PROGRESS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1901.

10

IN TWO INSTALMENT-PART I.

HELEN'S SECRET:

CHAPTER I.

A joyous peal rang out from the balls of Rushmead Church-a psal of welcome to the heir who had just opened his eyes on the troublous world.

Rushmoad was delighted, albeit a note of sadness ran through the general harmony.

He, who would have seen his dearest longings fulfilled by the event of his con, lay, with many a gallant comrade, under the burning sun of Africa-in a soldier's grava.

His young wife had given way utterly at first under the grievous shock, and those who loved her feared she would never | do!' rally; but when the baby was placed in her arms, the warm mother-love welled up, and she craved for life once more.

'Ah ! we shall do now, I hope,' said the doctor, who had been almost despairing; 'but she must be carefully watched, there is great prostration.

A clever, trained nurse was in attendance; and in readiness to do anything required of her, from washing the baby to preparing any sort of invalid food, was Helen Vicars, who was called Lady Laura Wyvern's maid, but whom ber ladyship treated much more as a companion.

As a matter of fact, the girl's posi tion was a somewhat anomalous one in the establishment, not without its trials to a proud, sensitive nature.

Endowed with considerable beauty, well educated, ambitious, she was treated by her employer almost as an equal when alone, and left to her own devices at sll other times.

It was only by the exercise of great tact

The young man spread the message out, and read egain the fateful words which deprived him of fortune and estate.

'Just my oursed luck!' he ejaculated, as he paced up and down the spartment. 'In any other family it would have been a girl. And this wretched brat is to deprive me of debts.' all that makes life worth living. A miserable, wailing mtast, who will need so little during its long minority that the value of the piace will be doubled. And here are I, over head and ears in debt; and, of course, they will all be down on me like a lot of and influence!' harbits when it is known that I shall not inberit. Heaven only knows what I can

Seating himself once more, he remained buried in his gloomy thoughts until he was interrupted by the timid entrance of the servant.

She handed him another telegram, and quitted the room immediately.

This second wire was an announcement of the birth from the doctor.

Having persued it, Mr Wyvern thraw it into the waste paper basket, then sat down before a writing table.

Selecting a telegram form, he wrote a message of congratulation to Lady Laura Wyvern, a bitter, mocking smile curling his lip the while.

Then he took a sheet of paper and wrote as follows-

"My dear Helen,-As you can imagine. the news is a crashing blow to me,' and one from which I am not likely soon to recover, I am coming down tomorrow-it is so natural I should hasten to bestow my congratulations in person-and I want you

ed in his arms. 'Oh Hilton, I am so sorry!' she said, when she had presently freed herself. 'I hated sending you the tidings.' Not more than I hated receiving them,

can assure you.' "What will you do?"

'That is precisely what I don't know It means complete ruin to me, for I am certain my uncle will cast me off altogether when he learns the extent of my liabilities I was a fool to build on such a very insecnre foundation. It has given way and left me stranded.'

Helen Vicars looked up into his face, a soft light in her beautiful grey eyes.

'Can I do anything to help you? I have some money which I have saved-nearly ninety pounds.'

She stopped abruptly as he laughed aloud.

'My dear little girl, your generosity is sweet and charming, but ninety pounds would be but a drop in the ocean of my

She drew back in dismay.

How dreadful! What will you dop'

'I think you asked me that question before. I am no nearer having a answer.' 'I wish-oh, how I wish I had money

'I wish so, too,' he responded heartily. There was an awkward silence for a few moments, then Hilton Wyvern spoke in a hesitating voice, glancing at his companion from time to time.

'You see, Helen, this business alters all my plans. I have nothing; I-I-oan docan do nothing but-but seek to make a wealthy marriage.

She stopped him short with a low vaice. 'Hilton, don't say such a cruel thing! You cannot surely wish to break our engagement.

'It is not a question of what I wish, but necessary. It would be an odd way of chowing my affection by taking you to a life of beggary.'

'I should not mind. I could live any life --endure anything-if we were together 'I love you so!

