

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

agent—her will was subservient to another's.

Was there no one to save her in her hour of peril?

Who, indeed, should there be? Who could know of her determination to sacrifice name and honor, save the man into whose treacherous keeping she had agreed to give herself?

And he was little likely to set free the bird he had ensnared.

How the villain gloated over the victory he had so easily achieved!

What recked he of honor, or of how the world regarded him?

What thought had he for the woman whom once he had desired this one, and of whom he had already tired?

How long would this new infatuation last?

The question did suggest itself to him, but he dismissed it with an impatient shrug.

It was not the more or less remote future that concerned him.

It was the present, and the future that was immediate, which absorbed his mind.

A few more hours, and then—

Alice Collingham would have crossed the Rubicon.

There would be no going back.

She would be his irrevocably.

How he longed for those few intervening hours to pass!

And Alice, too, looked forward feverishly to the advent of the time for flight.

Yet not without misgiving, in spite of the glamour in which this accomplished villain had enwrapped her.

He was so unlike the Arthur Vivian of old.

Or was it that he had always been the same, but in former days had hidden his true character?

She loved him passionately—madly.

But she was disappointed in him, and she knew it.

Her better nature told her she would have preferred him to be the honourable, upright gentleman she once had deemed him, even though in that case she could never more be sought to him.

But the unreasoning infatuation that had seized her for its own silenced the promptings of her conscience.

The die was cast.

She had agreed to his proposal—had consented not only to sacrifice her own name, but to wrong another woman.

Ad she would not recede a single step from that to which she had pledged herself.

Such is the power of love—a power for evil as well as for good.

## CHAPTER VII.

SAVED.

'A Lady to see you, miss.'

Lady Cullen's maid stood respectfully at the door of Miss Collingham's pretty sitting room.

Her Ladyship, with that forethought which is so charming a trait in a hostess, had placed a tiny boudoir at her young guest's disposal during her visit to Russell Square.

This was a great boom to the girl, who longed for solitude occasionally—for a spot she could call her own, and retire to when the chatter and well intended babble of her godmother's visitors became too much for her shaken nerves.

This evening—it was now seven o'clock—she was more than ever grateful for this sanctuary.

She was about to take a step, the enormity of which terrified her.

She experienced only a restless, and an impatience for the hour to arrive when she should have placed a barrier between herself and the safe, happy time of her girlhood.

Such was the fatal power of her would be destroyer!

Lady Cullen had gone to a dinner party from which Alice had excused herself on the plea of over fatigue incurred the day before at the garden party at Belmont house.

And, indeed, she looked ill enough to warrant any such excuse.

'Go to bed early my dear,' the kind old woman had said as she kissed her good night. 'I want you to look your best to-morrow. Bert Thornton is coming to take us to the flower show in the Temple.'

How far away everything seemed, and how dark and enigmatic did the future look!

The maid's entrance aroused Alice from her bitter sweet reverie.

'A lady!' she repeated. 'I can see no one to-night Martin. I suppose it is only someone about my pink satin from Madame Fleurette's. Tell her to come to-morrow.'

Alice drew her breath sharply.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow!

It was all one now.

The rubicon would soon be passed.

'No, Miss Collingham; it is not madame's young woman. It is a lady, and she says it is imperative that she should see you at once. She is in the small library.'

'Tell her I cannot see her,' was the impatient answer.

Martin left the room, returning, however, almost immediately with a folded piece of paper.

'The lady desires me to give you this,' he said.

Upon the paper were written the words: 'I must see you.—It means—to you—more than life and death.—E. SAYCE.'

Alice turned giddy with the shock and an undefinable dread.

She looked at the clock.

She had not much time to spare.

It was past seven, and at nine o'clock she was to meet Lord Sayce at Charing Cross Station.

'Show her up,' she told Martin, in such a hoarse voice that the maid stared at her in surprise.

'You are not well, miss,' she ventured.

'Let me—' but the girl only waved her aside.

'Show her up at once,' she repeated, still in those strange tones.

'The man with whom you have decided to fly tonight, Miss Collingham, is not Arthur Vivian.'

Enid Sayce's voice was clear as a bell as she made this statement.

She had made it before, but the girl had seemed incapable of understanding, and most assuredly the tale of crime and deceit, which the woman before her had to unfold, might well be hard to believe.

Then who is he?

