

**THE LAST
SENTENCE, VOL. III**

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The last sentence, Vol. III by Maxwell Gray

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MAXWELL GRAY

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SENTENCE, VOL. III**

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THE LAST SENTENCE

A NOVEL

BY

MAXWELL GRAY

AUTHOR OF

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.



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THE LAST SENTENCE

PART III.—Continued.

CHAPTER IV.

LOST.

THERE followed then a time of great happiness, a long flight of sunny, summer days, each bequeathing as it passed fresh strength to the two weak creatures with whose lives Cecil's heart was bound up—a second honeymoon containing fresh elements of happiness unknown in the first.

The long vacation had arrived, so there was nothing to call him away from Cynthia, who was now able to sit out of doors under the cedars, pale and wasted, yet looking quite herself, and half amused

at her husband's skilful and tender handling of the little Cecilia.

'Never in my wildest dreams did I picture you dandling a girl-baby,' she said, one bright day; 'you always had such a horror of babies. Nature is indeed strong.'

'Ah, but this little thing cost me so dear,' he replied; 'and, then, I had to be both father and mother to her.' A dark flush went over his face as he spoke, and his brows knit at some thought his words had evoked.

'You must not expect it again, Cynthia,' said Lady Susan, who was sitting at work in the cedar shadows. 'It is the first, remember; that is all the charm. The General was never tired of wondering at our first baby's perfections, but he scarcely seemed conscious of the existence of the others until they were old enough to speak. I believe he occasionally was known to ask if the reigning baby was a girl or a boy, and never remembered which.'

‘Well, is the poor little beggar to learn Sanskrit or Hebrew first?’ asked the General, who had just driven over from Cottesloe to fetch his wife. ‘The last time I came, your ladyship, they were disputing about when it should begin Greek.’

But Cynthia was impervious to sarcasm. ‘She certainly will have a taste for music; see how she is listening to that robin,’ she said, looking gravely at the small object of the discussion, which lay cradled on its father’s left arm, staring solemnly up at the dark cedar boughs, with one mottled fist fumbling at its mouth and the other closed round Cecil’s forefinger, while it emitted occasional grunts and gurgles, supposed by its mother to express admiration and joy.

Stabs of self-reproach were piercing the heart against which the small soft babe was so warmly nestled. Her father was thinking of that other earlier baby that had never been thus cradled and cherished. Yet that first little daughter had been a pretty,