

CHAPTER I.

10

In one of the upper rooms of a house in Harley street a sick man lay in a gilded canopied bed-a rich man evidently, whose descent into the Valley of Death was made as easy as possible with all that gold could purchase, or science suggest. An em broidered quilt covered his wasted limbs, and his head and shoulders rested on downy lace trimmed pillows.

But outward appliances were in vain to ease the suffering he felt as he wearily turned from side to side with half-closed eyes and quick, uneven breath, that came in gasps between his tevered, colourless lips

By the window stood his valet, holding back the curtains and looking out into the silent streets. He was very tired, having watched all through the night in order to give the sick man's wite and a hired nurse a rest.

The lights of London were fading, growing pale before the glory of the rising sun. The first hint of dawn was stealing across the sky that but an hour ago was like a purple pall spread tent like over that vast wilderness of chimneys which we call the City. Each moment the outline of spires and buildings showed more distinct against the lightening heaven, while in the far east where the day begins, the rosy flush lost itself in a lake of saffron, melting in the inevitable London grey overhead. Suddenly a clock in a steeple near at

hand broke the early stillness with its noisy iron tongue to tell the hour in sonorous tones.

The valet started and leaned towards

no harm.'

'I think you are right, Plush, and I will follow your advice. We will wait till day light. But, my God, it anything should triend of the tamily, and I am sure he happen to him today, if he should die, I shall always feel guilty as if bood were on | What do you think ?' my hands.'

Your ladyship must not view matters in such a dismal light. Sir Alison may yet recover,' replied the servant : but as he glanced at the face among the pillows, which was gradually assuming such a ghastly hue, he himself hardly believed in such a possibility.

Lady Garnet walked to the window and remember she had never done her hair, and looked out absently into the street, which to wonder whether it would look more now was awakening to fresh life and stir. Each moment seemed to drag as wearily as it weighted with lead. She longed for and vet dreaded the doctor's visit. He had said he would come early this morning,

Cora Garnet was generally quoted as the loveliest woman in London; and it was the favorite boast of more than one after all, he would have died today? Di club man that he had the entree to her box | not the doctor say he could not last long? at Convent Garden. Of medium height, No doubt the dose she had administered of pa e complexion, with features far from perfect, but just irregular enough to give sudden end? At any rate she was fully character and piquancy to the almost color determined to think so. less face which looked all the fairer by contrast with the dark auburn hair, of that hue bordering on red and yet remaining brown which only artists can appreciate-such was Cora, Lady Garnet.

Her father, the Reverend John Burnett, had with his large family and small means filled the Rectory of Briarly End, in one of the midland counties, and here it was that Sir Alison Garnet, at as one of the cleverest surgeons in London. the time a bachelor of five and torty, who had driven all husband hunters to despair, met and suddenly tell in love with the parson's prettiest daughter, and married ing room, I suppose. Well, there's no her atter the shortest possible "wooing

realised her loss at once, and was over- | Plush for this-his consideration of my whelmed with the torce of mingled emofeeling.

CHAPTER II.

'I will order the dog cart round at four to the minute. That gives you an easy half hour's drive to the station, Captain Cameron,' said the master of the Castle Moness to his guest as they rose from the sumptuously spread luncheon table that glittered with silver and costly glass, with masses of flowers and fuit covering the snowy damask cloth.

'Will that arrangement suit you ?' 'Now, to be candid, Mr. Scott, with all due respect to your dog cart, should I offend you by saying that on such a glorious afternoon as this I would not miss the walk for any consideration. There's a fresh breeze blowing which will make the moors a pedestrian's paradise. The road between here and Glasgowis just a panorama picture that Millais ought to paint : every bit of it. And on foot, you see, I can just stop where I choose and drink deep draughts of your strong northe n air and enjoy my favorite views to my heart's content.

'All right; very well, young man,' replied the bost, rubbing his hands and look. ing proudly out of the window at the broken undulating stretch of mountain and moor and hanging woods; at the distant silver lake that lay like a gem between its indented shores with the sun shining full on its sparkling surface; at the princely park where the deer were crouched in the shadow of giant oak and purple beech; and closer at hand, bis eyes wandered right and left across the grey stone terrace to where the gardens sloped to the smooth sward of the wide velvet-like lawn.

