. You have been deceived, Miss Meredith—basely deceived, though not in the way or by the man you think. I am aware that Mr. Rupert Norton suggested to you that there were certain love passages between his Cousin Charles and myself. In that, in spite of what you saw, you did Mr. Charles Norton an injustice. The love was on my side. He never whispered a word to me that you or anybody else might not have heard. I am now paying the price of my folly, and in making expiation I shall have a still heavier price to pay in the future.'

Iris' lip curled.

'Perhaps, if I tell you that I was present on a recent occasion, though neither of you suspected it, it will save you from calling further on your inventive powers,' she said.

'I have told you the truth; but to tell you that was not the only thing which brought me here today. I am a married woman, Miss Meredith, though for some time my husband has thought me dead. To keep him from ruining the happiness of another woman as he did mine, I have intruded on you today.'

'I do not understand you, Miss Wilmot; pardon me, I forgot you said you were married.'

The sneer passed unheeded.

'I am not Miss Wilmot; I am Mrs. Rupert Norton.'

For a minute neither spoke, then suddenly the color rose to Iris' face.

'Is it true?' she whispered. 'Is he your husband?'

'He is yonder; you can put it to the test.'

Impulsively Iris called to Rupert.

He turned and came towards her at once.

After advancing a few steps he suddenly stopped, and Iris saw his face go white.

'You thought me dead,' Blanché said, advancing a step towards where he stood. 'And if harsh treatment and neglect could kill, I should be dead, and you a free man.'

'Listen, Miss Meredith. I and my sister Clara more than four years ago took a holiday and ran down to Monte Carlo; there we chanced to make the acquaintance of your two cousins, Rupert and Charles. Rupert fell in love with me—a mere passing infatuation, but strong enough to make him marry me.'

'You lie!' Rupert hissed, white with passion.

'Oh your cousin Charles I saw little, he left the place before I was fool enough to think I loved this man, who, after swearing that he would spend his life trying to make me happy, deserted me within a year of our marriage, giving me an allowance so small, that even in Italy I could scarce live on it. From time to time during another year, he visited me, but it was only to torture and insult me. He struck me

often, but his fist was kinder than his tongue. So miserable was I that I often prayed for death.'

'It was at this time that my sister, who was so like me that even he, my husband, could not tell us apart—except for the color of my hair, which was golden, whilst Clara's was dark—came to visit me. She was always delicate, and she caught cold, and died. In this I saw a chance of freedom. I wrote to my husband in my sister's name, telling him that his wife was dead.'

'The news was so good that he never doubted for an instant that it was true. Never doubted even when we met two years later. I had taken the precaution to dye my hair, and no one to this day doubts for a moment that I am Clara Wilmot, and Blanché lies buried in Viterbo. It was he, my husband, who came to me, and suggested that I should be doing a friend of his, a young artist, whom I had met at Monte Carlo, a good turn, if I would let him paint my portrait.'

'I consented, never dreaming that I was aiding him in a plot to ruin his cousin's happiness and steal from him his promised wife. The rest you know, Miss Meredith. If any doubt remains in your mind, look at that man's face!'

A glance at that passion-torn countenance from which the mask had fallen, was enough.

With a look of loathing Iris turned her back upon the man who had been so nearly the ruin of her young life, and bowing to the actress, crossed over to where her father sat, with the portfolio on his knee.

'You say you are my wife,' Rupert said as he advanced and laid his hand on Blanché's arm. 'You can prove it, I suppose?'

'Yes; in a court of law it is necessary.'

'Then you are mine—bound to obey me. Mrs. Rupert Norton, we will go home.'

She had well counted the cost, but his voice called up memories that for a moment, made her sick with fear.

Her courage, however, was equal to the ordeal.

'Good-bye, Miss Meredith,' she called out. 'All that I have said from first to last is true.'

'I believe you,' Iris answered gravely. Blanché placed her hand on her husband's proffered arm.

'One moment!' Iris exclaimed. You cannot go with that man. Can I do nothing for you?'

'Yes. Here is someone I should like to see you shake hands with before I go.'

