

CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.

cluded. 'I ought to have trusted him more. He—that night down on the rocks in the darkness—he kissed me, and I ought to have known then that that kiss was no insult—as I was insane enough to think it—but love claiming love. I deserve to be unhappy.'

'Think so, little woman? But how about him poor wretch?'
'Do you think I have not thought of him?' she asked, with a quick sigh. 'But Cyril, dear, how about Tom?'
'Let's think it over,' he suggested. 'I must go now. I shall see Kain today, Olive. Shall I let him know what really parted you?'
'No; it is not fair to Tom. Let it rest.'

CHAPTER V.

The birth of a son and heir to the Willoughbys brought about a christening feast late in November.

Olive had promised to be god-mother to the small bit of humanity, held in such esteem by the worshipping parents; so once again she found herself in the place so full of memories of vanished happiness.

Of course, Tom Henson accompanied her to Thurleston, unfeignedly glad, as he declared, to get away from the fog and gloom which had settled over London.

His betrothed had hinted that his absence from town for a month or two would not be taken amiss by her; but, as she had persisted in remaining with her brother until this invitation from Thurleston arrived, Tom refused to do as she so kindly suggested, fondly imagining that his presence was as desirable to her, as hers undoubtedly was to him.

Oversea was closely enwrapped in a mantle of warmth, left behind by the perfect summer which had been reluctant to leave so charming a spot.

Olive's heart throbbed painfully, as her eyes fell on the familiar scenes.

'How quiet you are, Olive. Tired, eh?' Jack had been carrying on an erratic conversation with Henson, who sprawled on the back seat of the dogcart; but his cousin's continued silence began to strike him as something out of the common.

'I think I am a bit tired,' confessed Olive.

'Oh, by the by,' continued Jack, 'who do you think is going to be Dick's deputy?' His brother Dick had offered to stand as sponsor to the young heir of the house of Willoughby.

'I'm sure I don't know. Who?'
'Why, Kain! His doctor ordered him change of air. He lost flesh and spirits over that leg business, you know, so Amy asked him down here on the understanding that he was to make himself useful. She didn't tell him you were coming; thought it would be a pleasant surprise for him. But he seems too seedy, somehow, to feel much pleasure about anything. Said he thought we were quite alone, or we should not have come. I just mention this to prepare you for the change in him. He isn't half the man he was in the summer.'

'No?'
It was with difficulty that Olive spoke at all.

She told herself that this was Cyril's doing.

He had kept ominously quiet on the subject on her crooked love story after she and refused to allow an open interference in the matter.

She felt very angry with him for arranging this meeting between Kain and herself—in Tom's presence, too.

If the christening had not been in question, she would have made some excuse to return to town without even seeing Chandos.

But the meeting was inevitable, so she braced herself for it, strong in the mistaken belief that she was doing right in persisting in marrying one man while loving another with her whole heart and soul.

Chandos Kain was greatly altered; there was no doubt about that.

He looked taller and older, and altogether unlike the man who had made love to her, in the interests of art, barely four short months ago; and yet never had she felt for him such passion and tenderness as she felt now.

'You have been very ill?' she said gently.

'Bike and I came to grief, you know. It was a bad smash. I had to lay up through that tremendously hot weather. It was enough to ruin any constitution temporarily. I shall be all right again when I have picked up a bit.'

'I hope your stay here will help you to do that.'

'Thank you. I hope so, too.'

He glanced round.

The others had passed into one of the many rooms opening on the hall.

He and she were alone.

Dropping his voice he continued—

'Do not think hardly of me for being here. I did not know you were coming.'

'No. Jack told me; I am not likely to misjudge you.'

She still spoke with exceeding gentleness, but she rose to her feet and moved in the direction the others had taken, as though intimating that they had said all there was to say.

But Kain thought differently.

'One moment!' he pleaded. 'Since we have met I must speak, and when I have spoken I promise to be silent for ever, unless you yourself unlock my tongue. You are going to marry Henson?'
'Yes.'

'Were you engaged to him all the time?'
'No.'

'Then it was all a mistake? We have ruined our lives by our own folly?'
'I believed you married until my brother undeceived me,' she murmured; 'speech was almost impossible.'

'And I thought you were promised in marriage. I was going to explain—about Sylvia—that night on the rocks. Do you remember? I kissed you.'

He looked at her with gaunt, hungry eyes.

'I remember. Major Rosedale spoke and—I—left you. I was angry.'

