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NEW SERIES, Vol. XXVI.



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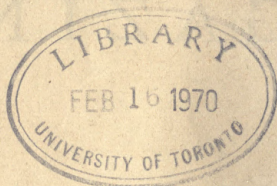
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THE  
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JANUARY 1896.

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*CLARISSA FURIOSA.*<sup>1</sup>

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER I.

DURING AN AUTUMN SESSION.

THE House of Commons on a murky November evening (at which time of the year the representatives of the people ought to be much more pleasantly and healthily employed than in endeavouring to force necessary measures down the throat of an unsportsman-like Opposition) is indeed a melancholy spectacle for the sympathetic eye to gaze down upon. But who, except a very ignorant and sanguine person, can expect sympathy to descend from the Ladies' Gallery, or the misery and iniquity of an Autumn Session to be justly appreciated there? Miss Clarissa Dent, for example, craning forward with parted lips and drinking in every word of the really eloquent denunciation which a famous Radical statesman was hurling at the Government of the day, had no idea that the orator was fighting a losing battle very much against his will, nor any pity to bestow upon the weary legislators beneath her, save upon the few occupants of the front ministerial bench—who, to be sure, seemed to be taking their punishment with amazing apathy and indifference.

'How *can* they answer him?' she demanded, in an agitated whisper, of her aunt, who was seated beside her. 'He hasn't left them a leg to stand upon!'

'Hasn't he?' returned the stout, lymphatic lady addressed. 'I wasn't listening, and I am not sure that I know what it is

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all about ; but your uncle says the Bill is perfectly safe, so it doesn't matter whether they can answer him or not. Most likely they can, though ; for I believe Sir Robert Luttrell is to reply, and Sir Robert, your uncle says, is far and away the best debater on our side.'

Clarissa scrutinised with increased interest the hat beneath which this champion of Constitutionalism and the existing order of things was taking repose. There was not very much to be seen of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Luttrell, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, except his hat ; for he had tilted it over his eyes, his head was thrown back, his closely trimmed grey beard was at right angles with the rest of his person, and, but for the slow, regular swinging of one long leg over the other, he might have been supposed to be fast asleep. But when his redoubtable antagonist sat down, amidst prolonged cheering, and when he himself rose, resting both hands for a moment upon the table, a keen, intelligent spectator, such as Miss Clarissa, was able to divine that the languid-looking elderly gentleman who was about to speak might prove sufficiently wide-awake for all practical purposes. His head was well shaped and well covered with curly hair, which was almost white ; he was tall and spare ; he evidently had been, and in one sense still was, extremely handsome ; his dress showed signs of care, and there was a certain indescribable air of power about his pose and mien—arising, perhaps, from his being so obviously at his ease. The fighting man, whether friend or foe, is readily recognisable, and we mortals are so constituted that he commands our respect, not to say our love, whatever be his method of introducing himself to our notice.

Sir Robert Luttrell's method, it must be confessed, was a little disappointing, at the outset, to those who were unacquainted with him and it. His halting, hesitating delivery, the long pauses in which he indulged, and his frequent, deliberate consultation of documents were scarcely of a nature to provoke enthusiasm. But by degrees his complete mastery of his subject became more and more apparent ; by degrees, too, the quiet style in which he made his successive points rendered it increasingly manifest that he had his adversary on the hip. The Government of which he was a member was, for the moment, demanding an extension of powers in dealing with a disturbed portion of the United Kingdom, and he was able to show, not only that what was asked for was indispensable, but that the party in Opposition had never even

attempted to dispense with it. The political career of the far more eloquent orator who had preceded him had not been altogether free from inconsistencies, and to these Sir Robert drew attention in a dry, half surprised, half melancholy tone which delighted the House. He had the air of merely stating acknowledged facts and of inviting somebody to be so very kind as to explain how an honourable and right honourable gentleman had contrived, within the space of a few months, to perform that strange gymnastic feat known as turning his back upon himself. It is not likely that his speech affected a single vote, or that he had any expectation of its doing so; yet he scored a triumph which was tolerably sure to be taken note of in the constituencies, and even within the walls of the House he gained one more enthusiastic adherent.

