

land that he was conscious of Janet's presence. Then he moved a little, the eyelids were raised flutteringly, and for one moment he looked at the watching girl.

"You are very good, Janet—you will tell Rowley and my uncle——"

The whisper failed, the eyelids fell once more, and a tremor shook his broken frame. A moment later Janet knew that her vigil was over, and as Sir James Nancarrow stepped forward and placed a kindly hand on her shoulder, she broke into a storm of tears.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LOVELIGHT

"THAT is an amazing story about Charles Rowley being Sir Charles Shapland's son," said the baronet half an hour later. "I wonder how it is that the fact has been kept hidden so long."

"Probably because Sir Charles thought that his son was dead," answered Janet thoughtfully. "But do you think it is true?"

"There isn't the shadow of a doubt of it," broke in Lady Nancarrow, who had been told of the confession. "Sir James and I have remarked more than once that Mr. Rowley is very like some one whom we both know, but neither of us could recall who it was. Now I know. It is Sir Charles. There is quite a wonderful likeness, in spite of the disparity of age."

"Yes," agreed the baronet, "and I think we must let Sir Charles know at once. I am going to telegraph to him."

"Will you tell him everything?" asked Janet quickly.

"I think not," replied the baronet thoughtfully. "As you know, his health is not very good, and if he were to hear all that has happened the shock might be too great for him. But I think there will be no need. Inspector Garforth is here, and I have had a talk with him. The matter can probably be arranged, as death closes all accounts, even those of the law. It will be quite sufficient, I think, to tell Sir Charles that a mistake was made, and that the man who had died was Jim Rowley, the foster-brother. We can say further that Vernon recognized Charles as his cousin, which will be quite true, and that he asked you to tell his uncle. There will be some gossip at Shapland, of course. That is inevitable, but as only three or four people know the real facts it will not greatly matter, and Sir Charles will be the very last person to hear anything, if he ever does, as I pray he never will. Don't you think that will be the best way?"

"Yes," agreed Janet, "I do. It would be too terrible to tell him that Vernon, whom he had sent to find his son, had tried to kill him."

"Then I will go and telegraph to him, and will meet him at Dover. And in the meantime I think that you had better return home with Lady Nancarrow. There are things to do here, and arrangements to be made, and until there has been an inquest some one who knew Shapland ought to be on the spot. So you had better take the car, and considering the strain of the past few days the sooner you do so the better. We must not have

you breaking down now. I will have the car brought round for you in half an hour."

As there was nothing further that Janet could do, the baronet's plan was followed, and three-quarters of an hour later, she and Lady Nancarrow left for home. When they reached the boundary of Shapland it was dark, and Lady Nancarrow looked at her companion, whose face showed like a white lily in the darkness.

"My dear, you know that Charles is free. He will be wondering, perhaps he will be waiting. Will you drive as far as The Towers with me, or shall I run you straight home?"

"I—I don't know," answered Janet, with a sudden tremulousness. "How did you guess?"

"My dear Janet," replied Lady Nancarrow lightly, "I am a woman. That is a sufficient answer to a question of that sort, and being what I am I think I shall not wait for a more definite answer from you. I shall just run you to The Towers without stopping. I am very fond of Mr. Rowley, and as it isn't fair to keep him waiting in suspense, I am going to do what I can for him—and you."

A few minutes afterwards they reached the house, and of the footman who opened the door Lady Nancarrow inquired: "Is Mr. Rowley at home, Starling?"

"He is in the library, m'lady," was the reply.

Lady Nancarrow looked at Janet.

"Go into the drawing-room," she said. "I will see Charles first, and then send him to you for a few minutes. I shall tell him about Vernon Shapland's death, but I think it will be better to say nothing about the possibility of Sir Charles being his father, at present. There might be a mistake somewhere, and in any case Sir Charles ought to

tell him that piece of news himself. Don't you think so, Janet?"

The girl nodded, and Lady Nancarrow left her, as the footman showed her into the drawing-room. Her face was still pale, and there was a burden of sadness on her heart, which seemed too heavy to ever be lifted. Her eyes were full of thought as she sat staring into the fire, and she shivered a little as she thought of the confession of the man lying dead in the little Dorset cottage, the man who once had been her accepted lover, and who, but for a chain of seemingly accidental events, would within a short time have been her husband. As she reviewed those events, sitting there, waiting for the man who had saved her life, and for whom there was a truer and deeper love in her heart, they ceased to appear accidental, and she found herself thinking of the hackneyed lines that yet are burdened with wisdom :

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

"It is true," she whispered to herself. "Thank God, it is true."

Her thoughts left the man whose deeds had been so base and whose life had ended so tragically, and centred themselves upon the man for whom she was waiting, not impatiently, but with the quiet confidence of love. It was wonderful that, after long years in which he had been lost, he should have been brought to Shapland—the heritage of his fathers. More wonderful still was it that he should have been brought across the world to her—to save her life at the *Murland*, to save her from a marriage which she had never really desired, and the mere contemplation of which now made her

shudder. After all, she told herself, there is a Providence that watches over the world, that——

The sound of voices in the hall outside broke upon her thoughts, and she was conscious of a sudden access of nervousness. The next moment the door opened, and she caught the sound of Lady Nancarrow's voice, light and teasing.

"Five minutes only, by the clock, Charles. At the end of that time I shall interrupt ruthlessly, as Janet is very tired."

She heard the door close, caught the sound of an advancing footstep, and rising quickly from her chair she turned round.

As she did so she saw the love-light in her lover's eyes, and all the burden of sadness rolled from her heart, and the shadows of care fled from her eyes.

CHAPTER XXIX

MY SON!

SIR CHARLES SHAPLAND sat in a reserved compartment of the boat express, with his friend, Nancarrow, in the opposite corner. He had the look of a man over whom the years of life had gone heavily, and it was clear that he was much shaken by recent news.

"It is very sad Vernon should have died like that in the heyday of life," he said, in the voice of a man for whom sorrow has become too great. "I had thought better of him these last few months, and had hoped that he would have been more with me in the future. How did the accident happen? Give me details."