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HER LAST POSY.

In the rarest of English valleys A motherless girl ran wild. And the greenness and silence and gladness Were soul of the soul of the child.

THE LAWYER'S SECRET.

By B. L. Farjeon, Author of "Bread, Cheese and Kisses."

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

The dim lamp was shaded from the eyes of the invalid by a white porcelain screen, which subdued the light, and cast great shadows of the furniture upon the walls of the room.

He lay for some time quite quietly, with his face still turned away from Ellinor, but by the incessant nervous motion of the hand lying upon the counterpane, she knew that he was not asleep.

The doctor opened the door softly, and looked in.

"If he says anything to you," he whispered to Ellinor, "hear it quietly; but do not ask him any questions; and, above all, do not betray agitation."

She bowed her head in assent, and the physician closed the door.

Suddenly Horace Margrave turned his face to her, and looking at her earnestly with his haggard eyes, said:

"Ellinor Dalton, you ask me what this means. I will tell you. The very day on which you left England, a strange chance led me into the heart of a manufacturing town—a town which was being ravaged by the fearful scourge of an infectious fever; I was in a very weak state of health, and, as might be expected, I caught this fever. I was warned, when it was perhaps not yet too late to have taken precautions which might have saved me, but I would not take those precautions. I was too great a coward to commit suicide. Some people say a man is too brave to kill himself—I was not—but I was too much a coward. Life was hateful, but I was afraid to die. Yet I would not avert a danger which had not been my own seeking. Let the fever kill me, if it would, Ellinor, my wish is fast being accomplished. I am dying."

"Horace! Horace!" She fell on her knees once more at the side of the bed, and taking the thin hand in hers, pressed it to her lips.

He drew it away as if he had been stung. "For heaven's sake, Ellinor, if you have any pity—no tenderness! That I cannot bear. For four years you have never seen me without a mask. I am going to let it fall. You will curse me, you will hate me soon, Ellinor Dalton!"

"Hate you, Horace—never!"

He waved his hand impatiently, as if to wave away protestations that must soon be falsified.

"Wait," he said; "you do not know." Then, after a brief pause, he continued—"Ellinor, I have not been the kindest or the tenderest of guardians, have I, to my beautiful young ward? You reproached me with my cold indifference one day soon after your marriage, in the little drawing-room in Herford street."

"You remember that?"

"I remember that! Ellinor, you never spoke one word to me in your life which I do not remember; as well as the accent in which it was spoken, and the place where I heard it. I say, I have not been a kind or affectionate guardian—have I, Ellinor?"

"You were so once, Horace," she said.

"I was so once! When, Ellinor?"

"Before my uncle left me that wretched fortune."

"That wretched fortune—yes, that divided us at once and forever. Ellinor, there were two reasons for this pitiful comedy of cold indifference. Can you guess one of them?"

"No," she answered.

"You cannot? I affected an indifference I did not feel, or pretended an apathy which was a lie from first to last, because, Ellinor Dalton, I loved you with the whole strength of my heart and soul, from the first to the last."

"O, Horace! Horace! for pity's sake!" She stretched out her hands imploringly, as if she would prevent the utterance of the words which seemed to break her heart.

"Ellinor, when you were seventeen years of age, you had no thought of succeeding to your uncle's property. It would have been, upon the whole, a much more natural thing for him to have left it to his adopted son, Henry Dalton. Your poor father expected that he would do so; I expected the same. Your father intrusted me with the cus-

tody of your little income, and I discharged my trust honestly. I was a great speculator; I dabbled with thousands, and cast down heavy sums every day, as a gambler throws down a card upon the gaming-table; and to me your mother's little fortune was so insignificant a trust, that its management never gave me a moment's thought or concern. At this time I was going on in a fair way to become a rich man; in fact, was a rich man; and, Ellinor, I was an honorable man. I loved you—loved you as I never believed I could love—my innocent and beautiful ward; how could it well be otherwise? I am not a coxcomb, Ellinor; and if there is one character I hold more in contempt than another, it is that of a lady-killer; but I dared to say to myself—'I love, and am beloved again.' Those dark and deep gray eyes, Ellinor, had told me the secret of a young and confiding heart; and I thought myself more than happy—only too deeply blest. Oh, Ellinor! Ellinor! if I had spoken then."

Her head was buried in her hands, as she knelt by his pillow, and she was sobbing aloud.

