

# A LOVE IS BEST

By Florence Hodgkinson

CHAPTER IV—(Continued.)

And then Harold amazed them by the question:

"Is there a school at Easthill-on-Sea? I never heard of one."

Easthill-on-Sea was about two miles from Easthill proper, in the opposite direction from Dynevor Manor and the Uplands. Within the last few years some speculators had got possession of land there, and were trying hard to convert what had been a fishing hamlet into a watering-place. They had not succeeded well, and the present result was a kind of straggling, unfinished settlement, which was neither town nor village. The old inhabitants of Easthill rather made game of the new watering-place, which will account for Kitty's laugh.

"I really don't know, Harold; I hardly ever go to Easthill-on-Sea. There may be half a dozen schools; but I hope not, for their proprietors' sakes, for I can't imagine that any one would send children there."

"I think you're hard on the place," said Harold. "There's a very good beach and a splendid air. I suppose people are to be found who can do without niggers at the seaside."

"Ah, but they'd want decent roads and tolerable comfort," objected Kitty; "and you know when it rains Easthill-on-Sea is almost a swamp, because no one has made up the roads. Then they only bake every other day, and the butcher's shop opens twice a week. It would take a good deal to make up for such drawbacks."

"It is all so unfinished," said Mrs. Dynevor. "The roads are staked out, and imposing names painted on sign-boards, like 'Elm avenue,' and 'Sea View gardens,' but neither avenue nor gardens boast a single house, and the roads are not even divided from each other, except by a few posts."

"Why are you so suddenly interested in Easthill-on-Sea?" demanded Kitty. "You can't possibly have been asked to recommend any one a school there?"

"Oh, dear, no; but I came home from Marton by train, and a girl got out at our station who wanted to go to Easthill-on-Sea. She asked the porter the way to Mrs. Tanner's school. He questioned the ticket collector, and even the station master himself, but neither of them had ever heard of it. I couldn't help feeling sorry for her, she looked so tired and sad. It must be hard lines to come off a long journey and not find any one who can direct you to your destination."

"Poor thing!" said Kitty, and then the subject dropped. None of the three guessed the influence the lonely little traveler was to have on their lives. It never dawned on Kitty that the unknown girl who was bound for a school no one had ever heard of was to be her dearest friend.

CHAPTER V.

Nothing will describe the desolation which filled Beryl Lindon's heart when she stepped on to the platform at Easthill. She had left London filled with the one desire of escaping from her father and stepmother. Ever since she heard of the former's marriage her one end and object had been to get safely away from Elcheater square. It was only when she had actually started, when Mrs. Markham's kindly face was lost to sight, that she realized she was going among strangers, that a new, untried life lay before her, with not one friendly voice to brighten it.

It was a long, tedious journey, and involved two changes. Easthill was on a branch line, at which only the slowest of trains descended to stop. She was very plainly dressed in black; but all her things had come from a West End shop, and there was an air of distinction about her not often seen in a lonely little third-class traveler.

She was eighteen, though she looked older—a very small, fairy-like creature, with soft, wavy brown hair, and big, lustrous blue-grey eyes. Her complexion was very fair, and had the delicate carnine tint.

She knew absolutely nothing of the country. Brighton, Brussels, where she had been at school, and the tall house in Elcheater square had made up her world. To find herself at a little rustic station, with only a few cottages in sight, was almost alarming. And no one at the station had heard of Mrs. Tanner's school. That of itself was enough to discourage her.

"Don't you be afraid, miss!" the station master said kindly. "If you wrote to the lady, and she had your letter, she must live here somewhere, and the postoffice are the best people to help you find her. You go straight along this lane till you come to a sign post, take the road marked 'Easthill-on-Sea,' and presently you'll see four or five shops. The postoffice is the first of the lot, and they'll put you right."

Beryl left her luggage to the porter's mercy and started. The lane seemed interminable. Perhaps in summer time it was pretty; but it was a late season, and the trees were hardly in bud. Their bare branches almost met in the middle of the lane, looking very like black, threatening hands uplifted against her—or Beryl thought so. She reached the sign post without meeting a single creature; but another half-mile brought her to the shop, and her heart gave a thrill of relief as she recognized the postoffice.

It was quite unlike any postoffice Beryl had ever seen, being a cottage with all business transacted in the

front parlor; while the room on the opposite side appeared to be a baker's, one stale loaf and half a dozen stodgy-looking buns being arranged in the window.