All this was his, and had been purchased by the hard earned gold of a Glasgow merchant, not twenty years before a traveller for a busy firm at a salary of one hundred and fity pounds, and now a millionaire, a cotton lord--no wonder he was proud.

'The walk is a long one, Captain Cameron,' he remarked after a pause.

slight stoop of the shoulders, long white 'So are my legs, Mr. Scott,' replied the hair, and eyes concealed by blue spectacles. officer, surveying those limbs with much He had made an excellent practice for the same expression of face as that seen on himself in an influential and wealthy circle. his host's countenance when he scanned and when younger had been looked upon his landed property. 'Do you not agree with me, Miss Stott ?' he asked, turning to a young girl who had not yet risen from the table. 'Is not this exactly the weather for a walk P' 'I think so,' she replied with a quiet smile, and as their eyes met, hers fell before the plain significance in his. Proud as Ronald Scott undoubtedly was of his castle, his acres, and his gold, it is only fair to him to say that his pride in his only child was even greater-was almost boundless. All would one day be hers, he thought, as he glanced from the costliness of every small object that went to furnish his commonest room, to her sweet girlish face. He looked at it now with untold love in his eyes, and in so doing he caught his guest in the same act. She was handsome, but not fascinating. Her feat ures were almost faultlessly regular, her eyes as blue as lapis Iszuli. The hair, which grew closely over the firm square torehead, was of that darkest shade of brown, so often called back. 'Well, I should say, it you mean to walk you had better leave here at three o'clock, not later. I know you are anxious to be in London early to-morrow, or I should be more selfish, and beg you to prolong your stay till the summer is quite at an end. Anyhow, Ketha, put on your hat; you shall row Captain Cameron over the loch, and see him on his way with a God-speed, and a welcome back; and, remember, my boy, if ever you want a triend and though your father is a lord, you're like enough to need one some day as the rest of us, come to Castle Moness, and ask what you will of Ronald Scott.'



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Fitters and a second second

matter ? If not take back your words, and I will try and forget they ever were spoken. Are you really in earnest, dear P

'Yes, yes, darling; you are the only woman who ever shall be my wite,' he replied, drawing her head down on to his shoulder, and pressing his lips to hers. "But Malcolm-"

•Well ? '

'I am not good enough for you. What will your uncle, Lord Lochsber, say to your marrying a merchant's daughter ?'

'Leave that to me darling. When I return to England I shall bring my uncle up to Scotland with me, and he will show you what sort of a welcome awaits his heir's wite. Do you love me, Ketha ? '

'Should I have promised to marry you unless 1-I cared for you ?'

'That is not answering my question. Do you love me ? Look at me and tell me, es or No.'

the bed.

'Three o'clock ! Time for his medicine. Now where is it ? Must be in the dresshelping it; I must wake her. She should o't." have left it out.'

He knocked several times at the door of the adjoining room before any answer came to the summons.

At last a woman's voice asked sleepily:

Who is it. and what do you want ?

'I think the medicine is in the dressing room, my lady, and it is now time his lord. ship took it,' was the reply whispered through the key hole.

'Very well, Plush. I will bring it in directly ;' and the valet heard the uncorking of a bottle and the clinking of glasses.

Presently the door was opened a few inches. and a small white hand held out the measured dose of physic. The servant stepped softly towards the bed, and placing his arm under the sick man's shoulder to raise his head, he poured the mixture down his throat. Then he laid him back among the pillows and spread anothor blanket over his chilly limbs, for he was shivering.

A sudden cry behind him caused Plush to turn round,

In the doorway stood her ladyship with a face as white as that which lay on the pillows, and her large dark eyes dilated with horror. In her hand she held a half empty bottle.

'Ob. my God !' she cried, 'what have I done ? And you have given it to him. What shall we do ?"

What is it, my lady ? Have you administered the wrong medicine ?'

'The wrong medicine ? I have poured out poison for my husband. See here,' and she held out the blue phisl. 'It was so dark in the next room, and I was very drowsy, and I did not remember there were two bottles on the dressing table, and I gave you the lotion in the glass instead of the physic. Uh, Plush, what shall I do ? What will become of me ? Sir Alison will die, the doctor will discover the cause, and the world will suspect that I-I murdered him. Ob, help me. Plush, what is to be done ? Perhaps you had better run to the hemist's for an antidote. Quick, go now. Stay, let me see how he looks,' and her ladyship hurried to the side of the bed, bending her face down close to the lips of her husband that she might listen to his breathing.

