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# Parted by Fate

By LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

Author of "Parted at the Altar," "Lovely Maiden," "Florabel's Lover," "Ione," Etc., Etc.

### CHAPTER XXXIII Continued

As they rode along through the golden sunlight—girl-like, they fell to discussing the approaching wedding, and where it was to take place.

"Mrs. Kenwick is trying to induce me to have the marriage take place here, while mamma is equally anxious that it shall take place at our home near Richmond but father has quite a different view of the matter, and I must say I like his idea the best," smiled Verlie, "and that is that I shall be married where I was born—and that is at Black-Tor Light-House, on the Florida coast."

"Black-Tor Light-House!" echoed Neddy, aghast. "Why, Verlie Setton, I actually think you have lost your senses. I—I thought you were going to have an elegant, fashionable affair of it," she cried, disappointedly.

"That will make it none the less so to be married there," Verlie answered, serenely. "Indeed, it is one of the most weird, romantic spots in the whole wide world."

"Too weird," cried Neddy, shrilly. "I have always heard and read such strange tales and traditions about these isolated light-houses, that somehow the very mention of one makes me shiver. It is a marvel to me that you and Uldene could ever have passed your childhood there."

"I was contented—Uldene never was," sighed Verlie, thoughtfully. "Her one longing was to break away from its monotonous loneliness and see the gay, bright world beyond. She was very much like you, Neddy, in those old days. It makes my heart ache when I think of Uldene," said Verlie, in a low voice. "I loved her so well I would have willingly given my life for her if it would have saved her."

"In that case you would never have been Mrs. Rutledge Chester," replied Neddy.

The words were thoughtlessly, carelessly spoken, and Neddy repented having spoken them the moment after they were uttered.

"Heaven forbid that I should be his wife at the expense of Uldene's life," murmured Verlie. "I, who would have suffered death to have saved her!"

"Forgive me for bringing up such unpleasant thoughts, dear," sobbed impulsive Neddy, throwing her arm about Verlie. "We will forget all about it by going to see the flower show. Every one we know will be there. After that you shall go with me to try on my dress; it's to be my bridesmaid dress. Look out, Verlie, I may outshine you at the grand affair, if you're not careful," laughed Neddy.



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He says—I was troubled with itching piles for five years, and was badly ulcerated. They were very painful, so much so that I could not sleep. I tried almost every remedy heard of, and was recommended to use Dr. Chase's Ointment. I purchased a box, and from the first application got such relief that I was satisfied a cure would be made. I used in all two boxes, and am now completely cured.

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Mr. M. T. Wigle, of Kingsville, Essex Co.

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Physicians Fail to Make a Cure When Dr. Chase's Ointment Gave Immediate Relief.

M. T. Wigle, better known to every one in the vicinity as "Uncle Mike," was troubled for over 23 years with itching piles. At times he was so bad he would have to quit work. The irritation became so intense with constant rubbing that they became ulcerated and would bleed. He had been treated by many physicians, but found nothing that gave him relief. Reading in the paper the cure of a friend who had suffered in a like manner, and being cured by Dr. Chase's Ointment, he procured a box. After the third application he got such relief that he had the first comfortable night's sleep he enjoyed in years. The one box made a complete cure, and he says he would not be without it for \$50 a box if it could not be replaced. Mr. Wigle is a wealthy farmer, well known in the community in which he resides. It is over two years since he was afflicted, and he has never been troubled since.

"You are certainly pretty enough to," replied Verlie. "I will be very pleased to go with you to see it tried on."

"I went yesterday to see about it, but there was so much confusion there about some girl who had been taken suddenly ill, that I concluded to wait until to-day," said Neddy.

"We will take the poor girl who has been taken ill some fruit and flowers, and a few delicacies," suggested generous-hearted Verlie.

"It would be a perfectly splendid idea," chimed in Neddy.

An hour later the phaeton stopped before the humble cottage that sheltered Uldene.

### CHAPTER XXXIII. A BROKEN LOVE-DREAM.

Alighting from the phaeton, Verlie and Neddy came hastily up the gravelled walk.

Emily Lennox was profuse in her thanks when they told her what they had brought for her sick friend.

"I thank you—for her sake, more than words can express," said Emily, as she invited them into her humble apartments, taking the parcels from them. "Is the poor girl so very bad?" asked Neddy.

"Yes," replied Miss Lennox, "she is suffering from the worst form of brain fever. It would make you cry to sit by the bedside for any length of time, and listen to her delirious ravings—it would indeed. She clasps her little white hands, and with the bitterest of tears falling like rain down her face, she pleads with some imaginary person to spare her the love of some one whose every heart-throb should be for her and to one else. This is the one burden of her piteous prayer by day and night."

"Her lover should be sent for, if you know who he is," said Verlie, pityingly. "That is the worst of it. I do not know his name, or, in fact, where any of her friends are," and she related to them how and where she had met the young girl who called herself Miss Dean.

