

Right at Last

"Oh, my rooms are being done up, and I've moved up here for to-day. Sit down, will you?" and he went and put a chair with its back to the door, murmuring as he did so, in a voice just audible to Joan:

"For heaven's sake, not a word!"

"Very sorry," said Pontelere. "I feel so awkward. Dreadful luck last night. I'm inclined to turn up cards and take to the turf again; it's more amusing and a good deal more wholesome."

Bertie laughed with some make-believe carelessness.

"Talking of the turf," he said, "I suppose Stuart Villiers will keep a stud out to come into his pile."

"I've just seen him," said Bertie. "Seems to be making himself scarce. A close sort of a fellow. Never half liked him. Mustn't say so now, though. There's some good shooting at that place of his in Devonshire, isn't there?"

"Yes," said Bertie. "I suppose he'll marry and settle down now?" he added, keeping his voice as steady as he could, but glancing at the slightly open door.

"Yes, I suppose so," answered Lord Pontelere. "He can pick and choose now, I suppose, and marry well. He has had a fine time of it! Gosh, the pace as fast as most men, I should say, and a little faster. Been a good thing for some of the women if he hadn't been quite such an Adonis!"

Bertie's heart seemed to stand still. The critical moment was approaching.

"Do you think that he ever behaved unfairly?" he asked, slowly and clearly, so that every word should reach the next room.

Joan leant forward, her eyes fixed on the broad back of the man sitting near her, as if she would drag a negative from him.

Lord Pontelere stared.

"I thought you were talking of Stuart Villiers," he said, with a sneer.

"No I was," said Bertie, faintly.

Lord Pontelere laughed in a leisurely, sarcastic fashion.

"Did he ever behave fairly?" he repeated, blowing the smoke from his lips.

"You must have had memory, however. Have you forgotten that scandal about Lady George?"

"You mean that he tempted her to fly from her home with him?"

"Of course I do," answered Lord Pontelere. "Didn't Lord George meet Villiers at Calais and exchange shots?—a ridiculous proceeding nowadays—but Lord George was always old-fashioned."

Joan put her hand to her head and clutched the edge of the door. Was this another horrible nightmare—these two voices speaking in this way of the man she loved—the man she had trusted!

"And that is not the only intrigue he has been mixed up with," said Bertie, slowly.

Lord Pontelere laughed.

"The only one! You might put it in a basket with half a dozen others and still find some more to keep it company. I tell you that Stuart Villiers has done more harm in that way than any man in London! Why, you know that, I should think!"

"White and trembling, Joan put her hand to her lips to crush back the cry that seemed choking her."

"Ah," said Bertie, after a pause; "and you think—look here, Pontelere: I want to ask your opinion. Supposing—mind, this is quite a supposititious case!—I say, supposing Stuart Villiers chanced to meet a young girl—an innocent, pure-hearted girl. Suppose he got this girl to believe in him, told her, in short, that he meant to marry her, and—"

"his voice broke and grow hoarse in his excitement," and persuaded her to leave her home and fly with him. Hush, not a word! Hear me out. Do you think that he would act honorably by her?—do you think that he would have mercy on her innocence and purity?—that he would, in short, keep his word—and marry her? and he leant back and wiped the great drops from his forehead, his eyes fixed on the opposite door.

"Do I think if Villiers had induced an innocent girl to run away with him on the pretence of marrying her, that once having got her into his power he would keep his promise?" he said.

"Yes!" answered Bertie, hoarsely.

"My dear Bertie, if any young friend of yours, anyone in whom you take an interest, has been so foolish as to put such trust in Stuart Villiers—good Lord! Stuart Villiers—all I can say is that she is lost! Lost! Ruined! Past all hope and recovery."

Joan, with her hands clenched tightly, her heart beating wildly, rose and staggered to a door and held it swaying backwards and forwards. She felt as if she were going to faint, and meant to die rather than so. The truth, the awful truth, had struck home to her heart at last.

With parted lips she threw up her hands and cried silently, "Stuart! Stuart! My life, my love! And you have done this!"

