

IRENE'S VOW

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

"You must not dare to touch me," she cried, "the gulf between us is deeper than the grave. You make no mistake about me." She stood before him, proud of a young queen. "Make no mistake, I am not going to float down the stream with the lost and the unhappy. I was a good, innocent girl when I met you—in my own heart I am good and innocent now. You have duped and deceived me; the shame of that falls on you, and not on me. Before the pure, bright heavens I hold up my head proudly as I have ever done, and the shame recoils from me to you. I have willingly done no wrong; I would rather—heaven knows I am speaking the truth—I would rather have died than have done wrong; and, to my thinking, the wrong-doing falls from me, leaving me unharmed. I go from your presence, humiliated, mortified, grieved and wounded, but, thank heaven, not disgraced. You have sinned against me; I have not sinned."

"Irene," he cried, to stop the passionate current of words, "Irene, do listen to reason; we need not part. I will love you to my life's end. I will live for you." "Stay," she said, laughingly. "Remember that each word of yours adds insult to injury. I ask you now one fair, honest question. You own that you have sinned against me; that you have wronged me; that you would fain undo the evil you have done."

"Yes, I own all that," he replied. "I ask you now, most solemnly, most pleadingly, will you undo that wrong? You say that you love me, that you cannot live without me. I ask you, will you make me your wife? Give up Lady Lira. I will love you more faithfully and fondly by far. I will give all my woman's wits and talents to help you. Marry me, even now, and make me your lawful wife."

"I must refuse," he answered. "You persist in your resolution of marrying Lady Lira?" "I must so persist," he replied. "I cannot help it, Irene."

"No tears, no prayers, no pleading will avail," she asked.

"No, I must speak plainly. No," she said.

"You have trusted me so far; will you tell me the name of the man who helped you in your fraud?"

"He had no name," she said, scornfully. "If you could trust me with Lady Lira's name you may surely tell me his."

"I will tell you," he said. "It is Vane Forrester."

"Vane Forrester. Ah, well, we shall meet some day. Heaven is great and just; we shall meet; so here in life, Sir Hubert Estmere, we part—remember always, with my unutterable scorn and contempt, I should despise from my heart the man who needlessly shot a sweet singing bird, who wantonly tortured a butterfly, who destroyed, without reason, the life of a flower. What I feel for the man who could deliberately take the heart and soul of an innocent girl into his hands to destroy it you can better understand than I can explain. Of one thing be assured—you have not so destroyed mine. Against you and Vane Forrester I appeal to heaven. I swear for vengeance. And, listen while I swear it. This is my vow. You will remember it in the years to come. I swear by the truth of heaven, I swear by my mother's grave, by my father's love, by my own outraged honor, I swear to have vengeance against you, should I spend my whole life in seeking it. When the time comes for it you shall kneel before me with blinding hot tears asking for mercy, but you shall ask in vain. Now, farewell. Greatness, honor and glory lay before you; but trouble in the midst of it. Do not forget, sleeping or waking, Irene's vow."

"Stay, Irene!" he cried.

hand of one of the richest heiresses in England, the daughter of England's wealthiest statesman, whose "nod meant place." Yet Sir Hubert did not look as happy as, under the circumstances, he ought to have looked.

His face was pale; his manner had something of anxiety in it. More than one remarked that he looked round frequently as though he expected something or someone that never came. For how could he help it? The whole time, every moment, in his own mind, he was going through the details of that false marriage, the pretended marriage with the girl whom he had never intended to make his wife.

The beautiful words of the marriage service fell clear and distinct; for the second time in his life he said them; the first time had been in mockery when he tried his best to ruin a pure and beautiful soul; this time he was in terrible earnest, and he realized it as time went on.

More than once, as the ceremony proceeded, he turned round suddenly with something of fear in his face; he remembered that vow of Irene's, and he wondered so often how it would be fulfilled. Suppose that, as they emerged from the church door, they should meet Irene—Irene, her beautiful face aflame with vengeance. He shuddered at the bare idea of it, then laughed at himself for his folly. No, Irene could never be guilty of making a scene; it was unlike her altogether. She was a lady by nature, by birth; she would never be guilty of the vulgarity of making a scene; yet, none the less he looked anxious as the brilliant procession quitted the church.

