

CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.

for coming—like this. I know it isn't—just the thing, but such old friend And—and I wanted—well, with a nervous laugh, 'you don't come to see me and I must tell you—you—'

'Anything in my power to grant, Lady Harwood,' Max Delmar said gently, but a little formally, 'you have but to command me.'

'Your forgiveness,' she cried out, clasping her hands. 'Oh! you don't know what I've suffered all these years! I was cruel to you—cruel to—myself! But I was so young, and my father—you don't know what a girl has to bear from pressure of her family. Still, I did wrong, and I am wretched—wretched! to think you are still angry with me—'

'Indeed, you mistake, Lady Harwood,' Max said, as she paused in the rush of her words. He spoke with great gentleness, half ashamed for her sake, more pitying than he could express. 'I have forgiven and forgotten long ago. It can only be pain to go over the past; the page is closed. We have both other views in life. Let me take you to your carriage.'

He moved a step nearer as he spoke anxiously, in his chivalrous soul, to save her from herself.

But she put out her hand. 'Then, if you forgive,' she said, averting her face, and speaking low, 'if you forget my cruelty—I am free now, I am rich—in all these years I have been in heart faithful to you.'

There was a second's deathly pause. The man had tried to put from him the thought that the woman had ignored his plainly expressed inability to take up the threads of the past, but it was borne on him now, and it was an overwhelming pain to him.

'I thought,' he said, turning his face aside, and speaking in a steady voice, 'that you would have understood—forgive me! Between the boy of years ago and the man of today there is a vast gap that nothing can bridge—not even the great honor you do me. Believe me, it is the boy you remember, Lady Harwood—not the man of today.'

'No, no!' she cried out, bursting into passionate tears. 'When I read of you, covered with glory; when I saw you, heard of all your great deeds, it was not the boy I loved. Surely—surely you have not—'

She stopped choking. 'I beseech you, Lady Harwood,' Delmar said, 'do not prolong this interview. It can only give you pain! You are overwrought—to-morrow you will see things in their true light. It is impossible for me—for us, to renew the past. Believe me, I have long ceased to reproach you; a man finds for a girl a thousand excuses that a boy cannot see. I am not free, had I wish to remember.'

She started up, dashing the tears from her eyes.

'You are not free?' she said, through her teeth. 'You—you love someone else?' He bent his head.

'False—fickle!' Lilith cried fiercely. 'You professed I was the love of your heart—that I had ruined your life! You are easily consoled.'

A moment the man's eyes looked into hers; then he dropped them, and set his lips together.

He was too chivalrous to answer the reproach with reproach, and his pity was too great.

'Who is it?' she said, with trembling hands gathering her cloak about her. 'But I know—Beryl Chevenix!'

'I am engaged to Miss Chevenix,' answered Delmar, a touch of hauteur in his mien.

'You have done well for yourself,' Lilith said, with a sneer. 'She is an heiress. I was a fool to think you ever really cared for me! I see my mistake. I thought your lips were sealed when you came back, because I was rich and had been cruel to you. Now you are cruel. It is a mistake for a woman to stoop to a man. I wish I had never come!'

'It was a generous impulse, Lady Harwood,' the soldier said quietly. 'I shall forget all else but that.'

He stepped to the door as he spoke, and waited silently while she adjusted her veil.

She did not offer her hand in going out, nor did he—his—it would have seemed to him like a mockery in her humiliation; but he escorted her with punctilious politeness to the hall door, and, seeing she had no cab waiting, quietly accompanied her to the corner of the street, hailed a passing hansom, and put her into it.

'You will tell him where you wish to be driven?' he said. 'Good-bye.'

And the miserable woman sat staring out on the dismal London mist as she was driven back to her house, and when she reached her room she flung herself down on the couch, and broke into bitter, angry sobs.

After all, she had humiliated her pride for nothing.

She would hate Max Delmar now, and his bride; she would never look on his face again.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

No word of that interview between Lilith and himself was ever breathed, even to Beryl, by Max Delmar.

It was a sacred secret, which belonged, not to him or to Beryl, but to Lilith.

