

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

word. You shall not marry any other man. What do you mean? Mayla asked faintly.

She could make no effort to fly, for her terror was like a paralysis, and she knew that there was the light of madness shining in the old woman's glittering eyes.

I mean to kill you so that you will be forever true to him, was the answer; and powerless to move as she was, faint with physical agony and mental suffering, Mayla could only close her eyes, a prayer upon her lips, as she waited for the end.

A laugh of triumph rang from the old woman's lips, laughter which sounded strangely in that room where the dead man lay, but the next moment it changed to a strangled shriek of foiled rage, for the door of the room had been dashed open, and Mayla knew that Leonard's arms were close clasping her again.

CHAPTER V. WON AT LAST.

We must go back a few hours—to the time, in fact, when Sir Myles Frandford gave utterance to that startling exclamation—

'It is the ghost of my dead love! My wife has come back to me from the grave!' Leonard looked at the baronet in amazement.

For a moment he almost believed he had taken leave of his senses. What otherwise, could be the meaning of those astounding words?

Sir Myles, glancing fleetingly at his young relation, divined the thought that was present in his mind.

'You think me demented,' he said, 'and I do not wonder at it. But I am sane—as sane as you are, Leonard. That girl is the very image of my long-lost wife. It is not she, I know; but my daughter—my daughter! I have no proof that she died. Can it be—oh, God in Heaven grant it!—that it is my child whom I see lying there before me?'

'Your daughter!' the young man exclaimed. 'Can it indeed be possible?'

He could scarcely keep his excitement in check.

Mayla, Sir Myles's daughter! It might indeed be so.

He remembered the mystery by which she was enshrouded.

True, Simon Maine had told him she was a child of shame.

But what guarantee had he that that dastard had spoken truly?

In Mayla was indeed Sir Myles's daughter Maine's hitherto unaccountable determination to make her his wife was easily to be accounted for.

Once he was her husband, he could make known her identity and share the wealth which would be hers in consequence.

The more Leonard thought about it, the stronger became his hope that the baronet might be right in thinking Mayla was his child.

But something else had to be thought of at present, and that was the preservation of her life.

At all costs she must be saved if possible.

He had feared, when he had brought her to the Manor, that she was dying, and that fear returned to him now with redoubled force.

'A doctor! a doctor!' he exclaimed, excitedly.

The baronet started, as if from a dream. 'Yes, yes,' he said, hurriedly, 'you are right, Leonard; a doctor must be sent for at once. I must not lose her again—no, no! I must not lose her again.'

He seemed intuitively to know that he was right in his surmise—that Mayla was, in very truth, his long-lost daughter, the child he had mourned for years as dead, though he had never had any proof of her death.

Without a moment's more delay, a servant was despatched, post haste, for the nearest doctor, who was equally expeditious in accompanying the messenger back to the Manor.

A very brief examination of the still unconscious girl enabled him to assure the two men who awaited with breathless anxiety the result of his investigations, that the wound was by no means a mortal one.

It was carefully dressed, and then Mayla was consigned to the care of the woman servants, by whom she was conveyed to a room that had been prepared for her, where she was disrobed and put to bed.

While she was being undressed, her dead mother's letters came to light, and were taken downstairs to Sir Myles Frandford.

The moment he saw the handwriting, he uttered a joyful exclamation.

'It is the writing of my wife!' he cried. 'See, Leonard! This surely is a proof that Mayla is my child.'

The young man was almost as excited as the baronet.

'Read them, read them!' he exclaimed feverishly.

But Sir Myles was already doing so.

Strong man though he was, he could not repress the tears that sprang to his eyes as he mastered the contents of those pathetic epistles.

Without a word he passed the letters to Leonard.

The young man saw at once that they left no doubt as to the identity of the girl he so ardently loved.

'These are sufficient proof, to me and to you, that Mayla is your daughter, Sir Myles,' he said. 'But doubtless there is still further to be obtained, and it will be as well to have it, in order to make assurance doubly sure in the eyes of others. I will go at once to the mill, and wrest from that scoundrel, Simon Maine, every shred of additional evidence he may have in his possession.'

Without waiting for the baronet to utter a word, he hastened from the room, and a few moments later was out in the night speeding towards the mill.

By the time he reached the mill-stream, he could clearly distinguish objects for some distance around.

As he neared his destination he was surprised to see a female form standing on the bank of the mill stream, alternately wringing its hands and gesticulating wildly.

On hearing his footsteps the woman suddenly turned towards him, and he saw that it was old Barbara.

There was a look in her face that for a moment repelled him.

So ghastly white was it—accentuated as its pallor was by the light of the moon, which streamed directly down upon it—that it looked like the face of Death itself, while in the eyes there was a gleam that betokened madness.

For only a moment Leonard paused, then he went forward again.

'You here, Barbara!' he exclaimed. 'Why is this?'

She did not reply immediately, but stood gazing fixedly at his face.

Then she raised her hand, and the quivering finger was pointed directly at him.