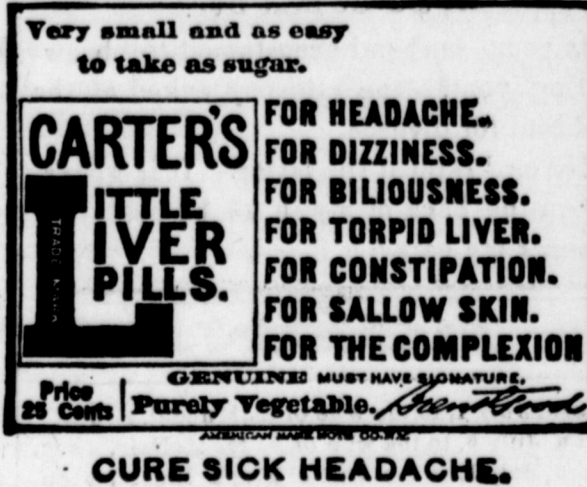
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'Because you thought I was married. She nodded.

'Except for that, you—'

'Don't, Chandos! I can't bear any more. Let me go, and—let us forget that we met before to day.'

Her words held a confession which would have served to tempt many men to disloyalty, but Kain loved her too well to pain her further.

Taking her hand he raised it to his lips with reverent passion, and then he let go without another word.

He did not mean to try to forget her, because he was resolved—now that he felt sure of her love—to win her, if possible, even though she were engaged twice over.

The christening took place next day, master Willoughby behaving himself as befitting the heir to an ancient house.

Olive—rest confident in Kain's promise of silence—gave up all thought of making a disturbance by insisting on taking herself off, the more especially as Tom openly expressed a desire to linger until the Willoughbys turned him out.

Chandos Kain also lingered, waiting, day after day, for an opportunity of stealing from his wealthy rival the thing held dearest by both.

He scorned to do it in an underhand fashion, yet Tom was so unsuspicious, so evidently innocent of Kain's rivalry, that it seemed increasingly difficult to go to him and say candidly—

'You think Olive loves you. You are mistaken; she prefers me to you. Release her, therefore, from her promise to you, that she may become my wife instead of yours.'

If Olive had been happy, or even content, it is possible that Kain would have taken himself off, as he had done once before, to his present great regret; but she was most palpably unhappy, to his love-lifted eyes, though the others did not seem to see it.

Perhaps she wished he would go; but if she did, she did not tell him so. She was careful to speak to him as little as possible, and still more careful never to be alone with him or to give him any opportunity of reminding her of the past.

Neither of them ever mentioned his work, and what had become of the unfinished—a sadly unfinished—MS., begun some four months before, Chandos Kain alone knew.

Things were in this unsatisfactory condition when one morning he determined to face the situation like a man and speak out or, at the very least, give Tom Henson some sort of a hint as to how the land lay.

It was a balmy, sunshiny day, warm as September.

Olive was not visible, but her fiancé was plainly to be seen strolling up and down the terrace at the back of the house, smoking a cigar, and gazing seawards, speculatively, at every turn.

Kain approached him very white about the lips.

'Can you spare me five minutes, Henson? I want to speak to you on a matter of great importance.'

'Won't it wait an hour?' asked the other smilingly. 'I have just arrived at the conclusion that a "dip" would be by no means a bad idea, for all it is nearly December; there has been no chilly weather yet to cool the water unpleasantly. The tide will be high in fifteen minutes; it's a case of now or never—for today, at any rate. I'll listen to you all the rest of the morning, Kain; or, why not join me, and let's discuss the matter, whatever it may be, under the sad sea waves—or in the middle of "em"?'
Chandos shook his head.

'I don't feel tempted.'

Perhaps, in his heart, he was glad of the reprieve, though still determined to have it out with Henson some time before lunch.

'It isn't fair that he should have everything—confound him!—and I nothing. He is welcome to his money, but not to Olive; she, at least, is mine by reason of mutual love.'

He went into the house, and took possession of a piano by way of passing the time.

Having played off and on, for the best part of an hour, he began to look for Henson's return from his swim.

But he looked in vain.

One hour passed, then another, but there was no sign of the man called Tom.

'Forgot all about it, I suppose, or found it chillier than he thought, so he is doing a bit of a walk to warm himself. Rather a mad thing, sea-bathing in November; but it's just those cool-headed, equable fellows who do the mad things. It isn't kind of Fate to play me a trick like this. I was primed to the nozzle with reasons why he should give him up, and just in the mood to fire them at him. Wish to goodness he'd turn up!'
But he did not; neither did he appear at lunch.

'Who saw him last?' asked Amy Willoughby, giving the order to fall to after waiting a reasonable time.

'I did,' said Chandos. 'He left me in order to go and bathe, tempted by the September like "feel" in the air. I guess he found it cold though, so he has walked somewhere to get up his circulation, and has lost his way.'