But, in a manner, it shook him greatly, as such an interview must, when the man is of noble nature; and there was something in his greeting of Beryl the next day which made the girl divine, with her quick instinct, something of the truth.

And when she heard later that Lady Lilith Harwood had left town rather unexpectedly, she felt sure that her instincts were true.

But she never said a word to Max.

The engagement was public property by this time, and the marriage was to take place early in the New Year, and then Delmar would go abroad with his young wife before settling down to a Staff appointment at Cairo.

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CURE SICK HEADACHE.

The position of bride and bridegroom made it a foregone conclusion that the greatest interest would be taken in this wedding.

Had it been in London, there would have been crowds, but the ceremony took place in the pretty village church of Beryl's home General Chevenix's place in Berkshire, where the girl had been brought up from her earliest years.

Beautiful indeed, Beryl looked in her white robes; and Delmar, the handsome bridegroom, came in for a larger share of the admiration than is usually bestowed on that necessary adjunct to a wedding.

Lilith—in Paris now—read all the accounts of white dresses, bridesmaids, and going away, with dimming eyes and a half sneer on her beautiful lips, and presently dashed the paper down and sat with clenched hand, staring out before her.

'It might have been mine,' she said to herself, and then laughed.

'Well, I won't wear the willow for him! He shall see that I can be happy without him. I daresay he would boast that Lilith Harwood remained a widow for his sake! She did not really think this; even while her lips uttered the sentiment, she knew that Max Delmar was incapable of such dishonor.'

'Monsieur le Prince Vasaroff,' announced her servant, and Lilith turned with a charming smile to welcome the middle aged Russian, who was wealthy and polished, but a terrific gambler, and beneath the polish, cold and cruel in nature.

He was an admirer of the beautiful English widow, and had shown marked attention to her shortly after her husband's death.

But Lilith had put him off, and told him he might renew his suit when her mourning was over.

Today she met him, in a lovely tea-gown of cream and pale green.

She saw him glance significantly at the confection, and dropped her eyes a moment as she received him.

After the first courtesies had passed, Prince Vasaroff bent forward, with a smile and lightly touched her green robe.

'Madame has discarded her mourning,' he said.

And Lilith leaned back with a careless laugh.

'Yes,' she said, what would you have? One cannot be always in black!'

'Especially when one is young and beautiful, and when black would mean despair to one who is faithful,' said the prince.

'Madame, I had your permission to speak again when your time of mourning was over; that time—is it not now come?'

He took her hand in his, and she did not withdraw it.

'Madame la Princesse Vasaroff!'

That was running in her head, and the Vasaroff jewels and sables, castles and domains, and rank and state, were all things greatly to be desired!

The owner of all these had to be taken with them, to be sure; but then, one need not see much of one's husband when one is very high in society.

And Max Delmar should never triumph—nor Beryl.

But the woman's heart went back over the years when she was a young girl, and a handsome, passionate lover had pleaded with her to be true to herself.

Oh, if this Russian had been Max!

But sentiment was all nonsense.

She shook off the softer mood that was coming over her, and glanced at the prince.

The glance said the time was come if he wished, and so he understood it.

'Madame will do me the honour to become the princess of my home, my heart,' he said lifting her hand to his lips. 'Is that so?'

'If you wish it,' Lilith answered.

She did not love this man in the least, and she had already had experience of a loveless marriage.

But no one should say she was a disappointed woman.

And the prince was enraptured, for the time.

For Lilith was very beautifully, and, in his way, he cared for her; moreover, she would be a lovely possession, to give grand entertainments.

This wedding was a very much grander affair naturally, than that pretty inunction in Chevenix Church; but hearts did not

count in this one—they were unnecessary impediments.

'Have you seen this Max?' Beryl said to her husband one morning in Cairo. They were together in a garden, and the papers had just been brought out. 'Lilith has married Prince Vasaroff.'

Delmar took the paper, and read the account of all the splendours which accompanied the marriage of the English beauty.

And when he had finished he laid down the sheet and put his arm round his young wife.