Then, snatching up her cloak and hat, she put them on, and opening the door that led to the landing, passed noiselessly out.

Five minutes passed. Bertie kept Lord Pontelere talking; he knew what terrible agony the beautiful girl must be suffering; he would give her time.

Indeed, he wanted time himself, time to regain his self-possession and calmness.

At last he said, absently:

chair, a great pain at his heart, his breast heaving slowly. For a moment his face sank into his hands, and he murmured:

"Gone! and I shall never see her again!" Then he looked up, and something suspiciously like a tear shone in his honest blue eyes, and he muttered:

"Never mind! I have saved her! Yes, I have saved her!"

CHAPTER XVI.

About the time Lord Villiers and Joan reached Paddington, Mordaunt Royce was sitting at his breakfast.

Now, though Mordaunt Royce was one of the best known men in fashionable London, few knew anything about his inner life—that is, his home life.

For years past he had been the jackal which has found food for Mr. Craddock, of Chain Court, Fenchurch street. It had been his duty to hunt down the noble game, the rich scions of the aristocracy, and drive them into the den of his master, there to be devoured and have their bones picked clean.

But during the last week or two something else had sprung up to employ his acute brain.

Ever since Elijah Craddock had told him the story of Stuart Villiers and the lost will, his restless mind had been on the work, the two millions loomed up before him, and haunted him day and night.

He felt assured, with Craddock, that a will existed, and that Lord Stuart Villiers had no right to the vast property, but he was still no nearer finding the rightful owner, and the rich booty still eluded his grasp.

For some time past he had not visited the old man.

But this morning he resolved to pay Chain Court a visit; it might be that the old man had something to tell him respecting the two millions; he might have discovered something. It was a lovely morning, and Royce, who enjoyed nature when she wore her best dress, thought he would go round by the park.

He lit a choice cigar—one of Lord Bertie's by the way, and sauntered through the gates. Mordaunt Royce made his way to the end of the gravel path, and was about to cross the road into Piccadilly, when he saw a slim, girlish figure hurry over the crossing, and after pausing a moment to look to right and left uncertainly, sink on to one of the seats by the rails.

He was a keen and close observer, and in an instant he saw that the figure belonged to a young girl, that it was graceful, and that it was active in a costume that, though not stylish and fashionable, was that of a lady.

This was quite enough to whet his curiosity and make him desirous of seeing her face.

He crossed over, and stepping just in front of her, said in his softest voice:

"I beg your pardon! Did you speak to me?"

Joan, for it was she, dropped her hands from her face, and looked up at him.

Mordaunt Royce was never guilty of starting, or expressing any emotion resembling surprise, or he would have started then. As it was he was speechless for a moment, struck dumb by the wonderful beauty and misery of the girlish face lifted to his gaze.

"I thought you spoke," he said, softly and encouragingly.

"No," said Joan. Then her eyes wandered from his face to the trees in front of her, and then back again.

"Where is that? What place is this?" she asked, in a dull, leaden voice.

"This is Hyde Park," he replied, as softly as before; "are you looking for anyone?"

"No, no," she murmured, wildly; "no one, thanks," and she rose and went quickly past him.

Royce stood for a moment looking after her, sorely tempted to follow; then, with a shrug of his shoulders, he went to the gate and called a hansom, and told the driver to take him to Fenchurch street.

Old Craddock was seated on his high stool, poring over his account book; but at sight of the gentlemanly dressed figure, climbed down and shut the book in the door.

"Come at last!" he opulated. "Where on earth have you been? But where have you been?"

"What is the matter?" demanded Royce, coolly, taking out a cigar and lighting it.

"I've been expecting you for days," said old Craddock, eagerly. "I've something to tell you. And he told the story of Stuart Villiers' visit to the Will with the Oliver party, and the discovery of the portrait and its resemblance to Joan.

"Is that all?" said Royce, coolly. "A matter of mere resemblance. There is nothing in that."