"Can you tell me the way to Mrs. Tanner's school—Woodlands, the house is called?" asked Beryl anxiously.

The young woman behind the counter was better informed than the hallway people, for she answered without any hesitation:

"It's the last house on the front. The name's not up; but you can't be mistaken because there are no more houses."

This was conclusive; but Beryl felt positively sinking from weakness and fatigue. She looked at the loaf of bread and buns, and finally asked the damsel in charge if she could have some refreshment—"a cup of tea or something."

"The fire's out, I expect. You can have a glass of milk and a plate of bread and butter, if you like."

The fare was plain, but it revived the traveler. The attendant gave her plenty of local information while she ate and drank. Mrs. Tanner had not been at Easthill-on-Sea long. There wasn't much opening for a school; there were very few residents, and naturally visitors didn't want to send their children to school when they came down in the summer.

"You do look tired!" she concluded. "But it's not much further now. The end of this street leads to the front, and Mrs. Tanner's is the last house on the right."

Beryl found the house easily; but her heart sank as she looked at it. It was so new that at the back the piece of waste ground called a garden was not yet fenced off, and the front railings had not yet been fenced off. Woodlands looked as though it had been built elsewhere, brought to Easthill on a trolley, and just popped down on the first vacant space. The wind howled round it, the waves which dashed over the shingle seemed to laugh derisively at it, and even to poor Beryl the huge board over the front windows—"Ladies' School"—seemed grotesque in such a place.

She rang the bell. It was so stiff her fingers could hardly move it, and when at last it rang it made such a noise she decided Mrs. Tanner would think her new teacher very impatient. There was not the least sound of movement in the house, and Beryl was actually contemplating a second ring when the door was flung suddenly open, and a very small servant in a very big white apron stood regarding her curiously.

"Is Mrs. Tanner at home? I think she is expecting me. I am the new governess."

"You're to come this way," said the child—she really was very little more. And Beryl followed her across a goodsized hall to a small sitting-room at the back, the door of which her guide opened encouragingly.

"You go straight in," she commanded.

It was a very small room, and rather sparsely furnished; but what Beryl saw first was a tall, slight woman in widow's weeds, who came forward to meet her with such a frightened face that the girl felt compelled to take the initiative.

"I am afraid I am later than you expected, Mrs. Tanner; but it is a long walk from the station, and I came slowly so as not to lose my way."

"You look cold and tired," said Mrs. Tanner gently. "Sit down and warm yourself. Rhoda will bring tea soon; I waited for you."

"It was very kind of you," Beryl began, and then she broke down helplessly and cried as though her heart would break. Of course it was behaving disgracefully, it was most unbecoming and childish; but those few kindly words had been the last touch.

Mrs. Tanner did not seem in the least angry. She took Beryl's hand and held it for a minute or two, then she said gently:

"I don't wonder at your being upset, my dear. When I first came here in January I loathed the place quite as much as you can do. I came from a pretty country rectory, with a dear old garden and trees that had stood the test of centuries, and this bleak, desolate place seemed terrible to me; but, Miss Lindon, work is the best cure for sadness, and even Easthill-on-Sea seems brighter when one is busy."

"Please forgive me!" said Beryl, pleadingly. "Indeed, I am not discontented; it was only that you were so kind to me."

"Did you expect me to be an ogress?" asked Mrs. Tanner. "When you have had some tea and feel rested I will tell you all about things. I am afraid you will find plenty of rough places at Woodlands, but they won't be of my making."

Tea was delightful. With curtains drawn and the lamps lighted, the room seemed quite a snugger; and Mrs. Tanner saw that Beryl had plenty of the fare provided.

"I would rather tell you everything before you see my sister," she said, when Rhoda had taken away the things. My husband died last November. He was the best and kindest man who ever lived, but he wasn't businesslike, and when all the expenses were paid I had only £20 and the furniture to keep myself and the children. Of course I knew I should have to work; but I had never had to earn my

living, and I did not know how to set about it. My sister is the only near relation I have. She is very rich, and she likes to manage. She decided I had better keep a school, then the twins could be educated for nothing. Her husband had a good deal of property round here, and they offered me this house rent free for three years.