'Poor Lilith!' he said half-sadly, and with a sigh. 'I pity her. A second time she has sold herself.'

'And yet she is a princess, and has lots of money, and houses, and jewels, et cetera,' said Beryl, with a touch of archness. 'Don't you think she is to be envied?'

He smiled.

'Do you?' he asked.

But Beryl laughed.

'I envy no woman,' said she; 'I have you.'

'A notable possession!' said Max jestingly.

'A very dear one,' Beryl softly answered. 'I am so sorry for poor Lilith. I can't think she cares for this man. Didn't you know him, Max?'

'I met him here some years ago. He did not impress me favourably. Like most Russians, he is an inveterate gambler and I am afraid some of his estates are mortgaged to the hilt; so I don't know that his wife will be so very wealthy, after all. 'And Lilith isn't the woman to lead a man to better things, I fear,' said Beryl. 'She will think herself cheated of that for which she sold herself.'

The Prince and Princess Vasaroff came to Cairo that spring, and Beryl fancied that Lilith had already found her life a bore, it was not wrong.

They all met on the drive on afternoon, and there were introductions and congratulations, and the invitations to the Prince's hotel.

'A charming pair!' said the Prince to his wife as they drove away. 'Madame Delmar is beautiful, and her husband had great taste.'

Lilith's lip curled, and her husband glancing at her, divined the truth in a moment.

His eye gleamed.

At once the demon of jealousy was aroused, and Lilith felt the effects then and afterwards, though during their stay in Cairo, the Prince was shrewd enough to see that Captain Delmar had no feeling but respect for Madame la Princesse.

But Lilith's marriage bodes no good. How should it?

She knew the man she married for a gambler and a rascal, and that she became his wife out of pique against another man. 'She is not happy,' Beryl said to her husband; and he drew her suddenly, with a half passionate movement, to his heart.

'My darling! my dearest!' he said under his breath, 'there is no shadow of doubt in you Beryl? You know I am yours utterly?'

'There never has been a shadow between us, Max,' she answered with deep tenderness. 'I understand. I love you the more, if it were possible, for that noble sorrow of yours.'

Because your noble, my Beryl, Max, whispered, and he kissed her soft lips again and again.

#### Twice in one Day.

The poorest family in Japan usually has its own house. This implies a great many houses in a city of nearly a million and a half of inhabitants, and explains why Tokyo gives the impression of being an immense and rather mean-looking village—an impression heightened by the fact that the rich do not usually display their wealth by adorning the street side of their houses, but reserve for the interior and back garden all the artistic or floral adornments for which they may have a taste.

The cheap appearance of most Japanese houses is simply a consequence of the frequent fires. Professor Milne, in his book on earthquakes, says:

'In one winter I was a spectator of three fires, each of which was said to have destroyed more than ten thousand houses—in all about a tenth of all the houses in Tokyo. These fires follow regular tracks like cyclones. A large part of the city's population depends for its living upon the work of building new houses and streets. These persons, naturally oppose all efforts to improve the fire-extinguishing service.'

A fire is apt to be made the occasion of a picnic. (The houses are soon rebuilt; and it often happens, we are told, that a man's house is burned down twice in one day, because, after the rebuilding, the shifting wind brings the flames back in that direction.)

This statement is not so improbable as it may seem at first sight, since some of the Japanese keep in stock the material for complete houses, nicely fitted and finished, so that they need only to be put together and raised like tents.

**GAINS MADE BY RUSSIA.**

Important Advantages Secured While England Was Busy With the Boers.

Now that the end of the war in South Africa is believed to be in sight attention is being turned in England to the advantages that have been gained by Russia during the eight months which it has lasted while the hands of England have been practically tied.