Her bands were on his arm; her face which, looked strangely white in the silvery moon beams, was upturned to his.

The words were uttered with an impassioned fervour which started him. She was usually so reticent.

You are a dear!' he responded ; but I cannot permit you to sacrifice yourselt. I had no business to bind you to such an unlucky beggar as myself.

then a suddan thought caused her to withdraw it and silently retrace her stops. As soon as Mrs. Dimsdale appeared on the following morning, however, Helen requested permission to go to London for a

few hours, as her sister was ill. 'I do not thick my lady will be likely to want me until the alternoon,' she said, 'and my eister is very anxious to see me."

"Quite natural. I see no objection to your going, child, and if Lady Laura asks

tor you I will explain the matter to her, answered the lady good-naturedly.

Helen thanked her and went off to get ready.

At the station an hour later she cast a sweeping glance around; but if she had hoped to see a tall, well groomed, familiar form, she was doomed to be disappointed.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Wyvern was at that precise moment standing on the terrace lighting a cigarette and wondering idly what were the prospects of a fine day.

CHAPTER III.

It was late in the afternoon when Helon returned to Rushmead.

She looked tired and listless, and walked with a legging step.

Lady Laura had requested that she should come to her as soon as she was back, so when she had made the necessary changes in her dress she repaired to the sick room. 'I hope your sister is better, Helen,' her ladyship said kindly.

'She is very ill,' the girl replied guardedy not thinking it was wise to impart the truth, namely, that her sister was dead, as it might cause a shock in Lady Laura's weak state.

'Do you feel able to read to me? I cannot sleep, and perhaps your soothing voice will send me off.

" Of course, my lady."

Helen purposely read in a low, monotonous tone, hoping it would have the desired effect; but at the end of half an hour the patient's eyes were still brightly open.

' Thank you. I do not want to tire you. Will you please tell nurse to bring baby to me ? Helen'-the lady raised herself on her elbow, and looked searchingly into the girl's face- ' you have never told me what you think of my boy.'

'I think he is like you; his eyes are blue and his hair has the same golden shade." . Yes, yes; I don,t mean that. Do you

one or two purchases, and hurried back.

"Well?" was her question, as she stepped neiselessly into her room and found the young girl ball asleep over a glowing fire. 'It's all right, miss,' said the maid, getting up hurriadly from the comfortable chair in which she had ensconced herself; 'the young gentleman haven't oried at all. he's sleeping like a lamb.'

'That's right. You can go now and get your tea.

Batore taking off her walking garments Helen went and looked at her charge.

He was sleeping quietly, the fair lashes lying on the soft baby cheek, which was not so round as it ought to have been ; one tiny hand resting outside the lace trimmed coverlet.

In spite of the warm temperature of the room the little hand was chilly; Helen carefully covered it up.

Alone she stood and gazad at the small sleeper, then moved quietly away, a heavy shadow brooding in her grey eyes.

In the evening the newly arrived surse came to have look at the little heir.

He was awake then, his large blue eyes wide open.

The nurse put her fiager against the little hand, which closed loosely round it.

"There is no superabundance of vitality," she remarked carclessly. 'It's frequently the case in these aristocratic families, where a child is of great importance; whereas, a tribe of youngsters will live and flourish in a labourer's cottage. Has he been christ. ened ?'

'Yes; the doctor thought it advisable, as he seemed so weakly,' replied Helen.

It was the same verdict from everyone. The baby's hold on life was considered. of the slenderest.

'How is my lady ?' Helen asked, anxioualy.

The nurse shrugged her shoulders. 'In a precarious condition. Her temper-

ature is vieing again. I am afraid we are in for a bad night. The doctor is coming again at ten: and, if necessary, he will remain until morning. I must go now. Good. night.'

'Good night, nurse.'

The nurse's fear was roshized. They had such a bad night with the patient that in the morning Dr. Joyce sent to town for a certain great physician, who arrived by the afternoon express.

Mrs. Dimsdole, terribly frightened and

that she was able to exact respect, and even a sort of liking, from the servants.