It was all right; there was no beautiful face quivering with passion, no indignant voice denouncing his in passing words. He was relieved when it was all over, and he, with his newly made wife, started on their wedding tour. Then, and then only, Lady Lira found time to tell him of her strange wedding present.

"Hubert," she said, suddenly, "we have begun life with a hidden foe."

It was no surprise to him; he was so sure that Irene would keep her vow that before his wife told him what had happened he knew that it was something concerning her.

"We have a hidden foe," said Lady Estmere, "whose one motto against us is 'war to the knife.' Imagine, Hubert, that among my wedding presents this morning I received a parcel sealed in black. When I opened it there lay a silver dagger with a little pearl handle, and over it was written, 'War to the knife.' It was addressed to me, and the writing was a woman's. Now, can you guess ever so faintly who sent me that?"

"How could I possibly guess?" he said. "Yet in his heart he knew it was Irene. It was so exactly like her, just the very thing that she would be sure to do. It would indeed be war to the knife, yet how unfair to this beautiful girl who was his wife!"

In what fashion would the war be carried out? He felt just a little apprehensive. He would have liked to know more.

"War to the knife!" Well, whatever came, he must protect the woman who bore his name; he was quite sure of that.

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seemed to her that she was doing what he, in her place, would have done. He strictly obeyed her request not to speak of her, to look for her, or cause any inquiries to be made about her.

The garden gate opened and his daughter walked up the broad garden path lined with roses—walked as though she had left it yesterday. He could see in that faint light that she had changed very much; she had grown taller, she was dressed with great elegance. He was struck mute and dumb by her marvelous and exquisite loveliness. His daughter Irene. Great heaven! were the evening shadows playing him false, or what was it?

Nearer and nearer she drew; and then by the faint light from the golden clouds he saw that her face was white with some terrible mental pain. His great honest heart went out to her.

"My darling, my darling," he cried, with outstretched arms; "oh, my darling, have you come back to me at last?"

She looked up, and the pale face quivered with pain.

"I know you would welcome me, papa; but before you take me to your heart, before you kiss me, let me tell you what has happened."

"Tell me the worst, Irene," he cried; "suspense kills me. You—you have a wedding ring on your finger, child; there can be nothing wrong."

"Listen, papa," she said. "Say, do not fear to kiss me, do not fear to take me to your heart. I have not sinned—I have been sinned against. Before earth and heaven, before man and before heaven, I stand erect and refuse to own that I have done wrong, or that the crime of a traitor has touched me."

"What is it, my child? Had he been married before? Is there another wife? What is it?"

She went up to him and laid her hand, which bore the wedding ring, on his shoulder; she raised her white, proud, pained face to his.

"I will tell you," she said. "The man whom I loved with all my heart was a traitor—a traitor—and you know all that word means. He wooed me, he won all my love; then he asked me to leave home and marry him. If he had asked me to go with him to the depth of the sea, the fire of the southern desert, I should have gone. He asked me to be his wife."

A great sigh of relief came from Santon Darcy.

"Thank heaven!" he cried. "I feared there was no marriage."

"Listen," said Irene. "He took me straight to London and to the place where we were to be married. Father, the marriage was a mock marriage, the minister a mock minister. It was a blasphemous farce played to deceive me; and now he has told me the truth—I am not his wife."

One by one Irene resumed her duties in her old home; between her father and herself there was no further mention made of the one subject that filled both their minds. Santon Darcy went on with his painting. Irene resumed the occupations of every-day life, and for a short time all was peace; but she drooped hour by hour; her very soul seemed to fade. She could not bear it, this constant opening of the old wounds; every spot was eloquent of him—every tree, every green lane, every field, every nook had some legend of him. She bore it until she could bear it no longer, until the pain of it seemed to have eaten her heart away.

Then she went to her father and laid her tender arms around his neck.

eral and graceful hospitality; he was one of the most famous statesmen and accomplished courtiers; but he never recovered his lost happiness. Some of the most beautiful women in England sought him, but he found no pleasure, no love, no hope—his heart was with his dead wife.