"There was time enough, I said. This Ellinor, was the happiest period of my life. Do you remember our quiet evenings in the Rue St. Dominique, when I left business and business cares behind me in Verulam Buildings, and ran over here to spend a week in my young ward's society? Do you remember the books we read together? Good heavens! there is a page in Lamartine's 'Odes,' which I can see before me as I speak! I can see the lights and shadows which I taught you to put under the cupola of a church in Munich, you once painted in water-colors. I can recall every thought, every word, every pleasure, and every emotion of that sweet and tranquil time in which I hoped and believed that you, Ellinor, would be my wife."

She lifted her face, blind and blotted by her tears, and looking at him for one brief instant, let it fall again upon her hands.

"Your uncle died, Ellinor, and the fair elevation of this palace of my life, which I had built with such confidence, was shivered to the ground. The fortune was left to you on condition that you married Henry Dalton. Women are ambitious. You would never surely resign such a fortune. You would marry young Dalton. This was the lawyer's answer to the all-important question. But those tender gray eyes, looking up from under their veil of inky lashes, had told a sweet secret, and perhaps your generous heart might count this fortune a very small thing to fling away for the sake of the man you loved. This was the lover's answer, and I hoped still, Ellinor, to win my darling. You were not to be made acquainted with the conditions of your uncle's will until you attained your majority. You were, at the time of his death, barely twenty years of age; there was, then, an entire year in which you should remain ignorant of the penalties attached to this unexpected wealth. In the meantime, I, as sole executor (your uncle, you see, trusted me entirely), had the custody of the fabled property John Arden, of Arden, had left."

"I have told you, Ellinor, that I was a speculator. My profession threw me in the way of speculation. Confident in the power of my own intellect, I staked my fortune on the wonderful hazards of 1846. I doubled that fortune, trebled, quadrupled it, and when it had grown to be four times its original bulk, I staked it again. It was out of my hands, but was invested in, as I thought, so safe a speculation, that it was as secure as if it had never left my bankers. The railway company of which I was director was one of the richest and most flourishing in England. My own fortune, as I have told you, was entirely invested, and was doubling itself rapidly. As your uncle's trustee, as your devoted friend, your interests were dearer to me than my own. Why should I not speculate with your fortune, double it, and then say to you: 'See, Ellinor, here are two fortunes of which you are the mistress; one you owe to Henry Dalton, under the conditions of your uncle's will; the others is yours alone. You are rich, you are free, without any sacrifice, to marry the man you love; and this, Ellinor, is my work!' This was what I thought to have said to you at the close of the year of speculation, 1846."

"Oh, Horace, Horace! I see it all. Spare yourself, spare me! Do not tell me any more."

"Spare myself! No, Ellinor, not one pang, not one heart-break. I deserve it all. You were right in what you said in the boudoir at Sir Lionel's. The money was not my own; no sophistry, no ingenious twisting of facts and forcing of conclusions, could ever make it mine. How do I know even now that your interest was really my only motive in the step I took? How do I know that it was not, indeed, the gambler's guilty madness only, which impelled me to my crime? How do I know? How do I know? Enough! the crash came; my fortune and yours were together engulfed in the vast destruction; and I, the trusted friend of your dead father, the conscientious lawyer, whose name had become a synonym for honor and honesty; I Horace Welmsden Margrave, only lineal descendant of the royalist, Captain Margrave, who perished at Worcester, fighting for his King and the honor of his noble race; I Ellinor, was a cheat and a swindler—a dishonest and dishonorable man!"

"Dishonorable, Horace! No, no; only mistaken."

"Mistaken, Ellinor? Yes, that is one of the words invented by dishonest men, to slur over their dishonesty. The fraudulent banker in whose ruin the fate of thousands, who have trusted him and believed in him, is involved, is, after all, as his friends say, only mistaken. The clerk, who robs his employer in the

insane hope of restoring what he has abstracted, is, as his counsel pleads to a soft-hearted jury, with sons of their own, only mistaken! The speculator, who plays the great game of commercial hazard with another man's money, he, too, dares to look at the world with a pitiful face, and cry: 'Alas! I was only mistaken!' No, Ellinor, I have never put in that plea. From the moment of that terrible crash, which shattered my whole life into ruin and desolation, I have, at least, tried to look my fate in the face. But I have not borne all my own burdens, Ellinor. The heaviest weight of my crime has fallen upon the innocent shoulders of Henry Dalton."

