

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

ed already by reason of his extravagant habits. For a few years he wished his love match to remain undivulged.

'Poor fellow!' sighed the baronet.

'He died suddenly, as you know,' went on Mrs. Darcy, and Mabel only survived him by a few months. The task of bringing Dick and Nellie up fell to my share.

'And nobly you performed it,' commented her grandson.

'I would fain have relieved you of this great responsibility, Marian, said the baronet regretfully. 'I have spent so many lonely years. There shall be no more reproaches, though; and Julian Beaumont has married my granddaughter instead of my niece?'

'Had Nellie been aware of her own identity she might not be missing now. Oh, I cannot pardon myself. And she is suffering, like her mother before her, poor child, from the after consequences of a secret marriage. If any harm should befall her—'

Tears choked Mrs. Darcy's voice.

'Neither time nor money shall be spared in the effort to trace her,' said the baronet. 'Be of good heart, Marian. For to day at least, you will be my guest?'

Mrs. Darcy consented, not unwillingly. This meeting with the lover of her youth had set old cords vibrating.

Moreover, she was very anxious to learn more details respecting Nellie's marriage, and the circumstances under which she had left Oriel Abbey.

'Dick, I suppose, is in no hurry to run away from us?' said Cicely, with a demure glance at her lover.

'I must go back to town to-night,' he replied. 'Mr. Anstruther objects to his secretary being off duty. I can catch the last train.'

The baronet winced at this reminder that his grandson was in another man's employ.

'You will, of course, sever your present connection with Mr. Anstruther, Dick,' he said, 'and regard Weston Grange as your home in future.'

'You are very kind, sir—the young man's new identity as Sir Vane's grandson and heir still seemed strangely unreal to him. 'I shall, of course,' he added, 'defer to your wishes in the matter. But Mr. Anstruther is not a bad sort. I am bound to stay with him till he can replace me.'

After dinner that evening Cicely sang and played, while her lover leaned against the piano, talking to her now and then in an undertone.

Both felt that the embargo was removed from their courtship, although nothing definite had been said on the subject.

'Unless, Cicely suggested, with a mischievous smile, 'our reversed position should lead Uncle Vane to regard poor little me as a most unsuitable match for the grandson and heir of whom he is already so proud.'

'And I couldn't dream of going against his wishes in that case,' answered Dick gravely.

He and Cicely were living in a world of their own—an atmosphere of well nigh unalloyed bliss.

Sir Vane and Mrs. Darcy, discussing the events of long past years with mingled emotions, were almost as deeply engrossed as the young people.

And when the time for parting came, Dick's leave-taking took so long that it required the fastest horse in Sir Vane's stable to enable him to catch the last train up to town.

Sir Vane went over to Oriel Abbey next day.

His disclosure in regard to the parentage of Julian's wife amazed the Beaumonts, while tending greatly to reconcile them to their daughter in law.

Perhaps Julian was the least affected by the announcement.

His love for Nellie was too disinterested to be much influenced by her changed prospects.

'I should like to see Mrs. Darcy,' he said, 'but I'm still a cripple. Do you think she would consent to come here, or is she too resentful on Nellie's account? Heaven knows, we have all treated her badly.'

'She will come, I am certain,' said the baronet. 'We intend to sink all animosity. If only our efforts to find your wife, dear boy, are successful, we shall in future, I trust, form a very united family party.'

Mrs. Beaumont called at Weston Grange, and assured Marian Darcy how deeply she deplored the unfortunate incident which had driven Nellie from Oriel Abbey, and whed Mrs. Darcy sat beside Julian's couch she indulged in no reproaches.

Julian impressed her very favourably for thing, and he was suffering a remorse and anxiety respecting his absent girl-wife which rendered any blame on her part superfluous.

'Nellie never permitted you to suspect her marriage, then?' he said presently.

'No; she kept her promise of secrecy made to you with the utmost fidelity, poor child,' sighed Mrs. Darcy. 'Of course, she had to tell me she had accepted fresh employment, under an assumed name, while declining to state the reason.'

'And what must you think of my policy in the past,' groaned Julian, 'which rendered these subterfuges imperative?'

'You have made all the atonement in your power by openly acknowledging her as your wife. God grant she may soon be restored to us!'