The question came harshly from between dry lips.

'If you will listen to me patiently, Miss Collingham, I will tell you the story of my life, in which both these men, the man who is dead—your lover, Arthur Vivian—and the man who calls himself Lord Sayce, and who, alas! is legally my husband, played so large a part.'

'He is dead! Arthur is dead! You lie, Lady Sayce. Listen, I will throw prudence to the winds—woman's modesty—everything. You shall know the truth—my shame is not so great—I leave England to-night with—God forgive me—your husband, and my lover—the man to whom I was betrothed before you stole him from me.'

Alice was transformed.

From a pretty girl she became a beautiful woman, outraged and defiant.

An expression of deepest pity swept the exquisite face of Enid Sayce.

'All this I know. I was behind the box hedge in the gardens of Belmont house yesterday. I heard all. That is why I am here now—to save you from a fate far worse than death.'

Her manner was so calm, that she impressed the girl against her will.

It would do no harm to hear this story.

Alice told herself it would make no difference to her decision.

'I will hear you,' she said at last, 'but I warn you, I shall not believe one word you say.'

'I think you will,' was the quiet answer, 'when you have heard all. For myself I ask no quarter—for him, I only pray that he may reap as he has sown. It will be for you to decide. I am tired of life—my whole existence is one long purgatory.'

'Go on,' said Alice harshly. 'I have no time to waste. At nine o'clock—'

'Yes, I know—' sadly; and Enid, still in the same emotionless tones, commenced her narrative.

'I am of lowly origin on my father's side. My mother married far beneath her—in fact, she became the wife of a bare-back rider in a circus. Her life was like mine—a shadowed one. I was brought up in a circus as a rider. I was, in those days, very beautiful, and, as a matter of course, had many admirers; but none of them came up to what I considered my standard. I was vain, foolish, arrogant. When I was barely seventeen, Lord Fancourt came upon the scene.

'He visited DeLara's Hippodrome, where I was engaged, and fell—what he called—in love with me. His so-called 'love', turned out to be the basest of human passions.

'I was his slave; he my master. He was years older than me—a roue, jealous of me, yet not for an instant mending his own ways. And one day I left him; with whom matters not—but this I can tell you. My lover was not Captain Vivian. For him I conceived a mad passion which has been my doom.

'See, Miss Collingham, I do not spare myself. Although he was among my admirers he never made love to me—indeed, when one day I cast myself at his feet and begged him to give me his love, he told me that this act had banished even that regard which he had hitherto possessed for me—and then later on I heard of his engagement to you.'

Enid paused, but Alice made no sign.

She sat in frozen silence, waiting to hear the end.

'I will pass over the months that followed,' resumed Lady Sayce, 'and come to the awful tragedy of my life. Here emotion threatened to overcome her. But first I must tell you that, among my ex-lovers, I numbered one Randolph Sterne. Did you ever hear the name, Miss Collingham?'

Alice shook her head.

'I thought not, although he was a first cousin of your betrothed. He was always a black sheep—a disgrace to the family. He was mad about me, and threatened that, by fair means or foul, I should be his.

'I will not weary you with his persecutions, or his villainies. Suffice it that he was an enemy of Arthur Vivian's for a double reason—one, the lesser I now know, that I loved Arthur; the other that he envied him his future wealth and title.

'As you doubtless know, Arthur had an uncle, in the event of whose death he would become Lord Sayce, and, upon Arthur's death, the title and estates would go to his half-brother, now only a boy at Eton.

'Do you begin to see light, Miss Collingham? Ah! no, you have not yet the key to the mystery. On hearing of Captain Vivian's approaching marriage, I think I became mad. I followed him to the Curragh Camp. Never shall I forget that walk up the steep and snowy hill. I came face to face with him. There was a terrible scene.

'His anger that I should have followed him, making a scandal, as it would when I was discovered in the camp, was great; but I do not think I should have minded had not your name been continually on his lips. 'Alice will hear of it; it is an insult to Alice.'

'I cannot, even to you, Miss Collingham, rehearse again that drama. I am prepared to do much in expiation of my sin, and to save you, but that I cannot do. Stung by his scorn, I drew from my pocket a revolver. As Heaven is my witness, I intended to turn it upon myself—'

A low cry came from Alice—her face was like the dead.

'You—You killed him?'

Now she understood.