Her duties were varied and numerous. She assisted Lady Laura with her toilette, wrote most of her letters, did her shopping. read to her at times, and made herself generally useful, and agreeable always.

Lady Laura Wyvern had a sincere liking for the girl, possibly because she found her so useful and reliabl .

Helen was permitted to see the baby al-] most immediately.

humanity with a strange expression on her was graciously received by Mrs Dinsdale, pale, clear cut face-a lock almost of re- who guessed a little disappointment he sentmeut, mingled with curiosity.

not much of a judge, but to me it looks like a puny little thing.'

'He is not very robust, certainly; but the world is big enough for him to grow strong in,' was the guarded answer.

Lady Laura's sister, Mrs. Dimsdale, who was staying on a visit at Rushmead was delighted with ber tiny nepbew.

had no children of her own, and regarded the newcomer much in the light of a child with a novel toy.

when the baby, almost smothered in billows of dainty lace, was placed in her arms. It has a very red skin, though, and how oddly it wrinkles up its forehead. What tiny my baby. Of course, if it had been a girl hands ! And see, here is a curious mark. he would have had everything, the pro-What is it, nurse.

little palm which the lady held gently very good, and, with my own income, I

It's a mole, she said ; 'but in all my experience I have never seen one in such a curious place.

She examined it closely.

Better there than on the back of the band ; but perhaps it is a mark that will wear off.

"Not much fear of that ma'am.

Here the baby, evidently bored with the subject, broke into a teeble cry.

Mrs. Dimsdale promptly handed him over to the nurse.

At the moment the heir of Rushmead drew his first breath, a voung man entered a room on the first floor of a house situate in a fashionable locality.

He was considerably above the medium height, well form d, and mus ular.

By the majority of people he would have been pronounced singularly handsome, he had fine teatures, large expressive eyes and waving chestnut brown bair

But the mouth--that expressive teature-closed in a cold, hard line which was suggestive of cruelty, and the dark eye brows met all too readily in a heavy irown.

He glanced carlessly around the room. picked up the letters which were placed on the mantel piece, and threw himself into a large lounging-chiir.

to meet me at the old place as soon as I leave the dinner table. "Au revoir.

"Yours ever. H. W."

This note was placed in an envelope, the address on which was already typed, and which he carefully scaled.

Mr Wyvern rang for the maid and gave her the telegram to despatch; but the letter he placed in his pocket ready to post himself.

He started for Richmond by the mid-She gazic at the lunny little morsel of day train on the following morning, and must be feeling at the birth of a child who 'Is it strong, nurse ?' she asked. I am | was to shatter all his fine hopes.

Hilton Wyvern, however, was not a man to carry his heart on his sleeve.

His inquiries after Lady Laura and his new 'cousin' were correctly solicitous, and when he expressed a wish to see the baby the lady was perfectly charmed.

'It was so nice of him,' she confided to her sister. 'I'm sure he doesn't feel the She was a pretty. vivacicus woman, who least jealousy, which, you must admit, would be quite pardonable under the circumstances. And how exceedingly handsome he is ! I have not seen him 'Oh, what a darling !' she exclaimed, since he was a raw youth from college.'

'Yes,' replied Lady Laura languidly, Hilton is a handsome man, and I am pleased to hear that he bears no ill-will to perty being strictly entailed in the male The nurse bent down and looked at the line. Still, my marriage settlement was could have brought up a daughter quite comfortably."

But you surely prefer having a son ? Taink of the difference it makes to you. You have at least twenty-one years to queen it over this lovely old place, and even if you should marry again-

"Don't !' cried her sister in a sharp tone of pain, and when she buried her head in the pillow and broke into low sobs, Mrs. Dimsdale stole pentently from the room, anathematising her thoughtless tongue.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Dimsdale and the guest dined tele-s-tels, and it must be confessed that the lady, who was beginning to find things a little monotonous, was slightly obegrined when the young man announced his inten tion of emoking a cigar in the open air.