"Nothing in that?" echoed old Craddock. "I tell you the slightest thing may prove a clue. I tell you this girl, this Joan Ormsby, was the image of the portrait! I never saw anything like it. And remember she is not a daughter of this Colonel Oliver. She is his wife, as he calls her. Nobody knows anything about her. Mark that!"

"There may be something in it," he said, carelessly. "But where is the portrait?"

Old Craddock shuffled to a large case and unlocked it, and brought out a faded wooden case.

Mordaunt Royce stepped forward to look at the portrait with a careless, nonchalant air, cigar in hand, then suddenly he bent over the picture with an exclamation of astonishment.

"Well, well!" demanded old Craddock. "What is it?"

"What is it?" repeated Mordaunt Royce. "Why, I saw the original in Hyde Park this morning—an hour ago!"

"Wrong! The original is at Chain Court, in Devonshire," answered Royce, when the door behind them was shaken

The old man seized the portrait, and thrust it to the safe, and, standing on an inner office, waited until Royce had slipped it; then he opened the door, and a stalwart figure strode past him.

It was Lord Villiers—pale and agitated.

Half an hour after Joan had glided trembling down the stairs and into the street Lord Villiers returned.

He had been down to Doctors' Commons, and obtained as much information about the laws of marriage in ten minutes as many men acquire in a lifetime; and he had made what arrangements were possible. There would be some delay, but it could not be felt, and he felt that he could still depend on Joan's trust and faith in him.

As he opened the door of the sitting-room his face took upon itself the lover's fond smile, and he had almost spoken her name when, on looking round, he saw that the room was empty, and at the same moment he noticed the odor of a recently smoked cigar.

It struck him as rather strange; he had not noticed it when he was looking over the rooms in the morning.

However, no doubt Joan was in the dressing-room, and he would sit down and wait until she came back.

Ten minutes passed—ten precious minutes—and then he strode across the room and knocked gently at the door.

There was no answer, and, fearful of startling her, he went back to the cigar and tried a little more patience.

Then he got up again and this time called to her, gently and quietly. There was still no answer, and puzzled, and not yet alarmed by any means, he rang the bell.

"Has anyone been here, anyone to see Mrs. Newlands?" he enquired, quickly.

Now London landladies are sharp-witted; they enjoy various and manifold experiences, and they learn, like the wild animals, to be cute and self-defensive.

So Mrs. Parsons, scenting trouble, at first stared blankly at the fireplace, then replied bluntly:

"Anyone to see her? Oh, no!"

"Go," said Lord Villiers, his face growing paler as it seemed each moment—"go and look over the house, go and examine the other rooms, upstairs, anywhere! She may have mistaken her way. Go quickly, please!"

The landlady, still more suspicious, and still more convinced that safety lay in silence and discretion, left the room, and Lord Villiers paced up and down with feverish impatience.

"Well!" he demanded, when she returned.

"No, sir, your good lady is not in the house. I looked everywhere—she must have gone out, sir! She may have run out to buy something."

"No, no, it is impossible!" cried Lord Villiers, hoarsely. "When I came in the door was open—the street door!"

"Then she has slipped out quite unawares, sir," she said, with an air of conviction.

Lord Villiers put his hand to his forehead, vainly trying to leap to some conclusion, some clue to the mystery.

In confused bewilderment he seized his hat.

"If—if my wife should return while I am away," he said, "tell her that I shall be back directly, and that she is on no account to leave the house again."

"Very well, sir," said Mrs. Parsons, and she let him go without saying a word of Lord Bertie.

Where could she go? To whom could she fly? There was no one! As he pondered, he suddenly remembered Mr. Craddock. Joan had met him, and knew that he lived in London, and that he was a lawyer. If she were lost she might recollect the old man, and ask to be taken to him.

The thought gave him fresh hope, and he went straight to Chain Court, Fenchurch street.

"Has anyone called here for me?" he asked, abruptly.

"I called here—for you, my lord? No," said Mr. Craddock, his head on one side, like a jackdaw's, his eyes fixed curiously on the stern, handsome face. "Did you expect anyone, my lord?"

