

Friday, June 30, 1872.

**CAPTAIN DANIEL'S WARD.**

[CONCLUDED.]

I kept pondering the matter till it formed the chief subject of my thoughts through many a long night's watch. I did not know of any other woman whom I could love so well—I was only thirty-three, even though I had been a bearded second mate when she was a wee sprite of a child. After all, the disparity of age and perhaps—

She could not bear the thought of her marriage—perchance she might, if I asked her from any feeling of gratitude or obligation. Though I am satisfied since that I wronged her, even in thinking she might do so.

She had developed into a beautiful woman when we next met. She was evidently as fond of me as ever, for the tears came into her eyes at sight of me. But she did not, of course, rush into my arms and kiss me with the old childish gladness. All of which was natural enough, when I came to consider it.

I took occasion very soon after my arrival to speak to my sister, alone, about Jessie. And perhaps I was transparent enough to betray the interest I felt in Maria's answer. At any rate, she looked at me very rogishly. "No," said she, "none that I know of. Wish she might have—it is an acceptable or acceptable one. I didn't mean to say that not only had I applied only that she has none now."

"Is she hard to suit, then?" I asked.

"Very," said Maria. "Yet I think I know a man whom she would not refuse."

"Indeed! Who is the favored one?"

"You are the last ones who ought to ask the question. Go look in the glass," she added, as she rose to leave me.

"But I am too old, Maria." This in spirit I had said to myself in the belief that I was not.

"Too old to look in the glass, do you mean?" asked my sister innocently.

"She doesn't think so," mischievously again.

"Stay!" said I, detaining her, becoming very imperative and serious all at once. "I am your brother, Maria. Do not jest or trifle with my feelings."

"Not for worlds!" she returned, even more seriously than I myself had spoken. "Neither with yours, Maria; nor with his, for he is not, as my twinbrother."

"But how do you know all this?"

"O, the unscrupulous inquisitiveness of man? To ask a woman how she knows in a case like this! There, let me go now. But 'Prian added the dear girl, turning back, and striking a tragic attitude, "thou canst not say I did!"

Of course I couldn't; but I thought I might do it myself, on this hint. And I think I was hardly happier myself than Maria was. Maria and I were to sail the voyage of life together. She doesn't know any better than I do on the other hand, at what particular time she found out that she loved her old guardian. But we both agree that it is of my consequence.

## VENUS VICTRIX.

He was their only son, and it was the ambition of their youth that he should be clever, and beautiful, and prosperous, and happy, with a cleverness, and beauty, and prosperity, and happiness, that are not ordinarily met out to poor humanity. So, actuated by this ambition, they spent and toiled, labored and saved, and took great heed for the morrow, for the sake of their handsomely spirited boy.

Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright were young people when Bertie was born; but much thought and incessant anxiety to add to their board for his sake made them seem comparatively old by the time the young fellow was one-and-twenty. The father in his mercantile office, and the mother in her home, had this thought over before them; but Bertie said they must be careful; for Bertie's sake they must deny themselves all luxuries, and nearly all comforts that were not essential; for Bertie's sake they must cultivate the "best people" whom they wouldn't have troubled their heads to please, had not been for this Dagon of a son of theirs.

The devotion of the old people, as Bertie called them lovingly, was very well repaid by the bright-faced, bright-hearted young fellow. At twenty-two or three the son for whom they had so uniformly sacrificed so much, that other people in their positions would never have dreamed of going without, was well worthy of every sacrifice the most self-sacrificing parents could make. Unparalleled by the long course of indulgence and ultra-consideration to which he had been subjected the young man carried in his breast one of the most generous, unselfish, truthful hearts that human being could be blessed with. The only secret he knew was the subtlety of graving the unspoken wishes of his parents without letting them discover that those same unspoken wishes sometimes ran counter to his own.

The mercantile firm of which his father was the head was an old established and thoroughly respectable one, and Bertie divined that it would please the dear old father if by the only son, destined to succeed him in it, the boy's own hands would have led him into other grooves into which he had been cast by literature, in fact. But, without much ever having been said on the subject, it was well understood by the son that his sire held the practice of that unremunerative profession in something like aversion. "He'd buy a newspaper property or start a magazine for me, if he only knew that those were the only new-sources of income," said the young fellow to one of his like-minded friends. "But he'd do it with a pang, sir, and, please God, I'll never cost him one." "Varily, they were well rewarded, they were reaping the love they had sown so lavishly.

But it is not in the human heart to rest content with any state of things, however full of beatitude that state of things may be.

"The boy will marry, some day," Mrs. Arkwright said to her husband, when Bertie had reached his twenty-sixth year. "If he should choose wisely, he is sure to happen to him who kills us both, I believe." And tears filled the loving, motherly eyes at the wrath of the possibility she had conjured up.

"Time enough for us to think about that when Bertie thinks about it for himself," Mr. Arkwright urged. "I'm no, my dear; I will be too late then," Mrs. Arkwright said, with some truth and more energy. "When Bertie has seen the girl he loves, and chosen her, it will be too late for us to think about putting a suitable girl in his path."

"But he may choose a suitable girl for himself," Mr. Arkwright urged.

"And, on the other hand, he may not," the lady insisted; and it is our duty, when there is such a wide range of good and evil, to let him go his way.

If Bertie made a mistake in his marriage, what would our lives be worth?"

To be continued.

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