But in his sixtieth year, when different pains and aches had reminded him that he was mortal, a great longing to revisit his old palace at Rome came over him. He had heard from his agent there that some of his most valuable pictures were suffering from damp, and that one or two needed instant attention. Of all living English artists the Duke of Bayard preferred Santon Darcy; he liked the paros of his pictures; whenever he saw them he said to himself: "That man has had a great sorrow, and sorrow has taught him his art." So that now, when he required the services of an artist he wrote at once to him. When the artist wrote asking if he could take his daughter with him as a companion, the duke through his secretary answered "Yes," and then never gave another thought to the matter.

(To be continued.)

A TOWN'S RAPID GROWTH.

Effect of President Hayes' Visit to a Kansas Village.

George Clements, of Kansas City, a well-known knight of the sample case, is responsible for the following story:

"Talk about the rapid growth of cities, why, Neosho Falls, Kan., holds the record. I think the town is still on the map, but I won't be sure. At any rate, I remember when the population jumped in one day from 600 to 40,000, and the next day jumped back again. This was merely occasioned by a fair, and not a county fair at that, but simply a little crossroads celebration. It was just after President Hayes had been elected. He was touring the West at the time, and the citizens of Neosho Falls secured a promise from him to attend their fair. The town was fortunately on the line of a railroad, with a service of two trains a day, but when the company learned of the President's proposed visit a gang of workmen at once started to lay sidings. At least a dozen were constructed around the little frame station, together with a Y for the convenience of the engines. When the great day arrived the President was at hand, with several members of his Cabinet and a military escort from Fort Riley. The railroad company estimated that 40,000 people visited Neosho Falls that day, and I dare say some of them are talking about it yet. The next day the visitors were all gone, for there were no hotel accommodations, and nothing to feed them with. The gang of workmen came back and tore up the sidings and the Y, and the town again resumed its normal placidity, just as though nothing had happened."—Baltimore News.

Some Costly Smoked Meats.

"The costliest of all the smoked meats," said a dealer in such things, "are the fine hams and bacon that come from Limerick, Ireland. The prices of these meats may vary slightly from time to time, the hams selling usually, however, at from 33 to 35 cents a pound, and the bacon at 32 or 33 cents a pound."

"These costly smoked meats are made from fine hogs that are fed and tended with scrupulous care. The curing process is a secret. The result is shown in meats of such quality and flavor as to commend them most highly."

"Of course, there are fine hams produced here, also, notably those of Virginia, the finest of which bring 24 cents a pound. Included in the price of the Limerick hams and bacon is a duty of 5 cents a pound. If you were to add that to the price of the Virginia hams you would raise the cost of them to 29 cents, and adding further the cost of transportation from Europe, would bring the Virginia hams pretty close to those of Limerick in price; so that in their original cost they are about the same."

"As to which is the better ham, that would be largely a matter of taste. The Irish ham is rich and juicy, the Virginia is of a more delicate flavor."

Coffee Weather Forecast.

Drop carefully into the middle of your morning cup of coffee prepared with a little milk, two lumps of sugar, and from the result draw your auguries. If the bubbles ascend rapidly separate quickly, and go to the side of the cup, there will be much rain that day; if they gather slowly in the center and gravitate in a cluster to the side, only showers are to be expected; while if they remain placidly in the center of the cup, you may safely put on your best hat, and leave your umbrella at home.

Historical Novels.

One of the female historical novel makers describes her hero as "standing like a piece of marble with his thumb on the trigger of his trusted pistol." Few people of experience trust pistols and those who press the trigger with their thumbs are usually employed in the museums as trick artists. But then you can find almost anything in the historical novels since the women have started to writing them.—Washington Post.

Microbe Fecundity.

The fecundity of microbes is prodigious, so much so that if fifteen drops of water polluted with bacteria are allowed to fall into a cup of broth, the germ population would have increased in twenty-four hours to 80,000,000.

She Saw the Kiss Coming.



HOUSEHOLD TALKS.

English Scones.