"Yes, yes, I do not know," said Lord Villiers, confusedly.

The old man stood regarding him keenly.

"I'm afraid something is the matter; some unpleasant business upset your lordship. You couldn't come to anyone more anxious to assist you, my lord."

"Thanks," broke in Lord Villiers. "I am in great trouble. I—I have lost a friend—a dear friend! She was to be my wife."

The old man's sharp eyes grew into more than his usual keenness.

"My wife?" he repeated. Lord Villiers, firmly. "Our marriage was to be a sudden and secret one."

"Yes, yes," crooned Craddock. "Your lordship had sufficient reasons, no doubt."

"We reached London this morning. I went out for an hour, and on returning found her gone."

"Come back to her friends!" suggested the old man, with his usual on one side.

"No," said Lord Villiers, sternly. "I would not do that of that, at least, I am sure. I thought so for the moment, but now I am convinced that it is no so."

And like the portrait—or you thought so; I didn't say it myself. On I will find her for you, Lord Villiers. Dear me, and so young, too! and gone off—disappeared!"

"Like a dream," said Lord Villiers, more to himself than to the old man. "Find her and I will give you a thousand pounds."

"Yes, yes," assented Mr. Craddock; "and the little eyes shone in the dim daylight. 'I'd give a thousand pounds myself, my lord! Meanwhile, my lord, I know a man who can find her if anyone can.'"

"Take me to him! Bring him here!" broke in Lord Villiers, eagerly.

"No, no," croaked the old man; "that would not do. We must keep your name out of the affair! Let me give our man the instructions, and appear as the principal in the matter. As to money—"

Lord Villiers drew his cheque-book out, and going to the desk filled in a cheque for a hundred pounds, which Mr. Craddock, though he muttered something about it not being necessary, promptly pocketed.

"Spare no expense!" said Lord Villiers. "Leave no stone unturned! Unhurry her at once, at once!"

Mr. Craddock escorted him to the door, bowing and rubbing his hands; then he shot the bolt in its place, and shuffling across the room like a monkey, opened the door of the inner room.

"Royce! Royce!" he cried; "what do you think of this, eh? Fancy the girl's running away from him! He—he! Look! I'd rather cut up and disappointed, didn't he? Oh, my lord is like the rest of his family, a wild one, a wild one! But he's been tricked this time!"

"I think Stuart Villiers is not such a fool as you think him," said Royce, slowly.

(To Be Continued.)

Home Dyeing

Has it ever occurred to you what a large number of things one can dye at home, and in that way make quite a saving?

When on shopping expeditions, you have often noticed on the "Bargain Counters," Remnants offered at ridiculously low prices. The reason for these low prices was not by any means on account of the materials being of poor quality, but because the shades or colors were out of style; the materials often being of superior quality.

Now, these bargains could be taken advantage of, and by dyeing the goods, the colors could be changed to the most delicate shade of any of the fashionable colors popular at the time. And remember that it doesn't make the slightest difference whether the goods are Wool, Cotton, Silk or Mixed. As a matter of fact, Home Dyes now that with the Sargent Dye, one can color cloth of Any Kind perfectly.

You may possibly have a dress that is hardly worn at all, but is out of fashion as to color and style. Here again, these single Home Dyes step in to help things out. Dip it up, dye it a fashionable shade, and with new patterns make it up into a most stylish gown that will be the envy of your lady friends.

While Summer Dresses can be dyed delicate shades of any color by using these new Home Dyes very weak—say about an eighth package to about five gallons of water.

It is not alone to "Wearing Apparel," that these improved Home Dyes lend their services. Portieres, Couch Covers, Table Covers, Shade Curtains, Draperies, or in fact anything that is made of Cloth can be made to look just like new.

Never try to color anything a lighter shade than the article is originally. White or very light colored goods can be dyed any darker shades or any color.