His wife placed her hand on his heart, which she could feel beating regularly, it somewhat teebly, then raising her head with a great look of relief she said to the valet who was standing near :

'See, Plush. He breathes quite easily, as softly as a child. Perhaps after all the lotion did him no harm. There was no label marked poison on the bottle. What do you think we had better do P'

Well, my lady, as you say, the lotion, though intended for external application,

It was, of course, an excellent match for a poor clergyman's daughter, and Cora herself fully appreciated her good fortune.

Sir Alison proved as indulgent as he was devoted, taking great pleasure in seeing the admiration his young wife won from society, and humouring her in even her most fantastic and expensive caprices. The sorrow she felt for carelessness which had just been the cause of so grave an accident was undoubtedly sincere. Her lite with Sir Alison had been on the whole a very happy one. If she had not perhaps loved her husband as some few women understand love, yet she certaiuly enterwhich makes marriage a pleasant sociable arrangement, and hitherto Sir Alison might sately be said to have had no rival in his wife's affections-except perhaps herself. Selfish she undeniably was, weak as water save where her own interest was concerned, vain as only a woman ever can be, she possessed just enough generosity to be called good-natured, just enough heart to be sentimental, just enough depth to be

passionate. So far, since het marriage, her existence had been like a lively little French operetta made up of dancing, singing, and perpetua movement. Now, all was changed. Her husband had been seriously ill for many weeks, and during that time the house was of necessity hushed for the sake of the sick man.

As she stood at the bedroom window and idly watched the vehicles pass in the street below, it would be difficult to say which sentiment was uppermost in her heartfear, or remorse, or sorrow, or hope; the hope that a bird feels when he finds his cage door open, and he is free as the air outside.

She was not really a bad woman, but the idea did occur to her that, after all, dreadful as it would be to lose her husband, yet liberty is sweet; and still sweeter to a weak pleasure loving nature in the unconditional control of great wealth.

Till her baby son should be old enough to take the management of the money and the estate into his own hands, she, Cora, Lady Garnet, might rule as despotically as she chose.

At last she turned her face from the window to the bed where her busband was lying. Plush had fallen asleep trom sheer exhaustion on the sofa.

Something strange and ghastly in Sir Alison's rigid features made his wite hasten to his side. She laid one lightly on his forehead, and then withdrew the valet, who started to his feet.

'Oh, Plush, he is quite stiff and cold, eyes are half open, and-oh, he is dead, ways count on me as a triend, and come freshness in the air, and a tint of the ad-

Dr. Bradshaw advanced to the bed, bade the valet raise the blind and draw aside the curtain, leaned down over the dead man, touched his lips and telt his heart, then turning to Lady Garnet, who was standing behind him with tightly clasped hands and an ashen face, he shook his head several

PROGRESS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 26 1901.

'Oh, Alison, my darling, my one love, I

cannot live without you. Come back,

come back,' she cried, sobbing convul-

that her heart was broken.

And she really believed at the moment

The valet had really liked and respected

his master, and the tears that stood in his

eyes as he turned away so as not to in-

trude on the widow's grief were genuine.

rising to her teet, and pushing

her disordered hair,

once. It is now six o'clock. Ask him t

come without delay. See him if you can,

and tell him what has happened. Explain

all or nothing, as you think best He is a

would understand and is to be trusted.

'I should say, my lady, that it would be

Such was Cora Gurnet, that even at this

swful moment, with her husband lying

dead in the same room, she still could

'suitable' in the doctor's eyes to wear a

Once dressed, she returned to the bed

side and threw herself on her knees, bury

ing her face in her hands that she might

shut out the sight of those rigid features

by accident had nothing to do with his

Hurried footsteps were presently heard on the stairs, and the valet opened the

The physician was a tall man with a

door and usbered in Dr. Bradshaw.

with the seal of death upon them. Perhaps,

better to tell nothing until atter Dr Brad-

shaw has seen-seen-has been here, that

is. I will fetch him at once.

