

# UNTO SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

Or. THE FLOWER OF THE PENINSULA

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By Lily Froude

CHAPTER XIV.

NOTHING BUT LEAVES.

HE had gone, and she stood where he had left her, the dead leaves falling upon her and around her unheeded, as she watched the trail of the boat in the water. From a house across the river came the soft, sweet strains of "Robin Adair," and above her head, in the willows, Valerie could hear the twittering of the birds. But she heeded them not, nor was she conscious that the sun was shining, and that all Nature was glad and joyous. Her own heart alone was sad, and out of accord with all around her.

"He might have kissed me," she said, "just once on my forehead, to show he cared; it wouldn't have been a great sin—at least, so far as I know it wouldn't. But he knows best; he has such clear judgment in these things, and he is so honourable. I wonder if it was because he is so honourable that he didn't kiss me, or because he did not care to. He didn't even ask me to write to him. After all, I don't suppose he ever loved me—he never told me so, anyway. What a prudent lover he always was. One would suppose that I was some adventuress, and that he was afraid of my prosecuting him for breach of promise of marriage, therefore never putting it in my power. Of course, I'm thinking of past days, when he was considered my lover by some people, his mother included. Ah, well, to the pure, all is pure. But why did he never confess his love, if he had any, for me; and he expected me to confide my troubles to him before he had given me the right to do so. Well, I am going to try to forget you, Lewis St. Mar."

Poor girl, she did not know how impossible she would find it in the long, weary struggle of the years to come, and how, in her solitude, her thoughts would revert more and more to her girlhood's love. Whether for weal or woe, Lewis St. Mar would possess her heart until it ceased to beat.

Hopes, only dead hopes.  
Torn from the heart by the storms of life;  
Hopes, only dead hopes.  
Killed by sorrow and strife,  
Withered and chilled by the cold world's frown,  
Crushed and torn and trampled down  
Like forest leaves 'neath the winter's sky.  
The hopes of our young life wither and die."

Valerie repeated these words to herself as she slowly turned away from the river towards her own gate. She had read the words somewhere, and thought they suited her own sad life. All her hopes were dead, and she could see no way out of her misery, but just to suffer and bear her burden alone. When she reached the gate she found the faithful companion of her many lonely walks waiting for her.

"Poor old Pontie! You love me, don't you, doggie?"

Pontie signified that he did by immediately responding to her caress in a vain endeavour to lick her hands and face, and behaving in a generally riotous manner. Valerie let herself in with her latch key, and went straight to a

little room that was entirely her own, where she sewed and painted and dreamed of the past. It was understood that when in this room she was not to be disturbed, and the servant was forbidden to enter it. Valerie always cleaning it out herself. So, tarowing herself down on a sofa, she quietly fainted away, and there she lay until found by her husband some twenty minutes later. He was holding a glass of water to her lips when she opened her eyes, and gave a wan smile; then she sat up and took the glass from his hand, and eagerly drank a portion.

"What made you faint?"  
"I—oh, it's rather close, don't you think so? I suppose there is a nor'-wester coming up; they always unnerve me so."

"I thought the heat agreed with you; you always said that it did. I saw Mr. Mar on the river as I came home. Has he been here?"

"Yes, I told you at breakfast that he would be up this morning to take me for a row. I waited for him on the river in our boat; he did not come in; I did not ask him."

"Why?"  
"Oh, I don't know. Perhaps I felt he would not come in if I had asked him. He leaves Christchurch again in a couple of days."

"Does he? I suppose that was what made you faint. Was the leave-taking of a tender nature?"

"Quite the contrary," said Valerie, with flashing eyes. "Do you want to know what passed? I will tell you if you do."

"Oh, you need not unless you like; I never thought St. Mar a particularly affectionate individual."

"He may be affectionate to those who belong to him, but he never was particularly so to me."

Instead of answering, Mr. Day drew a chair up to the fire, which had burnt low, and planted his feet on the fender rail. He had a habit of doing this, even when there was no fire in the grate, and when the weather was warm.

"Frank!"  
"Well!"  
"I wish Lewis St. Mar had kissed me."  
"And didn't he?"  
"No, he is too honourable."  
"Too jolly cold, you mean. I believe if you lost your good looks he wouldn't care a fig for you."

"I have lost them. He told me I was thin, and he said when I frowned that I looked thirty-six."