This theory being accepted by all—Henson having a real talent for losing himself—they proceeded with lunch, and afterwards went their various ways.

Chandos Kain accompanied his host to the station to inquire concerning an expected package.

Amy started to pay calls, taking the son and heir and his nurse in the carriage with her, while Olive pleaded laziness and a desire to stay at home.

Left alone, Miss Granger took a book, and settling herself on her favorite rock, read until the sun set, and a mist began to creep up from the sea.

Then, shivering, she rose and looked down at the still receding tide.

'Of course it must go out or it couldn't come in—but one has some hope when the tide is coming in—it seems to bring a promise of good things to come. When it goes back it takes hope with it. But—'

looking at the faintly crimson clouds behind which the sun had vanished—'how late it must be? I wonder if Tom is back?'
She turned to go upwards and inwards, feeling conscious of a dismal sense of depression in the scene around her.

A low moan seemed to creep over the still waters from afar.

'Like a soul in pain,' she murmured to herself.

Then she shivered again and ran into the house, inquiring of the first servant she met if Mr. Henson had returned.

The reply was negative; and for the first time, a feeling of uneasiness stole over her which spread to the others when dinner time failed to bring the absent man.

By ten o'clock the uneasiness had become downright anxiety, though Chandos Kain tried to maintain an appearance of hopefulness for the sake of the two girls.

Amy was in such open distress that Jack insisted on her going to bed.

'We shall here in the morning, dear; try and control yourself, for Olive's sake—think what she must be suffering.'

'Yes, Jack, of course; poor Olive! But suppose anything has happened to him while he was our guest, I shall feel myself responsible.'

'Nonsense, my dear! How could you—or I either—be held responsible? But don't let us meet trouble half-way. Go to bed, and to sleep, like a good girl. Kain and I will sit up for an hour or two longer.'

Olive insisted on staying with them.

'Though it is not a bit of use, Jack,' she said, with the calmness of one who had given up all hope. 'He is dead. I am sure of it. He is drowned. I seemed to know it this afternoon when I was on the rocks. The sun went down so suddenly, and the mist covered everything, and I heard what I new know must have been his spirit calling to me. To-morrow or the next day you will find that I am right.'

'Why, my dear Olive, you are worse than Amy! What strange creatures you women are! Come and talk to her, Kain: help me drive some common sense into her head.'

'I heartily hope you are wrong.'

Chandos spoke to her very gently, his heart aching when he saw the expression in the dear eyes.

'No, I am not wrong.' Then, lowering her voice so that Jack could not hear she added in the same calm way: 'If I did not love him as he would have wished, I was genuinely fond of him.'

'He deserved it, replied Kain, not noticing that he followed her example in using the past tense.

But the past tense it was, as far as poor Tom Henson was concerned.

The next day brought the sad truth to light.

At low tide his body was found washed up on a little strip of beach about a mile from Thurleston.

He must have been seized by cramp, for he was a good and strong swimmer; but the best swimmer in the world must needs succumb if attacked by cramp when out of his death.

Chandos Kain felt thankful he had been prevented from speaking the words which might have made his dead rival's last hour on earth one emptied of happiness.

After the funeral he left Thurleston with nothing more than a warm hand pressure to remind Olive of his deep love for her.

And she saw nothing more of him until the following spring, when he returned to England after wandering half over Europe in response to a letter from a woman called Sylvia, demanding to know if there was any cause or just impediment why she should not accept a proposal of marriage from Cyril Marsh, M. D., her mother being willing, and herself not averse to the idea.

Kain called on Dr. Marsh's half sister, to ask her opinion on the subject.

Only, somehow, he quite forgot his errand when he found Olive alone, and looking prettier and more desirable than ever, though she still wore a semblance of outward mourning for the man called Tom.

'I may speak now, Olive? I have been silent long enough, I think. You will listen to me now, darling?'
She did not say she would not, but he appeared to have very little to say.

Perhaps the fact that he was permitted to hold her in his arms and kiss her, as

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will satisfied him that all had been said that needed to be put into words.

It was Olive who first remembered what his actual errand was supposed to be.

'About Cyril and Sylvia, dear—do you approve?'
Sylvia must marry some day, I suppose; and a double wedding will save a lot of bother. Don't you think so, darling?'
'Thank Heaven, poor Tom never knew I did not love him!' thought Olive, as she yielded herself willingly to Chandos Kain's passionate embrace.

EXPLORERS IN CHINA.