The first step taken by Russia immediately after it was seen that the Anglo-Boer war was going to be a much longer and more tedious affair than was first reckoned on was the mortgage she established over Persia, followed by the movement of troops to the Afghan frontier on the road leading to Herat. The next was the concession from the Turkish Government giving Russia the monopoly of railway construction in eastern Asia Minor which virtually converts the great plateau of Armenia into a Russian sphere of influence. Simultaneously with the negotiations that gave her this foothold in the regions overlooking the lowlands of Mesopotamia and facing the German sphere in Anatolia, Russia acquired a lien on Bulgaria in return for a small loan; she obtained the use of the important harbor of Bourgas on the Black Sea, which is connected by railway with Sofia, the capital, and the Serbian and Macedonian railways; and the Bulgarian army becomes again the advanced guard of Russia in the Balkan Peninsula. These are her gains in western Asia and near East.

In the Far East, Russia has obtained two notable concessions, one of which is believed by many to endanger the continuance of her pacific relations with Japan. The first of these concessions is the right to build a railway from Kiakhta, the Siberian customs frontier station south of Lake Baikal, to Kalgan on the great wall of China northwest of Peking. The obstacles to the construction of this road through eastern Mongolia are nothing compared to those presented by the country through which the Manchurian railway passes to Port Arthur and Vladivostok. Its strategic advantage is also greater, as it is so far removed from the coast that the chance of its being interrupted by an enemy foreign to China and Russia is reduced to a minimum.

The last concession was obtained from Corea on March 30, when the Corean Government made over to Russia a site on the shore of the harbor of Masampo at the southern extremity of the Corean Peninsula, to serve as a coal depot and naval hospital for the exclusive use of the Russian fleet. The value of the concession is doubly enhanced by a clause which prevents Corea from alienating to any other power any land in the neighborhood or even on Koje-do or any other island, which would cover Port Hamilton and Quelpart, islands which England has had an eye on for a long time.

This last concession gives Russia an exclusive ice-free harbor midway between Vladivostok and Port Arthur, thus securing a winter base for her Pacific fleet which is being steadily increased. It also gives her command of the sea road to Peking, and in a measure isolates Wei-hai-wei, and threatens Japan from across a very narrow channel. So secretly was this treaty negotiated that it was still unknown to foreign correspondents at Tokio in Japan in the middle of April, and apparently also to the Japanese Government.

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The feeling in England in relation to the Masampo concession seems to be stronger than with regard to the others, England having evacuated Port Hamilton in 1886 after obtaining an undertaking from Russia not to occupy Corean territory under any circumstances whatever. In 1894 Sir Edward Grey, then British Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, intimated that the British Government regarded this pledge as still valid. In the present circumstances, however, protest is unavailing, and the precedent of Port Arthur makes it doubtful in the opinion of many whether Lord Salisbury would persist in any objection he might raise; while an untimely threat might set in motion the troops Russia has collected in central Asia along the Afghan and Persian frontiers.

The end of the South African war is therefore the more ardently desired in order that the hand of the British Government may the sooner be free for contingencies which some believe are not very remote.

#### Not to Be "Stamped."

A Glasgow paper tells a story of James Russell Lowell's visit to the north of England which does not appear to have a place in Mr. Lowell's biographies. It illustrates the unwillingness of the north of England peasants to be outdone by any comer.

Mr. Lowell, the story says, one day entered an eating house and sat down at a table. Just then a barefooted yokel, who, like Mr. Lowell, had plainly been walking far, and whose bare feet were sore from the journey, as were also the American's, came in and sat down on the opposite side of the table. Mr. Lowell gave his order. 'Waiter, bring me a steak and fried potatoes.'

The peasant leaned his elbows on the table. 'Bring me yan, tee,—that, too,—' he said.

'Bring me a cup of coffee and rolls,' said Mr. Lowell.

'Bring me yan, tee,' said the peasant. 'And,' the American added, 'you may bring me a bootjack.'

'Bring me yan, tee,' put in the yokel. 'Why, what on earth can you want with a bootjack?' asked Mr. Lowell, surprised into asking the question.

The retort nearly took his breath. 'Gan away!' the rustic exclaimed. 'D'ye think I canna eat a bootjack as well as ye?'

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'And now, children,' said the teacher, who has been talking about military fortifications, 'can any of you tell me what is a buttress?'

'Please, ma'am,' cried little Willie, snapping his fingers, 'it's a nanny-goat!'

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