'Thou art the man!' she cried, shrilly. 'His blood is on your head!'

Leonard stared at her in amazement.

'What can you mean?' he said. 'I am no murderer!'

'Liar!' the old woman hissed. 'Had it not been for you he would be alive at this moment.'

'Of whom are you speaking?' the young man asked, more amazed than ever.

'O my boy—of Simon Maine. He is dead, and you are his murderer.'

'You must be mad!' Leonard exclaimed, and in his own mind he had no doubt of the truth of his words. 'I am here to see your master. Where is he?'

The old woman broke out into a shriek of laughter.

'He is there! He is there!' she cried, pointing downwards into the swift flowing stream. 'If you would interview him, you must go down there, there, there!'

Leonard started back in horror.

Could it be that the old woman spoke truly—that Simon Maine had indeed met his end in the chilling embrace of the mill-stream?

If so, that awful fact explained the madness which had seized her for its own, for he well knew of the dog-like attachment to the man she had served so long and faithfully.

He started forward impulsively, and in a moment was standing beside her on the verge of the stream.

It was very deep at this spot, but the water was clear as crystal, and the moon, now shining with unclouded brilliance, enabled him to see down in the depths with tolerable distinctness.

And as he gazed, it seemed to him that he could make out a dark object which looked horribly like a human form, lying down there motionless among the weeds.

In a moment his coat was off.

Another, and he had dived into the depths.

There might still be life in that motionless form, and villain though the man was, he could not let him drown without making an effort to save him.

In a moment he had seized the body of Simon Maine, and, with a mighty effort, he wrenched it free of the clutch of the entangling weeds.

Then he bore it to the surface, and, with old Barbara's aid, got it out upon the bank.

Every expedient he knew of he employed to restore animation.

But all was in vain, and at length he desisted, convinced that his toe was, indeed, beyond all earthly help.

'He is dead,' he said to old Barbara. She had been watching his exertions with bated breath.

'Help me to carry him into the house,' the young man added, and she obeyed like one in a trance.

The body was laid on the sofa in the best room, and Leonard, possessing himself of the dead man's keys, opened the bureau, and was speedily in possession of the additional proofs of Mayla's identity for which he had come to the mill.

Old Barbara took no notice of him, but sat crooning over the body of the man she had loved with almost a mother's love and the young man silently took his departure and left her alone with her dead.

When hours later, he learnt of Mayla's disappearance, he guessed at once whether she had gone, and her motive in going, and once more he sped back to the mill, arriving, as we have seen, in the nick of time to save Mayla from the vengeance of the mad woman.

'My dearest, we missed you from the Manor, and I was almost in despair. Why did you run away from me like that?'

The lovers were together in the homely kitchen at the mill, waiting for the carriage which had been summoned to take them back to the Manor.

In the room close at hand Simon Maine was lying dead, but save for his presence they were alone in the house, for Barbara had been taken away, and placed in safe keeping.

'I could not stay at the Manor,' Mayla answered brokenly. 'Have you forgotten my promise to Simon? It was one I dared not break.'

'It was one which you had no right to keep,' Leonard answered resolutely. 'But his death has cut that Gordian knot for ever. You will come back to the Manor now, dear love, for all the barriers which were between us have been swept away.'

'Oh! but you forget,' she answered, trembling. 'Think of the difference between our stations—of the story which Simon told me of my poor mother's death—of my father's sin—'

'My darling, about that I have a great deal to say, for while you slept last night I was making great investigations. They brought me those old letters which you found in your breast, and Sir Myles and I read them together, for, dear one, he has a right to know all that was in them; they were written by his dying wife!'

'In a few words, then, the story which Simon Maine told about your father having been a convict was a pure invention, fabricated by him in order, I suppose, to make you think the gratitude you owed him greater than it really was. That your mother died in poverty, cast off by all her friends, is unfortunately true, yet none the less she was Sir Myles Frandford's dearly-loved wife. From the time you were a baby he resolved to marry you and then, when you were his wife, to claim the fortune that ought to be yours. You see, you were right when you thought he did not love you.'

'And this wonderful story is true? Mayla murmured. 'I am really the daughter of Sir Myles?'

'Yes; beyond all doubt. Those letters which you possessed were alone sufficient proof, but I found still further when I came to the mill last night, and took myself to search that old bureau. Come my darling, Sir Myles is waiting for you, and I hear the carriage coming. Through all these years his life has been clouded by grief and remorse for your mother's loss, but you will console him now. Your love will be all the world to him, just as it is all the world to me.'

How she answered him need not be told nor how, within a little while she found herself clasped in her long lost father's arms, and realized that a new life of love and tender care had begun for her.

All this happened long ago, but the years which have elapsed have glided by in cloudless sunshine.

The shadow of sorrow has long since been banished from Sir Myles' face, while in all the land there is no happier woman than Mayla Frandford, now the lady of the stately Manor, who still remembers tenderly the far off days when her husband wooed her as the blue-eyed Maid Of The Mill.