"Didn't I say so? That's why he did not kiss you, and that's the man you've thrown your heart away upon. Women are queer creatures. Fancy imputing to honour every cold-blooded thing he does. Can't you see he does not love you, and never did?"

"Of course I can see it. I never said he loved me, and he never told me that he did. That is the reason I married you."

"I know; and if I were you I'd try and cure myself of loving a man who was indifferent to me. You never were the sort of girl to give your love unsought. What made you in this case?"

"He used to come after me, and we used to go on the river and to dances together, and I thought he cared for me; I fancied a woman could tell, but I don't now; I am sure I was mistaken, especi-

ally as you say it was not honour prevented him kissing me."

"I feel sure of it. If a fellow wanted to kiss a girl he cared for he'd do it—honour be hanged."

"It wouldn't prevent you, anyway. I suppose, and naturally you judge by yourself. I was thinking myself a while ago that I was getting a little tired of honour, my life is so barren of love, and I feel so lonely."

"You had better ask St. Mar to elope with you, and then you won't be lonely, or are you too honourable?"

"How coarse you are, and how I hate you. I cannot help being a woman, and having a woman's nature. Men com-

plain of the 'New Woman,' but they seem to forget that their sneers often turn a loving heart into that hideous creation, a mannish woman. They are denied affection by men, and are scoffed at for possessing it themselves. Give me about seven years to crush out my feelings, and after that you won't have to complain that I am too affectionate. Love wants to be fed, and as I am in no danger of a surfeit of that sort of food, I will be as hard as nails in seven years," and with a scornful laugh Valerie left the room. She was smarting from his taunt, and felt very bitter towards men in general. She had been in the habit of discussing her feelings with

## TARANAKI OIL AND FREEHOLD COMPANY, LTD.

CAPITAL £15,000  
In 15,000 Shares of £1 each, payable as follows: 2/6 per share on application, 2/6 on allotment, and calls if required not to exceed 1/ per share per month.

PROVISIONAL DIRECTORS:—Messrs W. T. Jennings, M.H.R., F. P. Corkill (Chairman), G. W. Brown, J. Hawkins, W. T. Gardner, T. K. Skinner, and M. Jones.  
Mr. J. S. S. Medley is Secretary.

The Company is being formed to bore for oil at New Plymouth, on the Carrington Road, where strong indications have for years been known to exist, and all existing from the Papa Rock has lately been discovered.

In addition to Ten Acres of Freehold, secured under a purchase agreement, the Company is in possession of a complete chain of boring rights and options, situated within the oil-bearing area of Taranaki, and touching the districts of Inglewood, Lepperton, Carrington Road, New Plymouth, and Moturoa.

It is the intention of the Directors to commence operations on the Carrington Road at a very early date, and there is every probability that when oil is struck the shares will rise in value, as in the case of the Moturoa Company, whose 25 shares were sold at £62. It is thought that the oil bed may be much nearer the surface in the Carrington, which is an important factor, minimising the cost of boring and greatly enhancing the chances of a good and permanent flow.

A large amount of the capital in this Company has already been subscribed, and those who wish to become shareholders should apply at once to any of the following Brokers:—

- Messrs. V. J. LARNER & CO., Stock Exchange, Auckland.
- Messrs. HARCOURT & CO., Wellington.
- Messrs. LEWIS & CO., Wanganui.
- Messrs. GRIFFITHS & SON, Blenheim.
- Mr. J. S. S. MEDLEY, New Plymouth.
- Mr. J. S. FREEMAN, Dannevirke.
- Mr. W. LISSANT CLAYTON, Gisborne.

### APPLICATION FOR SHARES.

To the Directors of THE TARANAKI OIL AND FREEHOLD CO. LTD. (Incorporated under "The Companies' Act, 1903.")

GENTLEMEN,—  
I beg to apply for \_\_\_\_\_ Shares of 2/6 each in the above-named Company, upon the terms of the Prospectus, and subject to the Articles of Association, and I hereby bind you the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_, being a deposit of 2/6 per Share payable on application, and I agree to accept the same or any sum or sums which may be allotted to me, and to pay the further instalment as provided by the said Prospectus.

Name in full \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prospectus may be seen at Messrs V. J. Larnar & Co., Stock Exchange, Auckland.  
MEMBER. ONLY 15,000 SHARES.  
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Shares are being applied for freely, and a large amount of the capital is now subscribed.

Applications may be made personally or by letter, with amount of first payment (2/6 for each share applied for) enclosed.  
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