CHAPTER V.

As soon as Julian Beaumont could get about again he went to town to take a personal share in the search for his missing wife.

Nellie had alluded vaguely to London as her destination before leaving Oriel Abbey.

On the strength of this the various persons interested in finding her made the Metropolis the centre of their researches.

Mrs. Darcy was staying at Oriel Abbey,

pending any further news of the absentees.

Dick had relinquished his post as private secretary to Mr. Anstruther, and made Weston Grange his home.

His engagement to Cicely Rivers was duly recognized and approved of by the baronet.

While Nellie's fate remained in doubt, however, Cicely and her cousin decided to postpone their marriage.

This sacrifice cost them less, since the pleasure of daily being together was already theirs.

Young Mrs. Beaumont's complete self-effacement was a mystery the searchers failed toathom.

The advertisements inserted in all the daily papers elicited no response; yet, surely, if she were still living, some of them must come under her notice.

Sir Vane Carlyon and Julian Beaumont secured the best detective talent available; they left no stone unturned in the effort to find the missing girl.

Yet the weeks crept into months, and still their purpose was unachieved.

Remorse and suspense had aged Julian by years.

He never relaxed his efforts to discover Nellie.

He followed up each apparent clue that presented itself, no matter how slight. He was constantly on the move.

Fred Villars, cured of his infatuation for Nellie by the knowledge that she was his friend's wife, heartily sympathized with Beaumont's great trouble.

'Had you admitted me to your confidence sooner, dear boy,' he said, when they discussed the matter. 'I should not have made such a fool of myself.'

'I wanted to do so,' Julian told him, 'but circumstances tied my tongue. Secret marriages carry their own penalty with them. Did you propose to Nell?'

'Yes'—Villars blew a cloud of smoke—'on the day I left the Abbey. She let me down very gently; but I knew from her manner I hadn't a chance. Well, that's all over. I only hope you'll find your wife soon, old fellow.'

Julian Beaumont was strolling down the Strand one evening, seeking distraction from his own dreary thoughts.

The crowded pavements, the groups outside the theatres, the life, movement, and brilliancy of the great thoroughfare stirred Julian's pulses; but not with the old glad elation of youth and infinite capacity for enjoyment.

A stream of electric light flooded the entrance to the Gaiety.

A daintily clad woman and a man in evening dress drove up in a hansom and passed in together.

Julian Beaumont's glance followed them, full of unconscious wistfulness.

Nellie and he had once gone into that theatre in just the same way; the memory of it came back to him with torturing intensity, as he walked slowly onwards.

He too, wore evening dress beneath his light overcoat.

He had left the Cecil with the intention of going to the Lyceum, where he had booked a stall.

Then, moved by some restless impulse, he had decided to torgo the theatre in favour of the ever-changing place of life to be found outside.

He paused to look at the canvases in a picture dealer's window.

'Roses, a penny a bunch! Only a penny a bunch!'

The refined, mournful intonation of the voice caused Julian to wheel sharply round.

A stout, motherly-looking woman stood on the kerb with a big basket of flowers.

Beside her, holding the roses up for sale to passers-by, was a slim girl; her poor clothes were clean and neat.

The sweet, sorrowful face, the great shadowy dark-blue eyes and curved lips had something wanting about them, though—a pathetic lack of expression and vitality.

The coils of warm, golden-brown hair beneath the flower-seller's gaudy straw hat were shot with gleams of ruddy gold.

Julian Beaumont stared at her blankly.

For a moment the busy Strand seemed to whirl madly round him.

The pallid girl, with her hands full of roses, was either his lost wife or her double.

'Roses, only a penny a bunch!'

She held them up to him, and their fragrance recalled him to himself.

'Nell!' he exclaimed.

Her eyes swept up, to meet his fastened upon her; a great tremor ran through her slender frame.

The dreamy look on her face gave way to a strained, agonizing effort to recall some lost memory.

The flowers she held fell unheeded on the pavement.

'Flowers, sir?' interposed the elder woman sharply. 'Never mind my girl; she ain't all there. Pick them roses up, Bessie.'

'She is not your daughter!' said Beaumont hoarsely. 'Nell! good heavens, don't you know me?'