Just as soon as you have decided what you are going to dye, you will want to know how much you will require. For the lighter shades and for small articles, such as Ribbons, Silk or Cotton Gloves, Stockings, Blouses, etc., one package as a rule will be sufficient. For heavy Suits, Coats, Curtains, etc., it is best if possible to weigh your goods before they are wet and use a package to about a pound of goods.

GOD'S WAY OR MINE?

(Christian Guardian.)

The man who likes in the Bible for minute and detailed directions for the conduct of daily life will look in vain. Jesus Christ, when dealing with individuals, dealt with them as individuals, as in the case of the young ruler, whom He advised to sell all that he had, and give to the poor; but this is the only case on record where we find Him giving such a direction. It may be argued that His teaching would lead all men to do practically the very thing which He advised, but we have no disposition to argue the point, the fact remains that, as far as the record goes, this counsel was unique. Even in the case of a man like Zacharias, there is no mention of any such requirement.

Our Lord contented Himself with laying down the great principles, which, through all the ages, and in all lands and amongst all peoples, should remain the permanent basis of Christian character. The minutiae of daily life He left largely for the divinely enlightened individual conscience. And when Christians are grossly dissatisfied with themselves and their attainments, and lift longing eyes towards a higher plane of life, and turn to the teachings of Christ for minute direction as to the way which leads thither, they may sometimes be disappointed at being unable to find such definite and positive guidance as they desire.

And yet the Scriptures are not silent upon this point. The Holy Spirit does not create a divine unrest, and inspire a holy longing for better things, without at the same time leaving us sufficient direction as to how that unrest shall be quieted and that longing satisfied. A multitude of witnesses will testify to this. The way into the holiest is made plain to everyone who honestly and intelligently seeks it.

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IT IS NEWS WORTH TALKING TO THE WORLD

How Ravages of Kidney Disease Are Checked in Quebec.

Mrs. Juliette Pothuizen, for Seven Years Suffering, Finds Quick Relief and Complete Cure in Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Whitworth, Bonaventure county, Que., No. 28.—(Special).—With the coming of winter the ravages of kidney disease are again felt in this Province, and the fact that a sure cure is vouchsafed for in this village is news worth giving to the world. Mrs. Juliette Pothuizen is the person cured, and she states without hesitation that she found her cure in Dodd's Kidney Pills.

"For seven years my heart and kidneys bothered me," Mrs. Pothuizen states, "I was always tired and nervous. I could not sleep. My limbs were heavy and I had a dragging sensation across the loins. My eyes had dark circles under them and were puffed and swollen. I was so ill I could hardly drag myself around to do my housework."

"A neighbor advised me to try Dodd's Kidney Pills, and I found relief in the first box. Six boxes made me perfectly well."

If you have any two of Mrs. Pothuizen's symptoms, your kidneys are diseased. Cure them and guard against serious, if not fatal, results, by using Dodd's Kidney Pills.

NEW CORSET MODEL CONFINES HIPS ONLY.

This is a simple story, but it is not radiant with beauty? Gratitude is not always manifested in so striking a manner, but all who take part in this work and do justly by the child may rest assured that no good deed is ever lost but in due time will bear abundant fruit.—J. J. Kelso, Toronto.

NERVE AGONIES

All Nervous Diseases Cured by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Nerves that are overworked or weak quickly indicate their distress by pain. That pain may be neuralgic or inflamed nerves, usually affecting the head, but often the spine and limbs. It may be nervous dyspepsia, easily started by worry, excitement or weakness. It may be St. Vitus' dance, a common affliction among children, or neurasthenia, a condition of general nervous exhaustion accompanied by acute melancholy. Worst of all the pain may signal the early stages of paralysis or nervous decay. At these disorders signify that the hungry nerves are clamoring for nourishment in the form of good, rich blood. The numerous cures of the above named nervous diseases and weakness in both sexes by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, are accounted for by the fact that these Pills actually make new, rich blood and so supply the starved nerves with the vital elements needed to strengthen them. Mr. Wm. G. Jones, Westmead, Man., says: "A few years ago it was my misfortune to suffer from nervous debility, brought about through a severe attack of grippe or influenza. When the first