"Of course"—she flushed painfully—"the Wiltons are in a very good position here, and it would not do for it to be known any one connected with them had to keep a school, so I promised Mary I would never mention the relationship. She has really been very good. She speaks of me to people as 'a young widow in whom she is interested,' and altogether I have twelve pupils. If the new ones promised this term come tomorrow I shall have fifteen. They pay £2 a term, so that I have £30 a year; but I found out if I had any one who could teach French and really good music I should get more scholars and keep them till they were older. That is why I thought of getting help. Besides, with only Rhoda, there is a great deal to do domestically, and the twins' clothes have to be made and mended."

"How old are the twins?" asked Beryl.

"Four. Rather young to be in school all day; but I can't send them out alone, and I don't like them to be in the kitchen with Rhoda. Miss Lindon, I know I am offering you a very small salary; but I think if you and I fit in you may really be happier here than in a grander situation."

"I am sure of it," said Beryl. "Mrs. Tanner, I don't think any one in the whole world can be lonelier than I am, and if only you will keep me, I shall be glad to stay."

Mrs. Tanner gave a little sigh.

"Mary—Mrs. Wilton—will be round in the morning. You must not mind if she seems a little overbearing. Oh, and there is the thing she wanted me to say—she does not like your name at all."

Beryl professed her regret, but hardly saw the objection was her fault.

"It's in this way," explained Mrs. Tanner. "The show place near here, Dynevor Manor, belongs to a Mr. Lindon, though General Craven lives there. Mary thinks it a slight to Mr. Lindon that my teacher should have the same name. Her husband is his agent, and goes to see him sometimes at his grand house in Elcheater square, Belgrave. Of course I told Mrs. Lindon would never hear of my school, much less my teacher's name; but she was very disagreeable, and said it could not matter to you, and that by changing one letter the name sounded quite differently. Do you mind being Miss Lendon? You see, it won't make any difference to your letters, because most people loop their i's now, so that they look like e's."

Beryl felt inclined to bless Mrs. Wilton. If, as she now felt positive, her father were the owner of Dynevor Manor, why, then, her one desire was that he might never hear his fugitive daughter was living beneath its shadow. She had never heard him speak of Sussex, or of possessing property in the country. Surely it was strange that, with all England before her, she should have drifted to the one place where he had interest.

School began the next day. The fifteen girls were nice things. Mrs. Wilton's interest had procured some. The clerk of the works employed by her husband to watch his interests in the building operations, sent three small daughters; the tax collector contributed two; but there was a sprinkling of a higher grade—the curate's only child, and the doctor's two little girls. Mrs. Wilton struck Beryl as far less refined than her sister. She and her husband were rich, and gloried in their money, though as yet it had not been able to force an entrance into the society of Easthill proper, which was of the select and exclusive kind known as "county."

(To be Continued.)

## CHURCH MONEY.

Some Odd Ways in Which Women Earned It.

The women folk of the Methodist church at Oxford recently set out to earn money for certain church purposes, and a meeting was held at which each woman or girl recited the method by which she had earned her contribution, says the Boston Journal. Some of the recitals were funny enough to convulse the audience, and a few are epitomized as follows: Miss Mary Dobbs started out to do some janitor work, but got tired and subcontracted the job, though saving for herself a margin of profit. Mrs. M. Collins said that one day her husband was tearing around the house hunting for his overshoes and said he would give a half a dollar to know what had become of them. She told him she had sold them to the ragman, and demanded the half. Mrs. Bay kalsomined her own house and saved the dollar which an old colored man demanded for the job. Miss Zulu Cole engaged in a great variety of employments. She got 5 cents for washing Mrs. Middleton's dishes, 10 cents for doing some sewing for her sister, 5 cents from her uncle for keeping her mouth shut five minutes, 5 cents for killing three cats, 15 cents for sweeping the sidewalk in front of two stores, and 5 cents for popping some corn.

Miss Lydia Mills made 50 cents by mending the harness and making a new halter for the cow. Miss Lottis Morrill got 50 cents for doctoring a sick calf.

Tombs are but the clothes of the dead. A grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered Fuller.

A PETITION.

Here among your poppy fields,  
Idleness, I pray you,  
Let me wander lazy-eyed,  
Slow of thought and pace;  
Empty-handed, light of heart,  
Eager to obey you.  
To loaf and make a madrigal  
Tuned to fit your face.

Sick am I of strife and toil,  
I would seek your dainties.  
Count the clouds and doze and dream  
Through drowsy afternoons.  
Frithee, take me by the hand—  
Show me where the way is—  
Let me change the dink of gold  
For your linnets' tunes.

