Saved From the Sea

"Ah! dear Helen, you are too good!" said the other, sadly. "I must not—can not go! it would not be fair to you, as things are with me; it is all changed—"

"Nothing is changed to the world," said Helen, stanchly, "and indeed nothing to us—Frank and me, and the Cliffords—except that which draws us all the closer to you. Promise me you will come back with us."

"Helen, I cannot—I cannot!" Christine said, much agitated, despite her efforts. 'I cannot promise to leave London, either; I may be wanted. I could not promise, even if I ought.'

"'Ought' is not the question, dear. Will you come, then Or later, if you can, or find it to your convenience?"

A sudden thought flashed across Christine that made her catch her breath.

Mr. Orde had said he should send for Falconer if there was a lock-out; Nest Hill was only twenty miles from Grass-Rowdon, and she would thus be near her husband, and if there was any danger she would hear of it quickly.

She wavered, and Helen Addison seized her advantage.

"Who hesitates is lost!" she cried. 'Surrender at discretion! You will come, if you possibly can?"

"I am beaten, Helen," she said, unsteadily. "I will accept your generous kindness if I can, but you must tell Major Addison all."

"If I may—the secret is yours."

"Secret!" repeated the other, with bitter emphasis, "when such a girl as Blanche holds it!"

"H'm!" said Mrs. Addison. "I don't think she will dare to gossip about you again in a hurry. You should have seen the look her uncle gave her! Heaven! I shouldn't like such a look from him! And she needn't have the least hope that St. Maur will ever make her an offer, to please twenty Mr. Ordes, or for twenty fortunes—for he won't! I'd take care he did not, either!"

Humor and Pathos, Comedy and Tragedy, in hand-clasp again. There stood the man's wife hearing the speech, smiling inwardly, despite the misery in her poor, aching heart.

"No," she said, quietly, "he flirted, but she could scarcely attract St. Maur's fancy beyond that. Is your brother in town?"

"How wickedly you said that! Yes, he is en route for Folkestone, since the Cliffords go there. He spoke to the doctor yesterday, and is accepted, subject to the young lady's consent."

"Ah, dear Mimie—then I think he is safe enough to venture," said Mrs. Errington. "I shall hear more of it soon, no doubt."

"Yes. Well, good-bye for the present, my dear, dear Christine. I shall see you again before we go into Kent."

She kissed her fondly and took her leave.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Christine, in writing to her husband from her new domicile, had told him what had happened, and why she had necessarily at once left. She merely stated that she had refused to give any explanation of her clandestine meeting, or promise it should be the last; but she entirely suppressed the questions and answers about her certificate and the deliberately permitted impression that she had never been married at all. Of Kenton Morley she said nothing.

Poor, tortured heart, how it ached for the loved one! Could she bear the long, indefinite separation that seemed to stretch away into so dark a future? Oh that curse of play, that load of debt that threw honor itself as a further weight into the scale against them! Oh the bitter truth of what St. Maur had said! What honest work could possibly take the place of the security given even if he could get it? what but the equivocal chances of the gaming-table or the turf could do it?

She sat in the corner of the sofa the evening after Helen's visit, wearing out heart and brain with thinking over all this in a thousand possible and impossible phases, blind and deaf to outward sight and sound. She was alone, desolate, as in those long six years of anguish, and she scarcely even heard the room-door open and close, or a light step cross the carpet, till some one knelt beside her, locked her in his arms, and passionately kissed her again and again.

"My one treasure—my heart's life!" St. Maur whispered, as she clung to him, startled, breathless with the sudden revulsion of feelings. "Now indeed you must come to your right shelter and protection, for my rash act, that fatal step into the moonlight, has cost you such home as you had. You are alone, and I cannot—I cannot leave you so, the more for the maddening memory of the past."

"Falconer, hush; not a word of that, my husband; it is long since repented of, expiated, and forgiven. And I——"

He interrupted her with almost feverish vehemence, tightening his clasp.

"Don't tell me again you will not come, for I have come to take you away with me abroad. Hush! no refusal"—for a moment his lips stifled the dreaded words on hers—"for I have got you, my darling, and will not let you go. How your heart beats and throbs against mine; and you are trembling so, dearest!"

"You—you frighten me, Falc; in pity let me go."