'It was an accident. He caught my arm. 'What would you do woman?' he cried in horror. They were his last words. The weapon went off, and Arthur fell to the ground, shot to the heart. Before I could recover from the awful shock I found I was not alone. I had been followed from England by Randolph Sterne!

'Heaven knows, if he too had not some deep design in also visiting his cousin at the camp. Of this I cannot be certain. Now you know why I am that miserable woman, his wife—the woman the world calls Lady Sayce.'

'I am no more Lady Sayce than he is Lord Sayce. My husband is Randolph Sterne—Lord Sayce lies buried in a nameless grave in the county of Kildare.'

A cry of horror escaped the listener. She saw at last as in a blinding flash of light the pit into which she would have fallen.

Truly she was most bitterly punished.

Randolph thus had me in his power, the unhappy woman proceeded. 'He told me there was but one way of escape from the gallows for me. He affected to disbelieve that Arthur's death was the result of an accident. 'You are a murderer,' he said, 'and I am witness of the fact.' So I consented to become his wife; he changed his clothes for those of the dead man, removing, or destroying papers to suit his own purpose. From that moment he became Lord Sayce.'

'He has traded on the marvellous likeness between himself and his cousin, thereby deceiving the world, even the woman who loved Arthur—yourself—Miss Collingham.'

Enid Sterne, to give her her right name, could not resist the temptation to utter the last words.

She told herself, that she would not have been so deceived—that her love for Arthur was greater than this girl's.

She waited for an answer—she waited in vain.

Her rival in poor Arthur's love had slipped to the floor in dead swoon.

Three years afterwards a bright and happy bridal party met at Dovemore Vicarage.

The bride was none other than sweet Alice Collingham.

Need it be said that the happy bridegroom was Sir Herbert Thornton?

After patiently waiting, he had won his heart's desire.

There was no secret between these two.

Alice had told him—and told him alone—the truth.

Only her devoted husband knew from what a horror she had been saved by the woman who had now lain at rest in her grave this year and more.

Enid Sterne's life, from the day when she had saved her rival, was devoted to works of charity, and in the pursuance of these had she come by her death.

A malignant fever had carried her off in the zenith of her beauty.

And the villain who had wrought such mischief—what of him?

For family reasons the scandal was hushed up; the guardians of the youthful Lord Sayce buying the impostor's silence, and thereby saving a long and expensive lawsuit—at a heavy price.

No one knows for certain his whereabouts, but on the racecourse at Melbourne is frequently to be seen a low class tout, who very much resembles the ex-Lord Sayce.

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Not a Perfect Specimen.

The little girl whom the New York Times tells about is only five years old, but she has such a large experience of dolls that she feels herself to be something of a connoisseur in children. Recently there came a real live baby into the house.

When it was put into her arms, this real live baby, the five year old surveyed it with a critical eye.

'Isn't that a nice baby?' cried the nurse, with the joyous pride with which a nurse always regards a new baby, in which she feels that she has a proprietary interest.

'Yes,' replied the little girl, hesitatingly, 'it's nice, but it's head's loose.'

'Mike,' said Plodding Pete, 'are you in favor of takin' de tax off o' beer?'

'No, sir,' was the reply. 'All de beer I drinks I gits fer nothin.' Dem as kin afford to pay deair five cents fur de stuff ought to be made to support de government. Down wit de rich!

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### RESCUE AT SEA.

Bravery and Kindness Shown by the Tollers of the Sea.

The fine four masted steel ship, the Mirzapore, bound for Australia and carrying one hundred and twenty passengers, when fifty five days out from London sighted a clumsy old Yankee whaler. The day being very still, the two vessels drew near enough together for the idle passengers to watch the whalers at work, but a breeze sprang up at twilight. The Mirzapore resumed her course, and lost sight of the other ship. What followed is told by Mr. Frank T. Bullen in the Cornhill Magazine.

About midnight a fire broke out in the Mirzapore's fore hatch. There was no confusion. Every order was obeyed with the same coolness and courage with which it was given; but the fire could not be subdued, and then came the captain's command:

'Clear away the boats!'

While the men worked with the energy of despair, there arose from the darkness the cheery hail of 'Ship ahoy!' a tall, gaunt figure, perfectly cool, as if the service he had come to render were in the nature of a polite morning call.