"Don't you think it will be rather unpleas nt out of doors ?' she suggested, these autumn evenings are terribly dreary, and with so many trees about the place is always damp '

'I am not atraid,' he replied, showing we rows of g eaming teeth in a fascing ting smile, 'and I want to look in on the rector; he and I are chums of long standing, out-' observing her mobile face could -'I trust I may present myself for a cup of coffee in about an hour '

'Don't! don't!' she cried ; 'I have only known the meaning of happiness-what it is to live-since we met.' Don't say you regret it!"

'Do not agitate yourself like this,' he returned, an uncomfortable presentiment of impending difficulties coming over him.

Much as we love each other, we cannot ignore stern facts. I have neither money nor profession; I am deeply involved-a quarrel with my uncle is imminent. Under taese circumstances, would it not be more honorable of me to release you at once, instead of holding you to a promise given under brighter auspices?

'I ao not wish to be released. I love you, and desire notning better than to share your anxieties.'

He gave an impatient sigh.

What a persistent, impossible creature she was!

'The only way you can help me is by throwing the little heir into the sea,' hesaid at last, with a laugh, and the girl caught ber breath.

'Ol course you would be glad if the child were to die?'s he queried presently. 'I certainly should not iret. But babies that are not wanted always live. I suppose the youngter is as strong as a young lion!" 'No; he is very delicate and feeble.'

The words were uttered in a low tone and Helen Vicar's face grew even paler than it was before.

There was a moment's tense silence, then the two regarded each other stead tastly, the girl at last moving uneasily under the strange fascination of her lover's gazo.

'I must be going,' she said harriedly. 'Lady Wyburn may want me.'

He did not seek to detain her, but turned towards the house.

In the shadow of the trees they paused. . I had better not accompany you any further,' he remarked quietly, 'or someone might sae us.'

'Shall we have another opportunity of meeting ?'

'I'm afraid not; I must go back to town in the morning.

'Then we must say 'Good-bye' now. Hilton, you do love me? Tell me that there is no other woman in the world who has the smallest share of your heart.'

It was impossible to utter the ready lie under the passionate, loving entreaty.

He seized her in an almost rough embrace to disguise his vexation. What on earth is the matter with you

tonight ? You know I love you. Have I not told you so a hundred times P' 'Yes.'

'Then why do you not doubt me ?'

'I do not. Good night, Hilton.' Their lips met for a second ; then the

girl burried away.

think he is strong and hardy P'

"I do not understand babies, my lady." " And you do not wish to hurt my feel

ings. Helen, I know the child is delicate. He does not cry half enough, and he lies so quist all the time. I shall lose him, as I have lost his father !'

She threw herself back on the pillows with a sob.

Helen went hurriedly into the adjoining apariment for the nurse.

In the middle of the night, lights flached through the house, and hurried tootsteps passed to and tro.

Her ladyship had been taken alarmingly ill.

- A groom was despatched in all haste for the dector, while the nurse, after giving some peremptory directions, took up ber station at the bed-side, and did not more until the doctor arrived.

Towards morning there was a slight im provement, but the lady's condition was still critical.

The doctor took Helen aside.

· I have wired to London for a second. aurse,' he informed her, ' as her ladyship must not be lett a minute. Do you think you could take charge of the infant ? We ed corridor, pausing at the ante room do not want too many strangers in the house, and Mrs. Dimedale agrees with me that this will be the best arran gement, and promises that a maid shall he told off, to wait upon you entirely."

'I will do my best,' Helen answered, a sudden color dyeing ber fair cheek. I. know how to wash and dress the child and attend to his food, but it will be anxious work, as he is not strong Do you think he will live, Doctor Joyoe?"

She asked the question with a psculiarly strained eagerness.

'Impossible to say. He is a frail child, and may go off like a puff of wird. Oa he other hand, babies have a marvellous power of pulling through obstacles which is simply astounding sometimes. You cannot do better than your best, and I shall be satisfied. We will, therefore, consider the arrangement settled.'