Ere the woman could reply, there came a warning shout, and the pedestrians stamped into any available place of safety.

A horse attached to a handsome cab had bolted.

Julian Beaumont caught the flower girl in his arms, and dragged her on to the pavement, but not in time to prevent her from being struck on the head, as the runaway flew past.

'She is dead!' exclaimed, Julian, gazing down at her, beside himself with misery and despair.

A crowd gathered round him and his senseless burden.

Mrs. Flaherty, who, with her basket, had escaped injury by a miracle, came up to them, frightened, saying—

'Holy Mother! what a misfortune. And to happen on the very first night I would let the poor darling come out wid me at all.'

A policeman pushed his way through the crowd. Julian spoke to him, and he hailed a cab; when it drove up, the young man got in, still holding the girl in his arms, and they were driven to the nearest

hospital.

Mrs. Flaherty followed on foot. Julian was utterly unable to imagine by what extraordinary combination of circumstances Nellie had been reduced to selling flowers in London streets, or why he had failed to recognize him when he had spoken to her.

At the hospital they relieved his fears as to her being dead.

He waited to ascertain the extent of her injuries in a fever of suspense; and while waiting Mrs. Flaherty threw a partial light on the mystery that so bewildered him.

She lived in one of the narrow courts just off the Strand.

While in hospital some time previous, the next bed to hers was occupied by a young girl who had been found lying unconscious on the pavement, not far from a great London railway terminus, her head badly injured.

Although well-dressed, no money, jewellery, or means of identification were forthcoming.

The patient's pocket was empty—turned inside out, as if she had been robbed. When she recovered consciousness her memory was gone; she could not recall even her own name.

Her past was a blank, and the hospital authorities could obtain no clue to her identity.

Friendless, penniless, unable to stay longer in the hospital when once she was convalescent, Mrs. Flaherty had taken pity on the forlorn young creature, and offered her a home.

She had accepted it, having no alternative, save the workhouse, and Mrs. Flaherty—honest, kind-hearted, prosperous in her way—had cared for and watched over the girl.

'Sure an' she moped so at home all by herself, that I tuk her out just for a change into the Strand,' said the flower-seller. 'Bad luck to the baste that came nigh upsetting us both. An' ye mane to say, sorr, that Bessie, as I call her, is yer wife?'

'She is, indeed,' he assured her. 'I knew the motive that brought her to London. How came by her first injury, though, I have yet to learn.'

The house-surgeon joined them now, with the welcome news that the patient had regained consciousness, and with it her lost memory.

She was under the impression that she had arrived in London only that night.

She stated that, on leaving the station, she had been hustled, knocked down, and robbed.

She remembered nothing more until she awoke in the hospital.

Julian supplied the missing links in his wife's narrative.

The house-surgeon, accustomed as he was to strange stories torn from the book of life, grew profoundly interested.

'The second injury sustained,' he said, 'and the flow of blood resulting from it, probably undid the brain-trouble caused by the first. Mrs. Beaumont's memory has returned to her, from the time of losing it; but the events of the subsequent months are a blank, and they may always remain so.'

'Can I see her?' asked Julian eagerly.

'Yes. Remember that she is very weak, though. There must be no excitement.'

Julian, how quickly you have recovered from the effects of your accident,' she said wonderingly. 'You can walk quite well.'

He kissed her tenderly.

'My accident is farther off than you think, dear,' he answered. 'We will talk of that tomorrow, when you are stronger.'

'Have I been ill long? Why did they bring me here? I was struck down and robbed on leaving the station.'

'Yes; and the blow affected your memory for awhile; but it has come back now. As soon as you can be moved, I am going to take you home—to the Abbey.'

'The Abbey?' her face clouded. 'But the bracelet—your mother? Oa, Julian, has she told you?'

'Yes, dear. My mother knows the truth about it now. She is only longing to have you back again, to atone to you for all you have suffered.'

Nellie was much better next day, able to see her grandmother, Dick, and Sir Vane Carlyon.

They had come up town immediately on the receipt of Julian's telegram.

They took her back in triumph to Oriel Abbey.

Julian Beaumont set Mrs. Flaherty up in a thriving little florist's shop, and, when in town, he and his wife never failed to pay her a visit.

