

Storyteller.

COMRADES EVER.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

Never to mortal ear did Gipsy Lewis tell the story of that night of conflict; how, like Noah's dove, her soul flitted between rough seas and stormy sky; how, as it drew towards morning, God sent His strengthening angel into her Gethsemane, and whispered His own peace to her sorely tried heart; and how, then worn out with the struggle, she had fallen asleep.

Awakening when the day was still young, she rose, and with an earnest prayer for strength, passed through the hall and entered the chamber of death. Lifting the blind, that the glorious rays of the sun should flood the room, she turned first to the husband of her youth. A comradeship of over a quarter of a century had been broken by the rude hand of death. Their love had been so deep, their union so true, their companionship so real, that she shuddered to face the future deprived of his sympathy and help in her home life, and his comprehension and support in her wider sphere of duty. Then her eyes lingered long upon the form of her lovely daughter, the bright, merry, fun-loving girl, whose song and laughter had made music in all their lives. She thought of the baby girl, whose coming had been so welcome; of the dancing sprite, for seven years her only child; of the jolly school girl; of the student, brilliant, versatile, and a general favourite; and as she thought sorrow's waves rolled over her. For long she knelt thinking, praying, suffering. At length she crossed the room, knelt by the window, and raising her eyes to the calm sky above, she breathed, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Broken petitions crossed her lips at intervals. "Oh! Divine Spirit, lay Thy healing, helping hand on me." Then calmed by communion with the Divine Spirit, she rose, and with the absolute trust of a complete surrender she murmured, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

CHAPTER II.

On the following morning, Mrs Lewis paced the verandah, awaiting the arrival of her son. His uncle had gone to meet the ferry steamer, which had just passed up the harbour. Even

as she waited a motor drove in the gate, and in a moment she held her boy closely clasped in her arms. How her mother heart ached to see the marks grief had left on his countenance. Will Lewis was a son of whom any mother might have been proud. Though only 19 years of age, he stood six feet high, and was tall and straight as a young pine. He looked what he was, a clean living, clean thinking young athlete, whose every muscle had been hardened by many a well-fought contest in the gym. or on the green. His scholastic record was a brilliant one. Dux of his school, he stood first on the Dominion's list of winners of Junior University scholarships, and was now a third year medical student at the Otago Varsity.

Like a bolt from the blue had come the news that never again should he see the father he so loved, or the sister whom he idolised. Stunned and shaken, he had started on his long railway journey, his one thought to reach his mother, between whom and himself the bond was peculiarly strong and tender.

"Come in, my boy, and have some breakfast," she said, not daring to quit the commonplace.

"I've had a bath and breakfast on board. I had to do something; you know anything was better than sitting still and thinking."

His lip quivered, his voice broke, and just then his sister's cat bounded from the hall to greet him. Instinctively he looked for the mistress behind the Persian, for always before they had greeted him together. He knew his sister was gone; now he realised it, and like a child he wept, while mother and uncle tried in vain to comfort him.

Slowly the day wore away. Like one in a trance, Will had stood beside the silent forms of his dear ones, bidding them a long, last farewell. Still unmoved he had stood between his mother and uncle, and had seen them committed to the tomb; had listened as in a dream to the sublime words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and outwardly calm had returned to his lonely home.

That evening found the two seated beside the dining-room fire, which the housekeeper had lit rather for its brightness than because the warmth was needed. Each thought of the other, and tried to be brave for another's sake. Oh, how they missed the lively girl, to whose laughter every room in the house used to echo.

Joking with father, teasing brother, running races along the garden path with her brother, chasing pussy on the lawn. Had she even been seen and the grave, quiet father, who was so little, and yet whose lightest word was a law to them all. How empty the house seemed bereft of the merry girl and the strong, silent man!

"Mother," Will broke forth, "How can we bear it? How can we live without them?"

Tenderly she bent over him and smoothed his heated brow. "We must have to live one day at a time," she said. "Let us try to live every day as it comes bravely and faithfully, and be worthy of those who have gone before us."

Then she suggested that he retire and seek rest.

"You're coming up mother?" he asked.

Sadly she smiled; her boy had never liked to miss the good-night kiss which she had given him as long as he could remember, whenever the garden roof sheltered them both.

When Mrs Lewis went up she found Will restless, tossing to and fro, "unable to sleep," as he put it. Sitting beside him, she spoke low and soothingly, gradually quietening his nerves. Then in a low, sweet tone she began the grand old hymn, "Abide with me. Many a time as a little boy had she sung him to sleep with its strains and old impressions were strong. Even she had finished its many verses. Will was quietly sleeping. As she kissed his brow she earnestly prayed that she might never allow her own grief to cloud his bright young life.

For a while she stood at the window following with her eyes the moon as it sailed across a cloudless sky. From her lips came the words:

"Still shine on in peerless beauty
Queen of the regal night,
Teach me to shed o'er life's path
duty,

Borrowed, celestial light."
(To be continued.)

Nay, why should we fear Death,
Who gives us life, and in exchange
takes breath?
The lordliest of all things!
Life lends us only feet, Death gives
us wings.
Then steal away, give little warning—
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good-night, but in some
brighter clime,
Bid me Good-morning,