Blanché answered, as Charlie sprang out on the terrace, followed by the exulting footman.

Iris blushed scarlet as she held out her hand to her lover.

'And now, Rupert, I am ready to go,' Blanché said. 'I have bought their happiness at a price, and I am ready to pay.'

'And you shall, curse you, to the last farthing!' he hissed, as they passed into the house.

On the first of May in the following year there was a crowd standing before a picture of a Spanish gipsy.

'It is wonderfully like her,' a tall, white moustached man said.

'Ah, yes—Miss Wilmot you mean,' replied his companion. 'Stage name, of course. Husband mad, you know.'

'Really?'

'Yes. Happen to know the doctor who was called in. Tried to cut his wife's throat, but she was too strong for him. It was hushed up, of course, but he is in an asylum, and the curious part of the story is, that he fancies his wife is perpetually trying to poison him. Till driven to it by hunger he will not eat, and suffers tortures of terror after every meal.'

'Gad, what an extraordinary thing!'

Charlie and Iris, who were standing behind the speakers, looked at one another.

'It was the best thing that could happen for her, dear, so don't look so sad,' Charlie said. 'See what a crowd there is about my picture! The Spectator says it is the picture of the year. Iris, dear, it need not be long before I claim your promise.'

'And but for Blanché,' Iris said, 'you—'

'To her,' he interrupted, 'I owe you, dear—my heart's delight!'

## One More Unfortunate

Wanted the DIAMOND DYES, but was induced by her dealer to try another make.

A lady writing from a small town in New Brunswick to the proprietors of Diamond Dyes, says:—  
'Please find enclosed Express Money Order for six packets of Diamond Dyes, colors as mentioned below. I have been a user of Diamond Dyes, for over five years, and they have given me entire satisfaction. A few weeks ago our merchant was out of a color I wanted in the Diamond Dyes and strongly recommended another make he was selling. I bought the packet with many doubts as to their worth. I made an effort to dye an old cream colored opera shawl with the new dye. The ghastly result almost drove me mad. There was not a semblance of any decided color. Now I am obliged to dye it black, and will do the work with the Diamond Dyes. No more poor muddy dyes for me while I can send to you for the reliable Diamond Dyes.'

He—And now that the expenses of the wedding tour have been paid, I only have 25 cents. What would you call that, dear?

She—The last quarter of the honeymoon.

# Seal Brand Coffee

(1 lb. and 2 lb. cans.)

Every bean effuses fragrant Coffee of absolute purity.

It is largely imitated. Examine your purchase closely.

CHASE & SANBORN,  
MONTREAL AND BOSTON.

## HE KILLED MANY BOXERS.

An American Has a Record for Slaughtering Chinese.

For sixteen days and nights Charles McIntosh of Greenpoint, L. I., lay under the sun and the stars on the top of a tower outside Tientsin, firing his rifle at the Boxers every time one showed his head. In that time he killed 96 Chinamen.

The strain upon his nervous system was so great that now when he sleeps he dreams of the little white puffs of smoke that dotted the plain whenever he showed his head on the battlements.

Mr. McIntosh went to China with Dr. R. E. Dienderler of Philadelphia, to start a new woolen mill at Tientsin to make blankets for the army and navy of China. When the trouble began the Americans and British seized the mill as a fort. From the 140 foot tower the whole country around could be plainly seen, and McIntosh volunteered to be the guard on top of the tower.

He said to a reporter:—

'When the bombardment began they made for the mill in a large party. When they got into range I opened with my little Lee-Metford. I knew just what the distance was and almost every shot told.

'From outside the town they brought up a small gun and trained it on the tower. The brick and stone battlements began to fly about my ears. At last there was only a ridge of stone six inches high between me and the ruffians, but as they had to shoot up they did not hit me. Lying off in the bushes and the grass, they popped at me whenever I stirred, but I could almost have held the tower against a regiment. Every night when the sun went down I could see all over the plain the bodies of men I had killed or wounded. About 96 were said to have met their death there.