"Not yet," he said; 'lie still in my arms and hear me. We can live abroad wherever you choose. No shadow of shame shall touch my wife as it did long ago; and no whisper shall reach my uncle in his little world, so apart from ours, as long as he lives; and I will cease to be a gambler in the hour you come back to me. I can, I will, with you at my side."

"Falconer, it is all an utter fallacy, a fool's paradise, as you know well in calmer moments. I know myself and you, and if there were nothing else, the horrible monotony of such an existence to us, so essentially citizens of the world ,would madden beyond endurance. Nothing is altered in the whole position since I spoke to you at your chambers, Falc; all that I said then holds good now, and you saw it plainly."

"Never, my heart," he said, between his teeth, "never, my heart! You still refuse, then?"

"Yes, for your sake—for the sake of our whole future!"

St. Maur put her from him, rose up, and walked four or five times through the room, then stopped before her.

"I have striven against this demon or your sake, in the passinate love I bear you, to win you back. I have given up turf-gambling, as I told you at Nest Hill; but in very revenge, it seems, for partial defeat, the demon has driven me on at all the other play since then. Its fierce grip felt resistless. I am desperate, reckless. I have lost heavily in the hope of winning to clear that debt, and I will do it. I must go on till I gain those thousands which shall set me free to claim my wife and lose the wealth to which I am heir, if it must be. I have got gold still. I'll keep my word to you, and not stake more than I can meet or raise, but I must play! I am going to-morrow to Monte Carlo."

Every wild, fevered word was as a dagger in that woman's passionate, loving heart; every word a cruel temptation to yield to that agonized yearning, and cry, "I will go back to you!" but even then she saw that the man's soul, undisciplined, struggling between good and evil—hope and despair—had reached a crisis on which hung its whole future; it was the battle brought to a hand-to-hand warfare between the passion of love and the passion of play. The first had been slowly, insidiously mastering the latter for months, and the fierce enemy, feeling itself being vanquished, was making a superhuman effort to regain its lost ground and reseize its victim, as the dying man desperately rallies, or the flickering candle leaps up in a last blaze before it perishes. All this, like a flash of light in darkness, Christine saw—saw that to yield one inch would be fatal now—saw that she must strike one strong, fierce blow and risk its recoil.

"Go, then!" she said, with a look and tone that made the red blood sweep to his bronzed cheek. "I, the gambler's wife, bid the gambler take his ill-gotten gold and fling it on the cast of a die or the turn of a painted card, and when the fever of excitement is at its worst, and the mad play, whether in gain or loss, is at the highest, remember that far away in this great city a woman waits alone for her prodigal, writing in letters of blood—'A gambler's wife, loved less than the glittering master-vice that, like the Harpies, degrades all its touches.'"

She had struck the blow now; she had buried the weapon to its hilt in the man's very heart's core, too deep to be dragged from the quivering wound that was numbed at first with the intensity of the agony. He stood like one paralyzed, crushed, a deathly pallor on his face as she buried hers in the cushions by her, his livid lips set, his hand clinched till the blood almost started under the nails. Outwardly stillness, but within a chaos of passions and torture, the stern, pitiless voice of conscience that cried aloud and would not be silenced.

An awful sense of blank, of something lost—loved less than the master-vice—a gambler's wife, the bitterness of truth, of self-reproach, of self-scorn, and of hers, forced their way into his soul, stinging him like scorpions. He was dazed, maddened.

"You bid me go from you and gamble," he said, so hoarsely that it scarcely seemed the same voice she knew. "You send me back to Monte Carlo with words that are worse than death! Do I need driving to desperation and despair, that you almost tell me I have lost your love and you your faith in mine!"

Christine's very heart stood still in its agony. She scarcely dared to move or speak lest she should break quite down and perchance undo what she had just done; and yet one softer touch she must give; she saw that instantly; she could not, must not, let him go quite like this, and she lifted herself—lifted the great dark eyes full of bitter tears that would not be quite suppressed, to his.

"No, no! Oh! Falconer, never either you must know—never in the wildest moment think that my love or faith in yours has failed, but only remember all my words."

"Seathing words," he said, hoarsely, "that are burning into me like red-hot iron. There is no fear of my forgetting them when I'm gone. Good-bye."

Her strength was almost spent, but she whispered the words, "Au revoir," as he turned away.

The next moment he had swung round and caught her passionately to his breast.