The Policy of European Powers Fore-shadowed by the Routes of Travellers

Notwithstanding the magnitude of the obstacles that have already existed to travel in China it is remarkable how many scientific explorers have traversed the length and breadth of the country since the early part of the century. It is interesting also to observe how the names of the explorers and the territory through which they passed seem to indicate the aims commonly attributed to the various Powers now manifesting particular interest in Chi see affairs. Southern China, for instance, has been the special field for British explorers, while there have been numerous Russian explorers in the north and north-western provinces, and the Germans have given special attention to the northeastern parts of the country.

As far back as 1816 English explorers began their work in Southern China, for in that year Amherst made a journey along the banks of the Peking, one of the northern tributaries of the Sikang, sometimes called the River of Canton; but Macartney had already done valuable work up the same stream in 1793. It was not, however, until the early part of the second half of the century—in the '60s—that systematic exploration of that part of China was undertaken. During that decade the southwestern and southern provinces were regularly quartered out by English explorers, conspicuous among whom were Oxenham, Dickson, Garnier, Bickmore and Cooper. Lagree, a French traveller, in 1867 made a journey into Yunnan from Siam.

But it was in the seventh and the following decades that the exploration of China was developed on a large scale and became international in character, foreshadowing events that have since begun to materialize. In the '70s the English activity spread from the southern provinces to the valley of the Yang-tse-Kia g. Baber, Gill, McCarthy, Moss and others penetrated into some of the most exclusive provinces, and made valuable commercial and military observations. While the British were thus working in the southern half of the country the Russian Przjvalsky made his first journey into the northern Thibet and Kansuh. Elias, who was believed to be travelling on behalf of the British Government, made a journey through Mongolia and Shansi in 1872. The northern provinces were also traversed by Pevtsol, Sezech, Fritsche, a German, and others during the same period. In the '80s the activity became still greater. Przjvalsky, Potanin and other Russians continued their examinations in the northwestern provinces and the province of Chi Li, in which Peking is situated. The British were equally active in the south. Bourne, Ford, Parker and others were going through the provinces of the Yang-tse Kiang collecting data of a political and military nature, while Mr. Archibald Little, who has done much to develop the navigation of the Upper Yang-tse-Kiang, was making observations of great commercial value. Mr. Archibald Colquhoun made, during the same period, a thorough and exhaustive survey of the province of Yunnan from Burmah with a view to the construction of a railway, and continued his work from Yunnan down the Yukiang and Sikang to Canton.

In the early part and middle of the present decade the exploring activity was intensified. In the north of China and Mongolia Russian and German military and scientific men made minute and exhaustive studies of the topography and mineral resources of the country. Rockh, Boborowski, Oortchey, Potanin and Braam tra-

verses Kansuh, Shensi, Shansi. Chihli and Shantung in every direction, the last named also making extensive explorations in the provinces of Ganhsuy, Kiangsi and Kwangtung. The English explorations of the Upper Yangtse provinces also went on actively, and the French paid considerable attention to Yunnan and Sechuen in view of their intended railway to Yunnan-fu, the capital of the province. They also had explorations made of the part of the provinces of Kwangsi and Kwangtung which lie south of the Sikang and its main western tributary that rises in Yunnan. The Japanese also have been looking into the province of Fokien opposite Formosa, to which they pretend to have a kind of reversionary right.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the governments more particularly interested in the future of China have taken care to be fully and accurately informed as to the character and resources of those provinces in which they were more immediately concerned. Those explorers whose names have been mentioned are only a few of the many who have taken part in the work of preparing the way for the events now ripening in China, but it is in the Chancelleries of the Foreign offices and the mobilization departments of the War Offices only of the different countries mentioned that their names and the records of their work are known.

Forbes and one of His Audiences.

As a lecturer on his experiences, Archibald Forbes was very popular, and he was fond of recounting an experience of his debut in that capacity at Leven, Fifehire. With a thumping heart the new lecturer appeared at the hall door shortly before the starting time of 8 o'clock, and, not wishing to crush through a great audience on his way to the platform, he asked hall-keeper to conduct him to a side door.

'Ye needs mind,' replied that functionary, not unkindly; 'there's no crowd.'

When Forbes entered the hall he had to admit that the keeper was quite correct. There was not a single soul present. After a bit, however, a man strolled in, and calmly proceeded to choose a seat. It seems he was a commercial traveller, putting up at the place for the night, who had found time hanging heavily on his hands. Nobody else coming, Forbes said to the audience.

'Will you have the lecture, or will you have a drink?'
'A drink,' said the traveller.

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The Landlady—What! You a Kentuckian, and cannot endure mint sauce?

The Colonel—There are things to be eat and things to be drunk, begging your pardon, madam.