And the valet quitted the room.

plain black cashmere than a silk.

must run round to the doctor's

"Plush,' cricd Lady Garnet, suddenly

'you

tions.

sively.

back

times, and said : 'I have known Sir Alison for many years

and it you will permit me to say so, there is no one of whose friendship I have been prouder; no one whom I admired and respected more highly, If I as a friend feel such grief, what must you experience-you his wife? Ah, I knew when I saw him yesterday that the end was not far off. I wonder, after such a terrible accident as the the one he met with, that he should have lasted so long.

'And nothing that we could have done would have saved him ?' asked Lady Gartained for him that strong degree of liking | from behind the handserchief she held to her eyes.

'Nothing, my dear lady, nothing. The accident gave a severe shock to the system and as I thought previously, the heart must have been affected.

Cora felt as if some leaden weight had suddenly been lifted from ber heart. After a few more expressions of sorrow and an urgent request that her ladyship would be sure and reckon on him for any service which it might be in his power to render, he took his leave, and as the door closed behind him Cors breathed a deep breath of relief.

Now she had only Plush to deal with. That would be an easy matter-servants can always be silenced with money, and of that she had plenty. She looked round as the valet entered.

·Plush.'

'Yes, my lady,' replied that functionwith his eyes discreetly lowerary

have been a faithful servant to Sir Alise and - of course you will be retained. I know

you will see how necessary for me i. is that you should be silent as the grave concern. ing the accident that occured this morning. I do not suppose for a moment, mind, that the dose you administered had anything to do with hastening Sir Alison's death still long walk back to the castle. Besides you understand I wish it kept quite secret. It might injure me if the story got about.' scrutiny at her'servant's face, but she could read nothing in that pale impassive counenance.

He raised his eyes quietly and met her gaze calmly, then respectfully lowered them once more.

'My lady, my lips are sealed. Sir Alison could not be more silent on the subject than I shall be. I only ask you to allow me still to remain in your service, to which I will some stir among the reeds and reshes devote my whole life and do my utmost to where the fishes leep up in play, or the merit your copfidence.

An hour later, Malcolm Cameron stood at the end of a winding path, where the summer woods reached down to the river, and the boat was moored to the treetringed bank, and by his side was Ketha am I to win the love of such a man as Scott.

The brisk exercise of rowing across the loch had left her soft cheeks rosy, and brightened the tender blue of her darkfringed eyes.

'I will not take you as far as the western lodge. As it is, you will have quite a which I had rather see the last of you here, in this lovely quiet spot. I shall picture Lady Garnet glanced with the closest you, as I see you now, when I am far away. Are you sorry I am going, Ketha? | ly. 'Yes,' was the scarcely audible answer.

He poused a moment, and looked around at the sleeping woods, and the still clear water, and the blue and white beaven above.

A great hush pervaded the place. No sound broke the silence but the occasional twitter of some singing bird in the boughs. tinkling of some sheep bells far up amid 'Plush, I shall trust you entirely. You | the mountains. It was a perfect afternoon

'Yes, Malcolm, I love you; and whatever happens I never will be another man's wife.' she replied earnestly.

'Then kiss me, Keths, and bid me God. speed, for the time has been flying since we have been bere.'

She raised her face to his, and their lips met. He held her tightly in his arms for a moment covering her downcast eyelids with breathless kisses; then he let her go, and bounding over the fence that divided the wood from the river-path, he waved his hand and disappeared among the close. ly-growing trees.

She lingered awhile down by the water. watching the way by which he had gone. She gathered a lapful of lilies, and smilingly looked at the shifting reflection of her features in the stirring stream. She sat down on the grassy bank under a tree, and thought, and mused, and dreamed over her new happiness, and built up castles in the realm of her imagination, with love for the painter, and fancy for the architect, and faith for the foundation, little guessing how soon the fairy fabric would fal ..

So she sat on the bank, looking at the river which ran round the park like a silver belt studded with emeralds. Her eyes roved from the mountains with their wooded sides and purple peaks, to the blue shining loch. She could, by bending low, just catch a glimpse of Castle Moness set among the trees, with its mano windows glittering in the sunlight.

'All this is mine,' was her thought, 'and I can give it to him. He will inherit it with me. I am glad I do not go to him empty-handed, a portionless bride. He has birth, he will have rank, and he is handsome ; and I have wealth and hundreds of acres as my dower. I am happy that it is so. And yet I feel, I know it is not my fortune, but myselt he prizes. Oh, what Malcolm Cameron?'