"I cannot part like that—I cannot! My darling this—this at least!"

One close kiss on her lips and she was put back; the door shut; she was alone with her bitter anguish.

CHAPTER XXX.

What wonder that, a day or two later, when Dr. Clifford and Mimie came to say "good-bye," both thought Christine looked ill? The doctor's sharp, experienced eyes especially saw the signs of deepened trouble int he beautiful face that could not be concealed; it lay in the velvet dark eyes, in the lines of pain about the sensitive, resolute mouth.

"This won't do, my dear," said he, shaking his head; "it won't do, Christine, and I warn you that if you are ill I shall come and carry you straight off home again; sha'n't ask 'May I?' you know!"

Mrs. Errington smiled faintly.

"I am not ill, doctor; but if I were, I am afraid you would find me rather a troublesome patient, and be glad to get rid of me."

"Not we!" said Mimie, nestling to her as she sat beside her. "Father and I would nurse you as we did before."

"I know you would, my darling; but indeed you must not be the least anxious about me. When do you leave town, doctor?"

"To-morrow, my dear, and return in the beginning of October. By the bye, whom do you think I met to-day in Pall Mall?"

"I cannot guess—unless it was Major Addison—ro, they are gone."

"I met Sir Arthur Channing, and we had quite a chat; he had come up yesterday from Staffordshire, en route for the continent; but I was very sorry to hear that this strike at Mr. Orde's—the Grass-Rowdon mines—seems to be serious. Knowing the old gentleman and his nephew, one feels interested in the matter."

How deeply Christine was interested he never dreamed.

"Yes," she said; "the men have been out a month already, too. I suppose, then, that Mr. St. Maur's going there was useless."

"Well, yes, so far; he, too, left yesterday. It seems that now they have had the impudence to add a demand for the dismissal of the manager (who is away ill) for some very groundless complaints, the truth being that he had sacked some of those agitators whom he had discovered in unfair dealings. But they won't cow old Orde, as Channing said, and certainly not that daring fellow St. Maur, who, it seems, met the men at a very stormy meeting, on his uncle's behalf. He told them straight out that their demands were too outrageous to be entertained for a moment, in the depressed state of the market; that they were being swayed by a few demagogues— socialists—who, for their own end, were setting them against their master, and they would find the struggle to their loss. He told them that the manager should on no account be dismissed, nor an advance of eight per cent. given by Mr. Orde. Some shouted:

"'He'd give it if you'd let him; it's all your doing!'

"'Yes, it is,' says St. Maur, as cool as a cucumber (Channing was on the platform); 'if he needed any persuasion I'm the man to do it!'

"He would be heard, too. He said that Mr. Orde, though at a loss, would give them 4 per cent. advance if they returned to work in a month; but if not, he would lock out until they came back at the present rate of wages, if he shut the mines for a twelvemonth."

"That was St. Maur all over!" said Christine, her eyes sparkling. 'He will not be intimidated or frightened. Were they violent?"

"Very near it! but it ended with hisses and groans, and a surge that came to nothing; only Channing says they are furious against St. Maur now, because they think (truly, too, I expect) that the lockout threat comes from him principally."

"And he will be Draconic—rightly!" said Falconer's wife. "Does Sir Arthur think the men will accept the very reasonable—nay, generous—compromise?"

"H'm! very doubtful," answered Clifford. "Ignorant obstinacy and ugly temper are generally helplessly stupid until starved out like an animal. As to St. Maur, I believe he would sooner be ruined than give in. Certainly, says Channing, there may be an ugly business before it's ended; they're a terrible rough lot, and Mr. Orde has fairly put the battle into St. Maur's hands—their master, one day—so it's as well they should see at once what stuff he is made of."

"Yes; and they can not easily mistake that!" said Christine, with proudly throbbing heart. "Is Mr. Orde at Grass-Rowdon still?"

"No; but he is not far off. Channing says he goes to-day to some place within easy reach. St. Maur has gone abroad; I don't know where."

Mrs. Errington could have told him that.

She asked:

"One month given them, you say? That is, then, till about the eighth of October?"

"Yes, about then."

Tea was now brought in; and after that, the doctor and his daughter—the latter almost crying—bid good-bye, and left.

Only a month—poor, aching, faithful heart!—only a month, and he must surely be back in England! Would he come to her? When—where—how would they meet? Ah! how? She had taken a last desperate measure that must kill or save.