Two Difficult Saturday Night Interviews.

The well-known Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, of New York, makes a point of being very courteous to newspaper men and is always willing to be seen and interviewed.

He sets aside one hour each day to be at home to callers in general; but to newspaper men he is at home at nearly all times—except on Saturday night. That night he devotes to final preparation and thought for his work of the next morning, and his rule has been never to be at home after six o'clock on Saturday evening.

In that particular he is like the late Dr. John Hall, who would never allow himself to be seen on a Saturday night, Doctor Parkhurst is a Presbyterian, and so was Doctor Hall—in fact, they were the two most distinguished Presbyterian ministers in the city.

About ten o'clock on a certain Saturday night a report came into a New York newspaper office that some one of Canadian Presbyterians had taken exception to passages in a book of Rev. John Watson's—Ian MacLaren—and that they even talked of forcing the matter into regular church proceedings against Doctor Watson on account of alleged heresy.

'Go and see Doctor Hall and Doctor Parkhurst,' said a city editor to a reporter, 'and get a full talk from them in regard to this.'

The reporter knew very well that the city editor did not expect him to get those interviews, but was sending him on a 'forlorn hope.' But he merely took the assignment without any comments and went out.

He went first to the house of Doctor Hall on Fifth Avenue, that being the father of the two from the office. He knew that if he sent up his card he would merely receive a message that Doctor Hall could not be seen. He decided therefore that the Doctor must be made to feel an interest in the information that he (the reporter) was to give.

The servant who opened the door recognized him as a newspaper man, and grinned. 'You know the doctor won't see you on Saturday night,' she said.

'Just tell Doctor Hall, said the reporter, 'that I have news for an intended trial for heresy of Ian MacLaren.'

The servant took the message and in a few moments the giant form of Doctor Hall came hurrying down the stair.

'What's that about Ian MacLaren?' he cried.

The reporter told him, and then got a good interview from him in regard to it.

Then to Dr. Parkhurst's house. Again the face of a servant who had frequently seen the reporter, and again the words, 'You know the Doctor won't see you on Saturday night.'

But the newspaper man wrote on his card: 'To tell you about a report of an intended trial for heresy of Ian MacLaren.'

In a few moments Doctor Parkhurst's voice was heard. 'Come right up here. Come right up to my study.'

The news was told and the second interview gained.

The reporter was back at the newspaper office before midnight and walked up to the city editor's desk. That tired faced man looked up.

'I have been to see Doctor Hall and Doctor Parkhurst,' said the reporter.

'Wouldn't be seen, of course?' said the editor.

'Got 'em both,' said the reporter.

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It has completely riced me up. I am just as vigorous as when a boy and you cannot realize how happy I am.' 'Dear Sir: Your method worked beautifully. Results were exactly what I needed. Strength and vigor have completely returned and enlargement is entirely satisfactory.' 'Dear Sir:—Yours was received and I had no trouble in making use of the receipt as directed and can truthfully say it is a boon to weak men. I am greatly improved in size, strength and vigor.' All our correspondence is strictly confidential, mailed in plain sealed envelopes. The receipt is free for asking and he wants every man to have it.

The chief reason most men want to go to heaven when they die is that they know it will surprise their wife's relatives to see them there.

The older a woman gets the less patience she has with the heroine in a novel who refuses to marry a man with money, simply because she doesn't love him.

'A man hasn't no better nor no worse ez he is rich,' said Uncle Eben. 'Day is just ez many microbes on a one lollah bill ez day is on a twoay.'

Mr. Mosquito—We'll have to move south pretty soon.

Mrs. Mosquito—Dear me, I must floundered and run a few more bills before we leave.

Mr. Boerum—No Willis, you couldn't have heard an owl this afternoon. Owls only hoot at night, they sleep during the day.

Willie Boerum (persistently)—But don't they ever hoot in their sleep.

Wife (who has been out shopping all day)—O, dear, how tired and hungry I am! Husband—Didn't you have any luncheon in town? A plate of soup only. I didn't feel that I could afford to have more. Did you find the hat you wanted? Oh yes; it is a perfect dream, John, and it cost three pounds ten.

The plans of the Irish delegation which is to sail for the United States have been completed. John Redmond, the Irish parliamentary leader, will be accompanied by Messrs. McHugh and Thomas O'Donnell, member of parliament. They will sail on the White Star line steamer Majestic from Queenstown, Oct. 24. Michael Davitt will join them at New York. Mr. McHugh is at present undergoing six months' imprisonment in Kilmashinham jail. He will be released Oct. 21. Mr. O'Donnell will make addresses in Celtic.

Sandra School Teacher—Now, children what did Pharaoh say to Moses?

Children—We don't know.

Teacher—Oh, yes, you do. He told Moses to go and do something. Now, what did he say?

Class—Go way back and sit down!

Man—I wonder why Irene can't talk two minutes without dragging in the young man she's engaged to.

Mabel—Force of habit, I suppose. I've always understood she had to drag him into the engagement.

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