At last, when the light was beginning to wane, and the shadows grew grever under the trees, she rose and sauntered homewards, not crossing the loch this time, but returning through one of the plantations back to the house.

She ran up the steps, and entered the hall, where the butler met her with a grave face, which startled her at once.

"Where is my father?" she asked hurried-

'In the library, miss.'

'Is anything the matter, John? You look strange. My father is not ill?"

'No. miss, but he's a bit upset. I think. The post came in while you was away, and a telegram also, and you see, miss. I fancy he must have heard bad news, for when I knocked at the library door about half an hour afterwards, he didn't answer, so I walked in, and he was lying on the floor. He had fainted. He still seems rather shaky. and I've sent for the and I cannot hear him breathe. See, his | shall not be a loser by your silence. Al- in summer, with just a touch of autumnal doctor, but I thought I'd better tell you, miss, before you saw master. He looks a

may not have contained any deadly poison,	he is dead ! God help me ! what will be-	to me for assistance if you are in any trou-	vanced season in the russet and crimson	bit changed.'
and pernane the mixture has done mo to to	Lasma at ma Di	ble,' and Lady Garnet held out one white	changing of the foliage.	Changed ! Yes, indeed.
shin no serious injury. You see if I run		1. Il I I and admin a him time to touch	Malcolm looked round, while a sense of	As her eyes tell on her father's face
to the state of the second	And Cold WIGHE MOR MOR MOR BAG INTOW		delight crept into his heart. He knew	when she entered the library it seemed to
			that by a word, not slone these many	Kathe impossible he could be the same
might be enreed abroad. If anything	seized her husband's chill damp fingers,	the dressing room,		
			hundred acres of moor and meadow, moun-	
were to happen to his tordenty, which crow		I muttered he to himself. 'now my fortune	tain and stream, might become his inderi-	me picture of strength and health, a model
forbid, it would not be very pleasant for	tall her she was still his own true loved	is made; what tools women are to be sure.	tance, but what was infinitely sweeter than	et elderly manhood; and here he was, hag-
		She does not see that she has put hersen	Thut of gold, he lete that obly one word,	gered, hervous, old.
Garnet had poisoned her busband.'	WIIC.	entirely in my power. A family secret !'	little question was needed to bring that	What had wrought this sudden wreck ?
TT-L Dluch bush ! The nurse might	But no answer came, no change passed	Why that is a gold mine in itself, which I	sligh gurlish figure into his arms, and yet	Ketha advanced quickly to the table, be-
			he b - tated, though he had not much time	fore which he sat with his head buried in
near you, and it is a dreaded thing to bey	lips and glazed dim eyes never lost their expression of vacancy.	Lady Garnet in the drawing room smil-	to 1 st.	
But the world will say dreadful things,	expression of vacancy.	Lady Garnet in the drawing room sum	A last he took one of her small gloved	CONTINUED ON PAGE FIFTEEN.
my lady, and the best way is not to give				
them anything to talk about. If I may be	108, Sir Anson was dead. The tamp of	the many high mirrors which lined the	W the new know that I long you Will	
		walls.	'Ketha, you know that I love you. Will	umors "
". II was to share ourset fill the	HOW POLIS OUL, BILL DAG DIANO, HODIO POLIT		you be my wife ?	Di Ostay I
morning and see how matters go with the	had found its way from that silent, dark	a faithful servant to be sure ! I suppose	She raised her eyes that were very seri-	Cu.s. 231;
Worning Von con easily dismiss the nurse.	eneu reom into the inte where bours inte	ne leels a sort of romantic anegiance to	ous now, but shone with unspeakable hap-	home; no knife, plaster
saying that you wish to attend upon Sir	rest.	me, such as one reads of in the days of the	piness to his face.	or pain. For Canadian testimonials & 120-nage
	As with all work maturas Cousis suist	Concedence Ab well! I am free from a	Oh. Malcolm, marriage is a solemn	or pain. For Canadian testimonials & 130-page book-free, write Dept. 11, MASON MEDICINE
Alison yourself. All may yet come right ;	The will an wood an it was short lived She	terrible fear, and I shall certainly reward	thing. Have you thought well over the	Co., 577 Sherbourne Street, Toronto Ontario.
as you say, the mixture has perdaps done	was as hassionate as it was prote mood. Due	torribio toar, and I busin outwardy toward		and the second
		•		