So the dreary, anxious days went by into weeks, and still that woman watched and waited for her prodigal till he should "come back and be forgiven."

CHAPTER XXXI.

One golden September afternoon Dr. Clifford sat alone on a bench just beyond the Lees at Folkestone.

Blanche had strolled off with the Fitzroys and Captain Darnley, whom they had met here—not to the doctor's liking as regards the latter, though he was not thinking of her at all just now, for his gaze rested on the figures of his daughter and Archer Northcote, far below on the beach, with that sweet, half-regretful pleasure that is so deeply tinged with sadnes, with which in mature years we look upon the reflex of our own youth; put before us as in a magic mirror—a pleasure checkered by a vague passing wish that we could for one moment go back and dream over again; and a sorrowful pity for the young dreamers, whose dream we know must too soon be crossed by life's stern, hard realities and troubles.

He watched the two figures till they disappeared under the cliff; and then, from the very converse of the picture, perhaps, his thoughts went to the young creature he knew as Christine Errington—here, two lives beginning, bright and full of hope; there, a life blighted, hopes dead, the hapless victim of reckless passion and deception.

So was he buried in bitter, painful thoughts that he did not hear some one coming over the grass, and positively started as a full, hearty voice exclaimed:

"It is Dr. Clifford, by all that is good luck!"

"Mr. Orde! you down here? How do you do?"

They shook hands cordially, and Mr. Orde sat down on the bench.

"Quite an unexpected pleasure!" he said. "I had no notion you were here, doctor. How and where are the ladies?"

"My daughter is on the beach with young Northcote—you remember him?"

"Yes. Indeed, I fancied that he was taken in that quarter. Nice young fellow, and a good deal with my boy. And where is Miss Leroy and that handsome Mrs. Errington?"

"Blanche is on the Lees with some friends, and Mrs. Errington is in London. She has left us, deeply to my regret."

"Left? Dear, dear! what a pity!"

"Yes," said the doctor, quitely; "she had to leave rather suddenly, in consequence of some family affairs that required her unfettered attention for some time to come."

This was strictly true.

"I met Channing,' he added, "and heard about the strike. How misguided the men are! It's a bad business."

"For them—yes," said William Orde, grimly. "We sha'n't yield. What Falc told them I'l stick to; and the month of grace is nearly run out. I just popped down here for a little sea air before I go homs. I don't get young, doctor, and things bother me more than they used to."

"Ah!" said Clifford, with a half-sad smile, "that is all our experience when we've turned the corner of our best years. But this matter you have, I hear, put into your nephew's hands?"

"Yes, indeed; all the executive; and, by Jove!" said Mr. Orde, beginning to laugh; "he'll carry it through with a high hand if they are too obstreperous —show 'em some California ways, I expect. I shall send for him, of course, if they don't come in."

"Is your nephew still abroad, then?"

"Yes; the young scamp has taken himself off to Monte Carlo—which place I suspect, knows him better than steady old fogies like myself quite approve."

"Ah!" said the doctor, looking down; "fond of high play, you mean. Monte Carlo is an awful place for gambling, certainly."

"Very bad; and at nearly two-and-thirty, I think he should steady down and marry."

"So do I," said the doctor, a little dryly "but it is a question whether some lady unknown would be wise to go in for the second state till the first was au fait accompli."

(To be continued.)

EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL BECOMES MASTER OF ARTS.

MISS DOROT HEA JONES.

Ann Arbor.—Sixteen years or more ago a mother in Harrisburg, was playing with her baby girl.

"Give mamma an 'A,'" she would say.

The baby fingers would select the desired block from the pile of "letter blocks" before her.

"Now give mamma a 'B.'"

And so went the play. Before the child could talk she knew her alphabet perfectly.

Now, when just past her eighteenth birthday she is a master of arts, establishing a record for the University of Michigan, and perhaps for the country. It is believed that she is the youngest person who has ever taken a second, or master's degree, in this country. She graduated when but sixteen, and now has finished her post-graduate work at an age at which most youngsters are just beginning undergraduate work.

At the university here they tell how, for three hours during her final oral examination, this frail little girl answered without hesitation the questions launched at her by four gray-haired professors. At the end of the test the skeptical members of the faculty had to acknowledge that Miss Dorothea Jones well merited the master's degree.