"Henry Dalton, my husband?"

"Yes, Ellinor, your husband, Henry Dalton, the truest, noblest, most honorable, and most conscientious of men."

"You praise him so much," she said, rather bitterly.

"Yes, Ellinor, I am weak enough and wicked enough to feel a cruel pain in being compelled to do so; it is the last poor duty I can do him. Heaven knows I have done him enough injury."

The exertion of talking for so long a time had completely exhausted him, and he fell back, half fainting, upon the pillows. The Sister of Mercy, summoned from the next apartment by Ellinor, administered a restorative to him; and, in low, broken accents, he continued:

"From the moment of my ruin, Ellinor, I felt and knew that you were forever lost to me. I could bear this; I did not think my life would be a long one; it had been hitherto lit by no star of hope, shone upon by no sunlight of love. *Vogue la galere!* Let it go on its own dark way to the end. I say, I could bear this, but I could not bear the thought of your contempt; your aversion; that was too bitter. I could not come to you, and say: 'I love you; I have always loved you; I love you as I never before loved, as I never hoped to love; but I am a swindler and a cheat, and you can never be mine!' No, Ellinor, I could not do this; and yet you were on the eve of coming of age. Some step must be taken, and the only thing that could save me from this alternative was the generosity of Henry Dalton."

"I had heard a great deal of your uncle's adopted son, and I had met him very often at Arden. I knew him to be as noble and true-hearted a man as ever breathed the breath of human life. I determined, therefore, to throw myself upon his generosity, and to reveal all. 'He will despise me, but I can bear his contempt better than the scorn of the woman I loved,' I said this to myself, and one night—the night after Henry Dalton had first seen you, and had been deeply fascinated with the radiant beauty of my lovely ward, that very night after the day on which you came of age—I took Henry Dalton into my chambers in Verulam Buildings, and, after binding him with an oath of the most implicit secrecy, I told him all."

"You now understand the cruel position which Henry Dalton was placed. The fortune which he was supposed to possess on marrying you, never existed. You were penniless, except, indeed, for the hundred a year coming to you from your mother's property. His solemn oath forbade him to reveal this to you; and for three years he endured your contempt, and was silent. Judge now of the wrong I have done him! Judge now the noble heart which you have trampled upon and tortured!"

"Oh, Horace! Horace! what misery this money has brought upon us!"

"No, Ellinor. What misery one deviation from the straight line of honor has brought upon us! Ellinor, dearest, only beloved, can you forgive the man who has so truly loved, yet so deeply injured you?"

"Forgive you?"

She rose from her knees, and smoothing the thick, dark hair from his white forehead, with tender, pitying hands, looked him full in the face.

"Horace," she said, "when, long ago, you thought I loved you, you read my heart aright; but the depth and truth of that love you could never read. Now, now that I am the wife of another, another to whom I owe so very much affection in reparation of the wrong I have done him, I dare tell you without a thought which is a sin against him, how much I loved you—and you ask me if I can forgive. As freely as I would have resigned this money for your sake, can I forgive you for the loss of it. This confession has set all right. I will be a good wife to Henry Dalton, and you and he may be sincere friends yet."

"What, Ellinor, do you think that, did I not know myself to be dying, I could have made this confession? No, you see me now under the influence of stimulants which give me a false strength; of excitement, which is strong enough to master even death. To-morrow night, Ellinor, the doctors tell me, there will no longer be in this weary world a weak, vacillating, dishonorable wretch called Horace Margrave."

He stretched out his attenuated hands, drew her towards him, and imprinted one kiss upon her forehead.

"The first and the last, Ellinor," he said. "Good-by."

His face changed to a deadlier white than before, and he fell back, fainting. The physician, peeping in at the half-open door, beckoned to Ellinor.

"You must leave him at once, my dear madame," he said. "Had I not seen the dreadfully disturbed state of his mind, I should never have permitted this interview."

"Oh, monsieur, tell me, can you save him?"

"Only by a miracle, madame. A miracle far beyond medical skill."

"You yourself, then, have no hope?"

"Not a shadow of hope."

She bowed her head. The physician took her hand in his, and pressed it with a fatherly tenderness, looking at her earnestly and mournfully.

"Send for me to-morrow," she said, imploringly.

"Your presence can only endanger him, madame; but I will send you tidings of his state. Adieu!"

The following morning, as she was seated in her own apartment, she was once more summoned into the drawing-room.