‘That was perfectly splendid!’ Clarissa exclaimed, after Sir Robert had resumed his seat. ‘I almost suspected myself of being a Radical half an hour ago, but now I haven’t the slightest doubt that I am a Tory. He was absolutely convincing! Didn’t you think so, Aunt Susan?’

‘I dare say he was,’ answered fat Mrs. Dent, with a yawn; ‘he is said to be a very able man. It is a great pity that he is so extravagant; for I believe it has come to this now, that office is almost a necessity to him, and of course the other side must have their turn *some* day. I am sorry to take you away, dear, if this sort of thing amuses you; but your uncle is leaving, I see, and I promised that we would drive him home.’

The majority of the members were leaving; for the debate could not be brought to a conclusion that night, and it was just then being continued by a long-winded, obstructive person to whom nobody cared to listen. Mrs. Dent and her niece, after finding and entering their carriage, were soon joined by a dapper little elderly gentleman in a very expensive fur-lined coat, who put his shrewd, pleasant, smooth-shaven face in at the window for a moment to say:

‘I’ll be with you immediately; I want just to say a word to Luttrell.’

This was Mr. Dent, of the famous banking house of Dent & Co., member for a metropolitan constituency and a man entitled, on many obvious grounds, to the respectful esteem of his fellow lawgivers. That he enjoyed the friendship and esteem of Sir Robert Luttrell was a circumstance hitherto unknown to his niece,

who had but recently taken up her abode under his roof, and her own esteem for Uncle Tom was considerably enhanced when, bending forward, she saw him holding that eminent statesman by the elbow. Presently the pair approached the carriage, talking in low tones as they advanced, and then Mr. Dent said :

‘Clarissa, Sir Robert Luttrell wishes to be introduced to you. He is kind enough to say that Lady Luttrell will accept you as a substitute for your aunt at dinner next Thursday.’

Sir Robert took off his hat, and, while expressing his regret that Mrs. Dent’s state of health compelled her to avoid heated rooms, declared himself very grateful to her niece for consenting to undergo the tedium of a solemn political dinner.

‘Politics and politicians don’t interest young people,’ he remarked, with a shrug and a laugh. ‘For the matter of that, I don’t know that they would interest old people if we had anything better to be interested in. Is this your first visit to the House of Commons, Miss Dent? How bored you must have been!’

‘Indeed no!’ exclaimed Clarissa. ‘This was my first visit to the House of Commons, but I hope it will not be my last; for the newspapers give one no idea at all of what a debate really is. Your speech made me see quite clearly how shabby and insincere the Opposition are, and I should think it must have made them feel ashamed of themselves too. In future I shall always beg Uncle Tom to get me into the Ladies’ Gallery if there is any prospect of your speaking.’

She turned red (but the darkness concealed her blushes) after making this flattering statement. She was entirely without experience of the customs and conventions of high society, and it occurred to her too late that for a mere schoolgirl to address so very great a man as Sir Robert Luttrell in that way might savour of impertinence. Sir Robert, however, seemed to be quite pleased.

‘The leaders of the Opposition,’ he answered, ‘are, I am sorry to tell you, dead to all sense of shame; but I, who belong to the party of simplicity and rectitude, am by no means impervious to compliments, and you have paid me the prettiest compliment that I have received for many a long day, Miss Dent. How much nicer you are than your uncle, who won’t even give me credit for being serious!’

The truth is that he was not very serious; and doubtless that was why, notwithstanding his conspicuous abilities, he was not, and never would be, the chosen leader of an extremely serious



nation. Mr. Dent, on the way home, explained to his niece in a few pregnant words how it was that Sir Robert's disabilities outweighed his abilities.

'It is his misfortune to be dangerously clever, and his fault that he is incurably indolent. No Conservative administration could be formed without him, and no department could be safely entrusted to him. As Chancellor of the Duchy he is the right man in the right place; but that office can't always be kept open for him, and it is only 2,000*l.* a year, instead of 5,000*l.*, which he wants and thinks he ought to have. One foresees the day when he will be driven to accept a peerage—as a preliminary step to figuring in the Bankruptcy Court.'