So now she is Dorothea Jones, M. A., perhaps the youngest master of arts the new world has ever known.

Limitations.

We all have them.
And we should admit it.
Perhaps not to all the world.
But to ourselves, at any rate.
We should not talk beyond our depth.
We should not, unless swimmers, wade beyond our depth.
We should not go beyond our depth in the matter of collarless blouses.
Indeed, we all of us have our limitations, and we should recognize them.
Frankness is beautiful, but insistence on weak points amounts to stupidity.

EEL AND MAN IN GRAPPLE TO DEATH.

Bloomfield, N. J.—Frank Tomski went out fishing, paused on the bank of the Morris canal, and stood there dabbling around with his line and hook in the water when John Fritz came along.

Fritz thought he would have a little fun with Tomski. He crept up behind him and gave him a push that landed the fisherman in the canal.

Just as he struck the water a big eel came up to nibble at the hook. Tomski grabbed the neck of the eel with one hand, and snatched at the fish line with the other, just like a drowning man grabbing at a straw. Of course Tomski knew that he couldn't pull himself out by a flimsy little fish line, but he grabbed just the same, and caught the hook in his thumb. That put one hand out and the other hand was in a death grapple with an eel.

It looked for a time like the eel

might win out. The slimy, snaky thing hiked up his hind tail and gave Tomski a slap on the face which made him release his choking grasp, and just then Johnson McQueen came along and saved Tomski from a watery bier.

The village constable is now looking for John Fritz, who ran away, laughing at his little joke, as McQueen approached. He will be arrested, when found, on the charge of cruelty to an animal and a human being.

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

The law of the spirit of life has made me free from the law of sin and death. —Romans viii. 2.

Man is a bundle of contradictions—he is alive, he is dead, he is free and in bondage, he is at liberty and yet limited by law, he is bought in one market, and sold into another. Within the bounds of this law I find:

Personality. Men can say I am, I am distinct, I am alone, I respond, I reflect, I discriminate. By day I am related to the glories of nature, by night to millions of stars. I am conversant with history, with men, with God. This law is from Him, is with Him, and leads to Him. It is exact, regular, permanent. Within the bounds of this law I find:

Reality. It is here, it is now, it is pure, it is productive, it is constant. How sweet, how secret, how sacred. It is above reason, it is not against it. It is my breath, my joy, my life, my crown, It is more solid than the earth, more lasting than the sun, more illimitable than the stars. Am I not superior to these? The earth will one day melt, the sun grow dark. You speak of a star and you say "it." I can say "I". It is cold, I am warm, it is moved by machinery, I am moved by conscience, by reason, by inspiration, my life is "hid with Christ in God." Within the bounds of this law I find:

Continuity. On earth there is no stay. The butterfly is a thing of beauty one moment, the next in the crop of the bird. very soon the bird is in the crop of the hawk, soon after the hawk is shot—mayhay falls to the ground dead. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days." The cloud is real, but it melts as you gaze. Men study the beauty of vanity; how soon they study the vanity of beauty. It is the business of faith to see all things in their intrinsic value. "Foresight assuredly comes to men, insight will often tarry with the child." Find out and follow the sure path of faith, then shall you be rich indeed. How many ships pass in the night and we knew not their history or destiny. We only see the phosphorescent gleam on the silent tide. Within the bounds of this law I find:

Certainty. What so sure as the facts of consciousness? I see, I know, I am persuaded that there is laid up for me a crown! This is the end of this magnificent law. And here comes in a caution of the first importance: See that you have it! "It is a sad reflection," says Mr. Penn, "that many men have hardly any religion at all, and most men have none of their own, for that which is a religion of their education, and not of their judgment, is the religion of another and not theirs."

A woman was riding in a buggy, the horse took fright and bolted down hill, she escaped with only a few bruises. An old friend asked her afterwards, "What were your feelings in the great danger?" The reply was, "I trusted in God all the time until the breeching broke, then I gave up all for lost." "My dear friend, excuse me, you did not trust in God at all; you trusted in the breeching strap.

Beware of a second-hand religion, it will surely fail, in the final hour!

—H. T. Miller.

"My boy, do you know where Mrs. Wilkins lives? She is a lady without children.

"I dunno her, ma'am; but ef she's a lady without children she don't live nowheres around here."