'Guess you've considerable of a muss yar,' said he; and after a brief pause, 'Don't know as we've any gre't amount o' spare time on hand, so if you've nothin' else very pressin', we mout as well see 'bout transhipment, don't ye think?'

He had been addressing no one in particular, but Captain James answered him.

'You are right, sir,' he said, 'and thank you with all our hearts! Men, see the ladies and children overside!'

Swiftly yet carefully the helpless ones were handed outside and bestowed in the boat. As soon as she was safely laden, another moved up out of the murk behind and took her place. And it all proceeded without shouting, agitation or confusion. It was the very acme of good boatmanship.

The light grew apace. From the tall tongues of flame in all gorgeous hues that now cleft the night, hugh masses of yellow smoke rolled far to leeward, making a truly infernal picture.

Meanwhile, at the earliest opportunity, Captain James had called the first comer—chief mate of the Yankee whaler—apart, and quietly told him of the true state of affairs—that there were many tons of gunpowder on board. The "down-easter" received this appalling news with the same taciturnity that he had already manifested, merely remarking: 'Wal, cap'n, if she lets go 'fore we've all got clear, some of us'll take the short cut to glory, anyhaow.'

But for all his apparent nonchalance he kept a wary eye upon the work to see that no moment was wasted. And so it came about that the last of the crew gained the boats, and there remained on board the Mirzapore but Captain James and his American deliverer.

According to immemorial precedent the Englishman expressed his intention of being the last on board, but the American said:

'Sir, I can't 'low no matter o' etiquette to spile my work, 'n' I must say 'it, I don't quite like the idee o' leavin' you bein'; so if you'll excuse me—' And with a movement as sudden and lithe as a leopard's he seized the astonished captain and dropped him over the taffrail into the boat as she rose on a sea crest.

Before the Englishman quite realized what had happened his assailant was standing by his side, manipulating the steering gear and shouting:

'Naow, then, my sons, pull two, stan' three; so, all together! Up with her, lift her, my hearties, lift her, or by th' gre't bull whale it'll be a job sp'iled, after all!'

And those silent men did give way. Suddenly there one deep roar that rent the heavens. The whole expanse of sky was lighted by crimson flame, in the midst of which hurtled fragments of that once magnificent ship. The sea rose in heaps, so that all the boatmen's skill was needed to keep their craft from being overwhelmed.

But the danger passed and they reached the ship—the clumsy old spouter that had become a veritable ark of safety in the time of their need. Captain James was met by a quaint figure advancing out of the crowd on the whaler's quarter-deck.

'I'm Cap'n Fish, at your service, sir. We hain't over 'n' above spacious in aour 'commodations, but you're all welcome t' the best we hev; an' I'll try 'n' beat up t'r the Cape 'n' lan' ye's quick 's it can be did.'

The Englishman had hardly voice to reply, 'I fear, Captain Fish,' he said, 'that we shall be sadly in your way for dealing with those whales we saw you secure yesterday.'

'Not much you won't!' was the unexpected reply. 'We hed t' make aour ch'ice mighty suddin between them fish an' you; 'n', of course, though we're noways extravagant, they hed t' go.'

The simple nobility of that homely man, in thus for self and crew passing over the loss of eight or ten thousand dollars at the first call from his kind, was almost too much for Captain James, who answered unsteadily: 'If I have any voice in the matter, there will be no possibility of the men who dared the terrors of fire [and sea] to save me and my charges being heavily fined for their humanity.'

'Oh, thet's all right!' said Capt. Silas Fish.

Love and Thrift.

The late Professor Shuttleworth of London was particularly fond of telling how, when he once acted as locum tenus in Devonshire, he had to proclaim the banns of marriage of a young yokel and a village maid. A fortnight later the young swain called at the professor's lodgings.

'Yes, I remember,' replied Mr. Shuttleworth.

'You put up the banns for me,' he said.

'Well,' inquired the yokel, 'has it to go on?'

'What do you mean? asked the professor. Are you tired of the girl?'

'No,' was the unexpected answer, 'but I like her sister better.'

'Oh, if the original girl doesn't mind you can marry her sister.'

'But should I have to be called again.'

'Certainly, that's necessary,' answered Mr. Shuttleworth.

'But should I have to pay again?'

'Yes, it would cost you three and sixpence.'

'Oh, would it?' rejoined the yokel after reflection. 'Then I'll let it remain as it is.' And he did.

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