'Oh Tom, you would never let it come to that!' exclaimed Mrs. Dent.

'My dear, what a shocking and unauthorised assertion! Your words seem to imply that I myself am desirous of obtaining a peerage, and that I should hesitate at no pecuniary sacrifice to gratify my ambition, whereas you ought to know that I am quite the most unambitious politician in Great Britain.'

'You are ambitious for your friends, Tom, if you are not ambitious for yourself, and I am sure you will not allow the Luttrells to be ruined for want of a little ready money.'

'Ah, you flatter me, my dear Susan, you flatter me! It is the business of a banker, I admit, to lend money; but it is likewise his business and his duty to do so upon unimpeachable security. After all, I am not Rothschild, nor is our good friend Sir Robert essential to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Let us endeavour to take a sane and philosophic view of what can't be helped, bearing always in mind the great truth that nothing matters very much.'

The foregoing dialogue conveyed no distinct impression to the mind of Clarissa, who—eager though she was to acquire information, and prompt at assimilating it when placed before her in the form of definite facts—was as yet easily puzzled by innuendoes. An orphan, who could scarcely remember her mother and whose father had been a grave, stern man of business, approachable only at meal-times during the holidays, she had, during the first eighteen years of her life, been about as solitary a human being as could have been discovered in England or out of it. She had cried on leaving school, although she had had but few friends there; she had cried when her father died suddenly, although he

had given her so little cause to lament him; there was in her a fine large store of affection ready to be lavished upon somebody and hitherto unclaimed by anybody. Of this a considerable portion was now overflowing upon her uncle and aunt, who had taken her to live with them in Portland Place, and who, indeed, were showing themselves very kind to her, having no child of their own.

‘It is a thousand pities, not to say ten thousand pities,’ Mr. Dent remarked, when his younger brother’s death cast this fresh responsibility upon him, ‘that Clarissa is not a boy. Still, being what she is through no fault of her own, she must be made the best of. With care and good management, we may, I trust, restrain her from eloping with the butler.’

Mrs. Dent would have been horrified at the bare suggestion of anything so improper and improbable if she had not been accustomed to the very extraordinary things which Tom was in the habit of saying.

‘You see,’ he added, by way of explanation, ‘she has a bias towards eccentricity. Or rather, you don’t see it, but I do. I detect it in her eyes and the arrangement of her hair, as well as in her speech every now and then. However, she is still quite fluid, so to speak, and it is your obvious duty, my dear, to run her into a nice, trustworthy, conventional mould.’

Poor Mrs. Dent, who had for many years been an invalid and who was entirely devoid of experience in the training of the young, protested plaintively against so startling a representation of her duty to her neighbour; but she was partially reassured by her husband’s next remark.

‘Your diffidence is becoming, Susan, and not altogether misplaced. What should console you is that the task of moulding Clarissa is only too likely to pass into other hands before long, and it will be for me, I am afraid, to say into what hands it shall or shall not pass. I feel strong enough to beat a domestic servant, but the Lord knows whether I shall have the strength and wisdom to make a judicious selection amongst the fortune-hunters who are sure to come buzzing round her presently!’

Clarissa in a few years’ time would enter into undisputed possession of the fortune which she had inherited from her father. This, it was generally understood, would be a comfortable, though not a large one; but as Mr. Dent, who was his brother’s sole executor, had maintained a discreet reserve upon the point, nobody knew for certain what the late junior partner’s interest in the

banking business had amounted to. In any case, suitors were not likely to hang back; for the girl was decidedly pretty, notwithstanding her somewhat angular figure and the awkward habit of poking her head which her schoolmistresses had been unable to correct, and which she herself excused on the plea of short-sightedness. Her fluffy flaxen hair and the blue eyes (often screwed up) in which her uncle had pretended to discern indications of dawning eccentricity were well enough, her complexion was really admirable, her nose and mouth did not sin against received rules; and she had a double row of excellent white teeth which were displayed every time that she spoke.