One pound of flour, one-quarter of a pound of butter, half a cupful of sugar, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder (if self-raising flour is used leave the baking powder out), one-half teaspoonful of salt, one cupful of currants, one egg, and enough milk to mix to a dough. Rub the flour and butter together until there are no lumps, then add all the other dry ingredients. Be sure that the currants have been thoroughly cleaned. Beat the egg until light, then stir it into the mixture. Add enough milk to form a dough as stiff as for tea biscuits. Roll or pat it quickly until a little less than an inch thick, and cut into any desired shapes. Scones are usually made the size of a coffee saucer. Bake in a quick oven until done. Split each scone as soon as done, and butter it, put it together again, and serve hot.

Chicken Potpie.

Cut up a chicken and put on in cold water enough to cover, taking care that it does not cook dry. While boiling, cut off a slice from bread dough, add a small lump of lard, and mix up like light biscuit. Roll out with a cake cutter and set by stove to rise. Wash and pare potatoes of moderate size and add them when the chicken is almost done. When the potatoes begin to boil, season with salt and pepper, add dumplings and season again. See that there is water enough to keep from burning, cover very tightly, and do not take cover off until dumplings are done. They will cook in half an hour and may be tested by lifting one edge of the lid, taking out a dumpling and breaking it open. Dish potatoes by themselves; chicken and dumplings together.

Tomato Omelet.

Scald and skin three ripe tomatoes, quarter them; fry a quarter of an onion (minced) in an ounce of butter, toss the tomatoes in this, add a little water to prevent burning; season with salt, a pinch of cayenne and a very slight suspicion of mace; simmer until reduced to a pulp. Break three eggs separately; beat them together, put them in the frying pan, and when slightly browned on the bottom prepare to fold the omelet; just before doing so, add the tomato pulp and turn the omelet out on a hot dish; surround it with a little tomato sauce, and serve.

Brown Bread Pudding.

Six ounces stale brown bread crumbs, six ounces fresh butter, four eggs (the yolks and whites whisked separately), half ounce powdered cinnamon, half pound coarsest brown sugar. Cream the butter, then mix well with the sugar till quite smooth, add the well-beaten eggs, and stir in gradually the other ingredients. Steam the pudding for two hours, or even more (it cannot be too much done). When turned out, pour melted jam over it, and serve hot.

Meat Souffle.

Make one cup of cream sauce, and season with chopped parsley and onion juice. Stir one cup of chopped meat into the sauce. When hot add the beaten yolks of two eggs, cook one minute, and set away to cool. When cool stir in the whites of the eggs, stiffly beaten. Bake in a buttered dish about twenty minutes, and serve immediately.

Broiled Salt Codfish.

Soak the codfish in cold water to remove the salt; dry with a cloth, broil over a clear fire for ten or fifteen minutes. When cooked serve on a hot platter, with melted butter poured over.

For Bunions.

Apply daily with a camel's hair brush a lotion made of glycerine, 2 drachms; carbolic acid, 2 drachms; tincture of iodine, 2 drachms.

Household Hints.

For a bruise, a dampened bag of salt. A goblet of hot water at each meal for dyspepsia. Clothes turned right side out, carefully folded and sprinkled, are half ironed. Sandpaper will whiten ivory-handled knives which have become yellow from age or usage. A spoonful of vinegar added to the water in which meats or fowls are boiled makes them tender. To remove black grease stains from clothing, wash with soap and cold water. Hot water would only set the marks. Discolored enameled saucepans can often be made to look like new by boiling a little chloride of lime in the water with which they are filled. Table oilcloth tacked back of the stove, if pans or cooking utensils are hung up, and of tables where mixing or dishwashing is done, saves the wall, and may be cleaned easily, and lasts a long time.

When soap is used for furniture it should be of the best quality, having but a small amount of alkali in its composition, and the water used should be lukewarm, applied with a soft cloth and quickly wiped off, particularly from all corners and crevices.

A neat contrivance is a goblet cover to keep the contents of a glass of medicine, for instance, from dust. It is made of a circular piece of cardboard, covered on the upper side with a srocheted mat in white zephyr, with a loop in the center by which to raise it.

THE BORROWING NEIGHBOR.