The Sister of Mercy was there, talking to her aunt. They both looked grave and thoughtful, and glanced anxiously at Ellinor, as she entered the room.

"He is worse?" said Ellinor to the Sister, before a word had been spoken.

"Unhappily, yes, Madame, he is!"—"Oh, do not tell me any more! For pity's sake!" she exclaimed. "So young, so gifted, so admired; and it was in this very room we passed such happy hours together years ago."

She walked with tearful eyes to the window, and, leaning her head against the glass, looked down into the street below, and out at the cheerless gray of the autumn sky.

She was thinking how new and strange the world looked to her now that Horace Margrave was dead.

They erected a very modest tomb over the remains of Horace Margrave in the Cemetery of Pere la Chaise. There had been some thoughts of conveying his ashes to his native country, that they might rest in the church of Margrave, a little village in Westmoreland, the chancel of which church was decorated with a recumbent statue of Algernon Margrave, cavalier, who fell at the Worcester fight; but as he, the deceased, had no nearer relative than a few second cousins in the army and the church, and a superannuated Admiral, his great uncle, and, as it is furthermore discovered that the accomplished solicitor of Verulam Buildings, Gray's Inn, had not left a penny behind him, the idea was quickly abandoned, and the last remains of the admired Horace were left to decay in the soil of a foreign grave.

It was never fully known who caused the simple tablet which ultimately adorned his resting-place to be erected. It was a plain block of marble; no pompous Latin epitaph, or long list of virtues, was thereon engraved; but a half-burned torch, suddenly extinguished, was sculptured at the bottom of the tablet, while from the smoke of the torch a butterfly mounted upward. Above this design there was merely inscribed the name and age of the deceased.

The night following the day of Horace Margrave's funeral, Henry Dalton was seated, hard at work, at his chambers in the Temple.

The light of the office lamp falling upon his quiet face, revealed a mournful and careworn expression not usual to him.

He looked ten years older since his marriage to Ellinor.

He had fought the battle of life, and lost—lost in the great battle which some hold so lightly, but which to others is an earnest fight—lost in the endeavor to win the wife he could so tenderly and truly have loved.

He had now nothing left to him but his profession—no other ambition—no other hope.

"I will work hard," he said, "that she, though separated from me forever, may still at least derive every joy, of those poor joys which money can buy, from my labor."

He had heard nothing of either Horace Margrave's journey to Paris, his illness, or his death. He had no hope of being ever released from the oath which bound him to silence—to silence which he had sworn to preserve so long as Horace Margrave lived.

Tired, but still persevering, and absorbed in a difficult case, which needed all the professional acumen of the clever young barrister, who read and wrote on until past eleven o'clock.

Just as the clocks were chiming the half hour after eleven, he heard the bell of the outer door ring, as if pulled by an agitated hand.

His chambers were on the first floor; on the floor below were those of a gentleman who always left at six o'clock.

"I do not expect any one at such an hour; but it may be for me," he thought.

He heard his clerk open the door, and went on writing without once lifting his head.

Three minutes afterwards the door of his own office opened, and a person entered unannounced. He looked up suddenly. A lady dressed in mourning, with her face entirely concealed by a thick veil, stood near the door.

"Madame," he said, with some surprise, "may I ask?"

She came hurriedly from the door by which she stood and fell on her knees at his feet, throwing up her veil as she did so.

"Ellinor!"

"Yes, I am in mourning for Horace Margrave, my unhappy guardian. He died a week ago in Paris. He told me all. Henry Dalton, my friend, my husband, my benefactor, can you forgive me?"

He passed his hand rapidly across his eyes, and turned his face away from her.

Presently he raised her in his arms, and, drawing her to his breast, said in a broken voice:

"Ellinor, I have suffered so long and so bitterly that I can scarcely bear this great emotion. My dearest, my darling, my adored and beloved wife, are we, indeed, at last set free from the terrible secret which has had such a cruel influence on our lives. Horace Margrave?"

"Is dead, Henry! I once loved him very dearly. I freely forgave him the injury he did me. Tell me that you forgive him, too."

"From my inmost heart, Ellinor!"

FACTS AND FIGURES.

—During the past fiscal year 46,632 agricultural patents were issued from the General Land Office at Washington. —Chicago Journal.

—A statistician estimates that the people of the United States have to pay twenty-three dollars a minute for Congress while in session.