Idleness! Oh, Idleness,  
Smile a welcome for me.  
Here's a minstrel out of voice,  
A weary heart to rest,  
Soothe me with the pipe of Pan,  
Hum his music o'er me.  
Look me like a tired child  
Sleepy on your breast.

—Theodosia Pickering Garrison.

## Blunders of John Carster.

By Gaston Harvey.

(Copyright, 1903, by Daily Story Pub. Co.)  
"Well, I suppose this is the end of it." John Carster heaved a heavy sigh, and strode along moodily. Helen looked at him curiously and then asked:

"The end of what?"  
"You know as well as I do what I refer to. To be perfectly plain, I hear it reported on very good authority that you are to marry this Monte Cristo. And that is what I mean when I say that I suppose we will not take many more walks together." He looked at her keenly.

"I suppose it is but a further exemplification of the doctrine announced by the Bible, where it says 'To him who hath, it shall be given, and to him who hath not it shall be taken away,' and I want to add to that, 'even that which he may seem to have.' I suppose that if I was on the upward tide, everything would be coming my way, but as I seem to be stationary, notwithstanding my frantic efforts to swim, everything appears to pass me, just out of reach."

There was a silence for a few moments. Helen reached in a fence corner and pulled a great glittering spray of golden rods. She did not look at him. After a few moments she said in a low voice:

"You are getting better, Joan. Don't do it. It does not help you."

"Don't you think I have cause to be bitter? A man can smile and stand a great deal; he can stand a great deal more without giving evidence of his suffering, and there is still another degree of pain, which turns everything to gall. I have suffered that."

"You are very wrong to look at things that way," replied the woman.  
"What have you to be bitter over? You possess youth, and health, and strength, and ability—all those are priceless gifts. You are well thought of by everyone, and I see no cause for you to think your lot is hard."

"Yes, what you say is true, but I have not the great essential—money. I might be a paralytic, and just have enough sense to keep out of a lunatic asylum, and enough morals to keep from being locked up as a menace to society, but if I had money, all that would be overlooked, and I would be better thought of than I am now. As it is, I am not considered at all."

"Not considered by whom?"  
"Everybody. And someone in particular whom I wish to consider me, and who has refused, I have tried everything else; I have placed myself at her feet. Love does not count."

Her face was crimson. She looked far away over the serene, brown fields, and at last said:

"Then what am I to deduce from that assertion—it isn't clear."

"You are not to deduce anything—I state it as my positive conviction that, given on the one hand a man with everything to make him desirable in the eyes of a woman, but with no money, and on the other hand a



"You are getting better, John—Don't do it."

man with nothing to recommend him but money, as between the two a woman will choose the man with the money ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. That's what I mean."

"Why John, why John!" There was an infinity of reproach in those words.

"Yes, I mean it!" he added. "I mean every word of it. Women are essentially selfish, and they love the soft side of life. They know that money will make a soft side to anything, and therefore, they are on the side of money."

"I am sorry for you," she said simply. "I thought that you had a higher idea of women."

"Haven't I a right to be bitter?" he continued. "Haven't I every right to such ideas? If it has not been demonstrated to me, nothing has. There is nothing so convincing as personal experience, and it is from that I speak."

"I have known you a long time, John, and I know of no such instance

in your career that you speak of. When was it?"

"You know very well what I allude to. You know that I have loved you for all these years, since we were little more than children. You know that there has not been a day that the incense of my soul was not offered to you, I have loved you truly, faithfully, unwaveringly. You know that my highest dream of earthly happiness was to some day make a home for you, where I could have you with me always. You know that my waking thoughts are all of you; that I dream of you at night; that not a plan I have made has not had you in its inspiration, with the hope that it would conduce toward the end I wished. There has not been an ambition in my brain that was not caused by my wish to excel and make you proud of me."

"The rest of the world can go hang—you are my world, the all in all for me. And now, after all these years, all that counts for naught. There comes into your life a great big, beefy man—you know little about him except that he is very wealthy, and in the course of two months he undoes

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Riding on a Shark.

One of the more wonderful fish stories of the century is told in the New York Press of Dr. Ralph Smith, a noted surgeon of Jacksonville. While in bathing in surf about up to his waist over on the East coast a big shark swam between his legs, forcing him to a sitting posture and swimming out to sea with his burden astride. The sensation nearly cost the doctor his hair and whiskers. He declares he was on the shark's back fully half a minute. When the monster got in deep water he slid off.

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