And Sir Vane?

He gave his grand-daughter a marriage portion which, taken in conjunction with her gentle birth, more than recoiled the Colonel and Mrs. Beaumont to their son's marriage.

If the baronet and the only woman he had ever loved saw fit to enjoy an Indian summer of placid happiness, as man and wife, no one objected to the arrangement.

The memory of the past threw its halo over their late union, and invested it with a tenderness which caused the younger people to declare that Sir Vane and his graceful grey-haired wife were the most devoted lovers of them all.

A Pathetic Appeal.

The following plea for judicial mercy, sent to 'Law Notes' by a correspondent, will be found brimful of pathos: Ex parte Samuel Rice.

To the Hon. H. A. Sharpe, Judge of the City Court of Birmingham, in Equity: Your petitioner, Samuel Rice, of Mobile, Ala., would deferentially represent that on January 10, in the year of grace 1891, your honor dissolved the connubial ties theretofore existing between petitioner and his consort, Annie Rice, granting her a divorce a vinculo et matrimonii, with the beatific privilege therein annexed of marrying again, a privilege, it goes without saying, she availed herself of with an

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ary. It has completely traced 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 enjoyment is entirely satisfactory."

"Dear Sir:—Years were 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 correspondence is strictly confidential, mailed in plain sealed envelope. The receipt is free for the asking and he wants every man to have it.

alacrity of spirit and a fastidious levity disdainful pursuit; but on this vital point your honor extended to petitioner only the charity of your silence.

Petitioner has found in his own experience a truthful exemplification of Holy Scripture, 'that it is not well for man to be alone,' and seeing an inviting opportunity to superbly ameliorate his forlorn condition, by a second nuptial venture, he finds himself circumsvalled by an Ossa Pelion obstacle, which your honor alone has power to remove.

His days rapidly veiging on the sere and yellow leaf, the fruits and flowers of love all going; the worm, the canker, and the grief in sight, with no one to love and none to care for him, petitioner feels an indissoluble yearning, longing and heaving to plunge in adventurous prow once more into the vexed waters of the sea of Connubiality: Wherefore, other refuge having non and wholly trusting to the tender benignity and sovereign discretion of your honor, petitioner humbly prays that in view of the accompanying facts of a great cloud of reputable citizens, giving him a phenomenally good name and fair fame, you will have compassion on him, and relieve him of the hymenial disability under which his existence has become a burden, by awarding him the like privilege of marrying again; thus granting him a happy issue out of the Red Sea of troubles into which a pitiless fate has whelmed him. For, comforting as the velvety touch of an angel's palm to the fever racked brow, and soothing as the strains of an Aeolian harp when swept by the fingers of the nightwind, and dear as those ruddy drops that visit these sad hearts of ours, and sweet as sacramental wine to dying lips, it is when life's fitful fever is ebbing to its close to pillow ones aching head on some fond wifely bosom and breathe his life out gently there.

And in duty bound to attain the possibility of compassing such a measureless benediction, petitioner will pray without ceasing in accents as loud and earnest as ever issued from celibatarian lips.

SAMUEL RICE, Petitioner.

A Remarkable Subscription Campaign in New York has just completed one of the most novel, and, in its results extraordinary campaigns for subscriptions, ever undertaken by an American publication. About a year ago, it secured from some of the strongest periodicals in the country, unusually low prices for annual subscrip-

tions, and, combining an annual subscription to Success with subscription to other magazines, it extensively advertized Success in the ability of the great American public to absorb periodical literature. Not only has it added over 150,000 subscriptions to its own list but it has sent the Review of Reviews nearly 80,000 new subscriptions; the Cosmopolitan, between 50,000 and 60,000; McClure's over 30,000, and other magazines many thousands each. This campaign has completely revolutionized prevailing ideas about circulation-getting, and Success will undoubtedly have some competition in this line next fall, but it has just completed contracts with the strongest and best magazines in the country for the subscription season just opening, and it is understood that the Success offers will be more popular this than year last.

Prohibitive Terms.

Tramp—'Ello, Mister, would yer mind givin' me a litt as far as Brentford? 'I'll work my passage.'

Boatswain—'Orl right, mate. Take 'old o' the 'orse's 'ead an' lead!'

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