Salutary Treatment Which Effectuated a Permanent Cure.

People who are continually borrowing household utensils and neglect to return them are annoying neighbors. The problem of how to cure them of the habit was solved in an effective though somewhat costly way by one long-suffering householder. Here are the facts: A new man had moved into the neighborhood. One of the first things he did, after getting his goods into the house, was to borrow a pair of steps from Mr. Smith, who lived next door.

Then he borrowed a hammer, a hatchet, a screw-driver and a gimlet, all of which things Mr. Smith, being an accommodating man, allowed him to take, and all of which the borrower promised to return "in a brace of shakes."

Several days passed, and none of the articles had been returned.

"I'll cure him," said Mr. Smith. "About a week later the man came back with the screw-driver, and apologized for having kept it so long.

"That's all right," said Mr. Smith, with a genial smile, "but you had better keep it now. I have bought another."

With a muttered apology the new neighbor hurried back, and returned with the gimlet, the hatchet and the hammer.

"You are welcome to those," said Mr. Smith cordially. "I have bought some others, and don't need them."

"But—"

"That's all right. You keep them. They'll come handy about the house."

Again the man hurried away, and was returning with the steps when Mr. Smith, who was just going out, met him.

"Why, bless me," he said, "you need not bring the steps back! I have got a new pair."

The man kept the things, but he never borrowed anything more of Mr. Smith.

The Tramp's Parlor Car.

A casual observer might wonder why the rods, bolted through the timbers at either end, are placed under freight cars, says Cloudeley Johns, writing on the "Philosophy of the Road," in Leslie's Monthly. They are not put there for hobs to ride on, but to stiffen the floor of the car. Sometimes there are four—two close together on each side—but more often there are six, separated by equal distances. At the center, where the rods are ridden, there is often room between them and the bottom of the car for a man to sit almost upright, though with his head bowed forward, but where there are six rods the hobo usually lies across them like a steak on a grilliron. While the train is moving slowly it is easy, as a rule, to drive him off by throwing coal or rocks at him; if it is going very fast there is danger of killing him, and that is likely to get the brakeman in trouble (from ten years to life is customary). There is one other way of removing a hobo from the rods under a freight, but the brakeman must be a man of steady nerve, quickness and physical strength; also he must know exactly where the hobo is before he comes off the top to get him. Dropping from the train a car or two ahead of the one under which the man is riding, the brakeman has time to brace himself before that car reaches him (the train should be moving only slowly); then he seizes the hobo by coat collar or by his arms; the motion of the train does the rest, and the hobo is dropped on the ground. But if the train is going at, say, a twenty mile rate—

The Champion Spanker.

Professor F. A. Lillie, of Waterbury, Conn., is the champion spanker of the world. Recently he chastised forty-nine pupils in thirty-seven minutes. A minstrel parade appeared just before the time for the school to assemble for the afternoon session. Every one of the pupils, even to the "littlest girl," struck and followed the band. During the afternoon the children straggled in and when the last one had appeared the professor called an executive session in the basement, where he had put away a nice piece of garden hose of convenient length. In thirty-seven minutes after the forty-nine children had assembled in the cellar they were marched back to their desks and every one of them had had a taste of garden hose.

He Was in Need of Pity.

A pious lady of Portsmouth had a husband who was a seaman.

He was about to start on a protracted voyage, and as his wife was anxious as to her husband's welfare, she sent the following notice to the village preacher:

"Mr. Blank, who is going to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation."

As the old lady was quite illiterate, the minister read the following to the congregation from the slip handed to him:

"Mr. Blank, who is going to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation."—London Tit-Bits.

Insect Food.

Those who object to eating meat as the term is usually understood will be interested in learning of a new movement whose leaders oppose the consumption of beef and mutton, but are equally hostile to vegetarianism. A French entomologist, M. Dagnin, has discovered a compromise which he cordially recommends in the shape of insect food. He speaks on the subject with authority, "having tested several hundred species of raw, boiled, fried, broiled, roasted and hashed insects." But the most popular insect food of all, he declares, is locust flour, which the Bedouins take boiled in milk or fried and served with rice.