Neither Verlie nor Neddy could understand a sorrow so great that a young girl like themselves should seek death when the bright world was so fair.

"I can understand a lover turning from a plain, homely, unattractive woman; but how any man could turn from this young girl would be a mystery to me. She is so beautiful, so sweet, with all the graces of a young day of the highest culture."

"You interest me greatly in this beautiful stranger," said Verlie, watching mechanically the process of the white sarah silk being tried on and fitted to Neddy's superb, supple, slender form. "I should like very much to befriend her. I—I am so happy myself, it pains me to see other young girls wretched. Could I see your protégée?"

"Ah, Heaven pity us! how slight a thing in this life might avert a cruel fate. Had Emily Lennox granted Verlie Setton's request, one of the darkest tragedies that ever startled a quiet community would have been averted."

"I am sorry to be obliged to refuse you," said Miss Lennox. "The doctor left a sleeping potion for her, which I have just given her, hoping it will induce sleep. She would start from her couch at the opening of a door. The sound of a footfall awakens her."

"In that case it would be wrong to disturb her. I will come again soon, however, and I hope then to be permitted to see her," said Verlie, as she and Neddy rose to depart.

During the drive back to Renwick Villa Verlie was unusually thoughtful. This by no means suited gay, talkative, lively Neddy.

"A penny for your thoughts, Verlie," she cried. "I have been talking to you for the last half hour, and I'll wager a pair of kid gloves, or tickets to to-day's matinee, that you haven't heard a word I said."

"I may as well own up at once and plead guilty to the charge. I haven't been listening, Neddy. I was thinking of that poor sick girl in the cottage we have just left, who must be breaking her poor heart over some faithless, unworthy lover. Ah, how thankful I should be, Neddy, for the love of such a noble man as Rutledge Chester!"

"What should you do if you were to lose him now, I wonder?" cried blunt little Neddy.

Verlie turned as white as the pale blossoms she wore on her breast.

"It would kill me. That's all, Neddy," she answered, in a low voice. "Don't mention such a possibility."

"There! I'm always saying something to bring tears to your pretty blue eyes," sighed Neddy. "Oh, if somebody would invent a bride for the tongue what a blessing it would be! Why, the patentee would make a fortune in no time. It would be one of those useful articles that's needed in every household."

No one could be down-hearted long where merry, fun-loving Neddy was, and she soon had Verlie in the best of spirits again.

On the drive homeward they passed Captain Lansing. Since the memorable night of the lawn fete he had carefully avoided Verlie. He raised his hat with a stiff bow as the two girls whirled by, and in that moment a sudden and startling secret became known to Verlie. Turning to look at Neddy, she noticed with astonishment that her pretty,

smiled face was suffused with blushes, and the dark eyes were wistfully following the young captain's handsome figure, with a light in them Verlie had never seen there before.

Like a flash the truth came to Verlie Setton.

Poor little Neddy—beneath her mask of gaiety—was quite as much a victim to a hopeless love-dream as the poor soul lying in the cottage which they had just left. Yes, she could plainly see that poor little Neddy's heart had gone out unsolicited to the gallant, dashing, handsome captain, who, in turn, loved her instead of Neddy.

Ah! what strange freaks fate plays with human lives and loves!

Never dreaming Verlie had the faintest idea of her secret, Neddy asked, with apparent indifference:

"Is Captain Lansing coming to the wedding, do you suppose?"

"I hardly think so. Still I shall endeavor to persuade him to come and act as one of the groomsmen."

"I have always had a fancy that he cared for you, Verlie. Is it true, do you think so?" she asked, wistfully, turning sharply towards Verlie.

"I think that is merely your imagination, Neddy, dear," replied Verlie, gently and evasively. "He was at one time a great friend of Rutledge's, you know."

"Why aren't they friends now?" inquired Neddy, suspiciously.

"I suppose young gentlemen friends are like girl friends—they have their little differences once in a while; don't speak, and then make up again."

This view of the matter seemed to please Neddy, and proved quite satisfactory.

"Then you must be mediator, Verlie, between the two," she declared. "Captain Lansing is such a nice young man to have at our entertainments, you know."

"I'll do my best," agreed Verlie.

In the depths of her heart she pitied bright, beautiful Neddy, for, she well knew, adding fuel to the flame of Neddy's love by being thrown into constant society of the agreeable captain, would be cruel to Neddy in the end, for she would never win him. As long as he lived his heart would hold but one love, one idol; that idol, he had told her, was herself; and the love of a life-time that filled his heart was his hopeless love for her. But Verlie would not have pained Neddy by telling her this for worlds. Hope is such a sweet, grateful panacea for a yearning, hungry heart.

Rutledge Chester had walked leisurely down the avenue, and half an hour later, dropping in at his club, the first person whom he met was his old friend, Captain Lansing.

(To be Continued.)

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