'How hot it got up there on the tower! How the sun beat down! They brought me food now and then. Water was very scarce but how good it tasted! Lying under the stars at night, listening to the whistle of shot and shell over by the European quarters, I used to think of my little wife in Scotland and wonder if she knew the terrible danger we were in.

'I never expected to get away. I calculated how long it would be before I should hear the yellow devils rushing through the mill below.'

Being a skilled machinist, McIntosh volunteered to drive the engine of the train that carried about 1700 American and German troops and ammunition in an endeavor to relieve Peking.

Several times companies of Chinese were discovered on the track ahead, trying to wreck the train. Once McIntosh fired six shots into a crowd and nine of them fell, the wheels of the locomotive crunching over their bodies.

Another time the train ran at express speed through several hundred Chinese that were tearing desperately at the rails. When one of them was afterward asked why he did not run, he said that the gods had promised that no harm should come to them. They expected to see the engine stop before it reached them.

Finding that the track had been torn up, the Europeans abandoned the train and pushed back to Tientsin, 48 miles. McIntosh was wounded in the leg—a slight scratch—on the way. There were four days of continuous fighting, and the men crawled into the city nearly overcome.

Mr. McIntosh, who has lived in Greenpoint for 11 years, is going back to China as soon as peace is assured. He says that the Tientsin woolen mill will yet be an assured fact.

## Borrowing Trouble.

Clara—What's the matter, dear? You look worried.

Marie—Oh, it's such a dreadful thing! I went to Chiggero, the great palmist, yesterday, and he told me that I would be married twice.

Clara—Goodness! That isn't what's worrying you, is it? I should think you'd be tickled half to death if he had given you

reasonable assurances that you were to be married even once.

Marie—But he told me also that my second husband would have red hair, and they say red headed people are likely to be quick tempered. I have such an impetuous disposition, too, you know!

## FIGURES AND EYES.

An Indication of Advancing Age That Admits of No Compromise.

'As we grow older,' remarked the man who was doing that at the rate of a week every seven days, 'we begin to observe that we seem to need more light when we read, or that the print of the newspaper that we have been reading with ease for over so many years is not quite as good as it used to be, or than we can distinguish the letters a little better if we hold them further away than usual, but we are very slow indeed to observe that the real cause of it is that we are growing old, and we rather resent the suggestion of some kindly friend that we need glasses. We resent glasses especially because they are the visible sign of our weakness and all the world may know by them, what we fondly think they have not yet discovered, to-wit; that our eyesight is failing. I am that way myself, or was, and I stood the glasses off as long as I could, and really, I could get along very well reading almost any type. Of course, I could not make out every letter, but I could get enough to complete the word, and oftentimes I could supply whole words that were indistinct by the sense of what I reading.

'But it was the figures that got me down at last. Ah, those figures. There is no context there, and when I saw dates or numerals of any kind the blur of the years shut out all their outlines and to save me I could not tell what was before me. I made mistakes so often in reading aloud to my wife that she would laugh at me, though she never caught me on the letters, notwithstanding many was the time I guessed at about half I was reading. But figures would not stand any fooling like that, and at last I acknowledged that it wasn't the type or the paper or the light or anything of that sort, and got myself a pair of glasses. Now I can tell a figure as well as a letter, and I discover they are printed quite as plainly as ever, though I was sure they were blurred before.'

She—I like him because he's so extravagant.

Her Aunt—That isn't the best possible quality in a husband.

She—Of course not! I'm not going to marry him.

# ABSOLUTE SECURITY.

Genuine  
Carter's  
Little Liver Pills.

Must Bear Signature of

W. D. Wood

See Fac-Simile Wrapper Below.

Very small and as easy to take as sugar.  
**CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.**  
FOR HEADACHE. FOR DIZZINESS. FOR BILIOUSNESS. FOR TORPID LIVER. FOR CONSTIPATION. FOR SALLOW SKIN. FOR THE COMPLEXION.  
GENUINE MUST HAVE SIGNATURE.  
Price 25 Cents. Purely Vegetable. *W. D. Wood*  
CURE SICK HEADACHE.