Leit to herself, Helen sank down in a chair and covered her face with ber hands, while a violent trembling seized her. She got up presently and went to the

window. A soft, white mist hid all but the immed

iste vicinity. There was a raw chill in the atmosphere

which made the girl shiver.

She dropped the curtain and walked back to the fire.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by a faint weil from the adjoining apartment

With color coming and going, Helen went in to her charge.

All that day the household was hushed, the servants moving about with eilent footsteps, and speaking in subdued voices.

The nurse arrived at midday, and inleft-a long, narrow room which opened. stantly took command of the sick-room on to the terrace by a French window, She walked quickly, and the moonlight | while her sister-in office went to her own | This window was already unbarred; it

distressed, had wired to her husband, beg. ging him to join her at once, and he came by the same train as the Dendon doctor.

The latter remained at the house for some hours, having an early dinner served to him before his departure ; but he left hope behind himi

Her ladyship would pull through; but the greatest care was necessary, and regarding this he gave some emphatic and minute directions, specially enjoining absolute quiet.

By ten o'clock the whole household was wrapped in silence, no lighte being visible, save in the sick room and the purseries. Helen, however, was not in bed.

On the contrary, she had attired herself in skirt and cost and as the clock commenced o strike the none, she pinned on wer head a coft yelt oat.

The girl's face was deathly pale, and her eyes shone with a restless brightness. it was evident she was isporing under strong excitement, which was only kept in check by torce of her will.

The last of the ten strokes had barely died away when she opened the door, and stole naiselessly along the thickly carpetwhich communicated with Lady Laura Wyvern's chamber.

Stepping lightly, she tip toed across the little room, to the door of the larger spariment.

This stood partially open, so by the xercise of great caution, she contrived to peep round to see what was going on.

The patient lay eleeping calmiy, while the purse, whose back was towards the door, est at the bedside, with her fingers on the lady's wrist, her eyes on the dial of a: match, she held in her other hand.

A shaded homp stead near, which gave sufficient light for Helen to observe the great alteration in Lady L ura.

She withdrow as silently and quickly as she had come, and once safely in the. nursery she stood white and trembling, a great wave of 1 decision sweeping over. 001

It it be true that good and be angels watch over the destiny of mortals, Halen Vicars at that moment was in the throes of great struggle.

It did not last long, and having made her choice, the girl set about what she meant to do with teverish baste

In a few minutes she came out of the room muffl d in a long, dark cloak, and wearing a thick veil.

She closed and locked the door, putting the key in her pocket

With swift steps she descended the

stairs, feeling her way cautiously in the

Treading care ally on the mats and rugs.

spread over the polished oak floor of the

big hall, she turned into a room on the

dark.