—The root and herb establishment in Carroll County, Va., is said to be the largest on this continent, 8,000 pounds of roots being taken in every week. Within a radius of thirty miles there are over 2,000 varieties of medicinal flora, of which over 1,200 specimens have been collected.

—The Suez Canal is one of the most valuable pieces of property in the world. The net profits last year were over \$5,000,000. This was an increase of over 28 per cent. over the profits of the previous year. Each ship that passes through the canal pays a little over 20 cents a ton. —N. Y. Herald.

—During the past six months 92 persons, aged 90 and upward, died in Philadelphia. Of these 17 were men and 75 were women. Five of the women were centenarians, and one man, the oldest of the lot, was James McTague, who had reached the age of 105. There were also 178 men and 311 women who were 80 or beyond it when death called them away. These statistics prove that women are the longest lived. —Philadelphia Record.

—The coal-fields of Alabama cover 10,860 square miles, and the coal is all bituminous, but differs widely in quality. The best coal in the State, and in fact in the United States, being fully equal to English cannel coal, is the Montevallo coal. No industry in the State has had so rapid a growth as the coal industry. In 1872 only 10,000 tons were mined in the State; in 1879 the annual output had been swelled to 290,000 tons; in 1880 to 340,000 tons, and in 1881 to 400,000 tons. —Chicago Times.

—The overseers of the poor in Boston have \$525,828 in trust funds, the income of which is annually distributed for specific purposes, in accordance with the desires of the donors, or disposed of by the overseers for the best interests of those whom they deem entitled to receive it. The largest of these funds is the "David Sears charity," amounting to \$260,645. Other large funds are the Boylston education fund, amounting to \$120,181, and the Pemberton general fund, amounting to \$104,602.

—There are 537 churches in Philadelphia—a figure which entitles that town to be called "the city of churches" in contradistinction to Brooklyn, and the assessed valuation of this property, according to the official report just published, is \$17,000,000. The largest valuation is that of the Roman Catholic Cathedral (\$285,000), and the next largest the Jewish Synagogue on Broad street (\$220,000). These figures, of course, represent only a percentage of the actual values, but they indicate that religion in its various forms is not an unknown quantity in the city of brotherly love. —N. Y. Times.

WIT AND WISDOM.

—Shallow men believe in luck; strong men believe in cause and effect.

—You can have what you like in this world, if you will but like what you have.

—Said a fond husband to his wife: "My dear, I think I'll buy you a little dog." "Oh, no!" she replied, "do not! I prefer giving you all my affections!" —Progress.

—Here lies a man whose earthly race is run; He raised the hammer of a rowling gun, And blew into the muzzle just because He wished to know if it was loaded—and it was.

—Mr. Editor: Will you please answer who was "David's wife's mother?" and you will greatly oblige a reader.—Lizzie. Certainly, with pleasure. David's wife's mother was David's mother-in-law. —Philadelphia News.

—An accordion factory at Long Island, N. Y., was destroyed by fire a few days ago. The police are looking for the incendiary. It is supposed the people want to present him with a valuable testimonial. —Norristown Herald.

—Gus De Smith called at a very fashionable house on Austin avenue a few days ago and acted so queerly that when that lady's husband came home, she said: "What is the matter with young De Smith? He acted so strangely. I think there must be a screw loose about him somewhere." "Reckon not. I saw him this morning, and he was tight all over." —Texas Siftings.

—A store up-town has a sign which reads: "This is a tin-store." An old inebriate staggered in recently, and after a good deal of fumbling in his pocket, put five cents on the counter. "What do you want?" asked the proprietor, indignantly. "Wa-wa-wa-a-a-d-d-d-drink!" "This is not a liquor saloon!" said the proprietor, with awful emphasis. "Wha-wa-what!" said the drunken man, astonished. "Why, Jo-Jo-Jones said I could get a horn here!" —N. Y. Tribune.

—A good adviser says: "Next to the love of her husband, nothing so crowns a woman's life with honor as the devotion of a son to her. We never knew a boy to turn out badly who began by falling in love with his mother. Any man may fall in love with a fresh-faced girl, and the man who is gallant to the girl may cruelly neglect the poor and weary wife in after years. But the big boy who is a lover of his mother at middle age is a true knight, who will love his wife in the serene spring of life as he did in the daisied year. There is nothing so beautifully chivalrous as the love of a big boy for his mother. Boys, think of this!"

[THE END.]