 and of a grant nature. The tossed the papers and enveloped on the surface of gaily. "A. Wyern strolled leisurely across the grantled terace which ran along the grantled terace which ran along the surface of the bouts, stricted the lawn this suspense were ended!" "Any the tossed the papers and enveloped on the subtoor, and opening a withit's closely serving it that moment appeared with a totage and the subtoor of a strong of the stress of the service. "A bound the filles and the service and th	The quick frown and impatient exclam	'Curtainly, it shall be ready,' she ans	fell with soft radiance on her white face,	apartment for a well earned rest.	was only the work of a moment to lift the
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broke open the envelope, The message was very bried-just the words-'A bee, born four p m - H V But Hilton Wyvern's face was suddenly convulsed with fury. He crushed the flimsy paper in his hand while a string of imprecations bissed through his set teath 'A uit moon sailed in a sky flecked with are billowy cloudlets; an occasional ore z rustled the leaves of the trees, and while a string of imprecations bissed through his set teath 'A uit moon sailed in a sky flecked with are billowy cloudlets; an occasional ore z rustled the leaves of the trees, and while a string of imprecations bissed through his set teath 'A uit moon sailed in a sky flecked with are billowy cloudlets; an occasional ore z rustled the leaves of the trees, and while a string of imprecations bissed through his set teath 'A uit moon sailed in a sky flecked with are billowy cloudlets; an occasional ore z rustled the leaves of the trees, and while a string of imprecations bissed the exquisite odour, and at the s.me mom- 'Any a more, but receiving so reply.' 'A uit moon sailed in a sky flecked with trembling voice, but receiving so reply.' but convents and and the sound of approaching foot- 'A uit moon sailed in a sky flecked with and addressed it. It was not the least of her privileges that she was allowed to make her meals allow in her private sitting room. 'A ter perusing it twice, she put it into her pockst and made her way to the draw- ing room. 'A ter perusing it term was class.' 'A ter perusing it term was class.' 'A ter perusing it term was class.' 'A term was class.	The news men took it eareleasly and	it was a warm evening, the air soft and	very plague l'	Having carefully read what she had	ha the dim lights when the days with
A init moon sailed in a sky flocked with The message was very briet-just the with disconsisting the bolt of the block in the series of the series in the series of the series in the s	Ins young man took it outenenty and		Helen made her way to her owa small	written, she put the letter into an envelope	by two dim nguis, when the don was
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But Hilton Wyvern's tace was suddenly convulsed with tury. He crushed the flimey paper in his hand while a string of impreciations biased through his set teath 'Any answer, sir' acked the maid in trembling voice, but receiving so reply. 'A not an only going to the stairs she listened, trembling voice, but receiving so reply.	The mease e was very brief-just the	white billowy cloudlets; an occasional	It was not the least of her privileges	Summoning the young housemaid who	to assist her to get a
But Hutok wyverns had wis subjective had wis subjective had with fury. He crushed the flimey paper in his hand while a string of imprecations lissed through his set teath "Any answer, sir" acked the maid in trembling voice, but receiving so reply.	words-'A ber, born lour pm - 11 v	ore z rustled the leaves of the trees, and	that she was allowed to mke her meals	had been deputed to attend to ber, she	* * * *
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He crushed the interve paper is he with the second of a prose ing to the second of a prose ing the stairs she listened, ing room. He removed his cigar the better to inbale which disturbed her very much. The blow' took the form of a sharp ing the stairs she listened, ing room. He removed his cigar the better to inbale which disturbed her very much. The blow' took the form of a sharp ing the stairs she listened, ing room. He removed his cigar the better to inbale which disturbed her very much. The blow' took the form of a sharp ing room. He removed his cigar the better to inbale which disturbed her very much. The blow' took the form of a sharp ing room. He removed his cigar the better to inbale which disturbed her very much. The blow' took the form of a sharp ing room ing the stairs she listened, ing room. Her part a met and the second of a prose classes ing root ing the stairs she listened.	convulsed with fury.		By the side of the tray lay a letter.	for any sound from the baby	From the line of her leaving the suite
while a string of impressions dissed through his set testh. "Any a more, sir" asked the maid in trembling voice, but receiving so reply. The blow took the form of a sharp walk of two miles to Walton, the nearest term was classed by the stairs she listened, torm was classed by the stairs she listened.	He crushed the flimsy paper in his hand	He removed his cigar the better toinbale	which disturbed her very much.	'I shall not be long. I am only going for	
"Asy answer, sir" asked the maid in the sound of approaching foot- trembling voice, but receiving so reply. The blow' took the form of a sharp her blow' took took the form of a sharp her blow' took took the form of a sharp her blow' took took took took took took took too	while a string of imprecations hissed				dow, Helen had scarcely been half an
trembling voice, but receiving so reply.) steps.	through his set teath				
trembling voice, but receiving so reply, 1 the for a conta of the door town where she posted her letter, mad to nego elever.	"Any answer, sir" asked the maid in		ing room	walk of two miles to Walton, the nearest	Before mon ing the stairs she listened,
	trembling voice, but receiving no reply.	In a few en onds a girl's form was class.	Her hand was on the handle of the door	town where she posted her letter, made	Continued on page eleves.
she disoreetly retired.	she discreatly retired.	TO A LOW BLOOKED & Guile Jorne was onep	I THE MAN WAS ON THE BALLIE OF THE WOY,	tona, andre des preses and and and	Continues on balls content.