‘They are displayed a little too much,’ the family physician said, when, for certain reasons, he had been requested to make a careful examination of the young lady; ‘it is a sign of a delicate constitution, and I think she will require watching. Her lungs are sound, and the cough which alarms you does not mean much—for the present. At the same time, I would not let her catch cold, if I were you. Why not take her abroad for the winter?’

There were several reasons for disregarding this very inconvenient piece of advice, one of them being that, although an active member of Parliament may succeed in finding a pair, it is not always possible for a busy banker to absent himself from his affairs for several months together, while another was that foreign habits and foreign cookery were abhorrent to Mrs. Dent. However, the doctor did not insist, and Clarissa, for her part, was not conscious of having anything the matter with her beyond a troublesome little cough. What she was conscious of—and had sufficient cause to be—was an exuberant vitality, an immense curiosity respecting the outer world, of which she had hitherto seen so wonderfully little, and, just now, much exultation at the prospect of dining with a Cabinet Minister and meeting all sorts of interesting people at his table.

People are apt to be interesting or the reverse in exact proportion to their novelty or staleness. Sir Robert and Lady Luttrell, who had been entertaining members of Parliament and the wives of members of Parliament for very many years, probably thought that the party which assembled at their house in Grosvenor Place on the succeeding Thursday was composed of units duller than ditchwater; whereas Miss Dent, as soon as she had heard the names of her fellow-guests, felt it a privilege and an excitement to be even in the same room with them. She was very prettily

dressed on that occasion, economy in the matter of dress being quite unnecessary so far as she was concerned; she was more or less aware of looking her best; she was too unaffectedly modest to be shy, and it is, therefore, not surprising that she produced a decidedly favourable impression upon those who saw her for the first time. Her hostess in particular (for the reasons above specified, no doubt, and because Clarissa's conversation and manners were so unlike those of the ordinary fashionable young woman of the day) took a fancy to her at once.

'My dear,' she said, speaking with a very slight foreign accent and laughing in response to a somewhat *naïf* ejaculation of the girl's, 'it is charming of you to thank us, but you will soon discover that it is we who ought to be thanking you for having brought a little brightness into our dreary gathering. My son—who is the only creature present, except yourself, with any pretension to youth—will tell you what terrible affairs our dinner parties always are. Oh yes; it is true that there are some great men in the room; but, between ourselves, it is not very difficult to be great and it is very easy to be wearisome. Not that I wish to disgust you with all these old gentlemen. If you are able to find them admirable and awe-inspiring, so much the better for you!'

Lady Luttrell was a Frenchwoman by birth, but had lived long enough in England to have acquired many of our habits, as well as a perfect command of our language. Clever, vivacious, and still retaining a fair share of the beauty for which she had been famous towards the middle of the nineteenth century, she was, and always had been, of considerable assistance to her husband in a social sense. Probably at the bottom of her heart she loved the land of her adoption better than that which she made a point of visiting every winter, but with which she had few remaining ties; probably, also, her great popularity was due to the fact that she not only liked us but had assimilated our little ways. It is scarcely possible for a foreigner to be really popular in English society until he or she has made that inferential acknowledgment of our superiority to other nations. For the rest, she was a woman of the world and an extremely agreeable and kind-hearted one; so that Clarissa, who prided herself upon being a little bit above narrow racial prejudices, had every right to be charmed with her.

The comparatively juvenile statesman who escorted Miss Dent to the dining-room was spared any painful intellectual effort in seeking for subjects of conversation suitable to his neighbour, his

whole time being taken up in replying to quick, eager queries, some of which had the privilege of amusing him mightily. He could not—or, at all events, he said he could not—enlighten her as to the policy decided upon at a Cabinet Council which had been held that day, nor had he very much information to impart respecting the special department which he himself represented in a subordinate capacity; but he was able to tell her who the distinguished personages in her immediate vicinity were, and he was likewise able to gratify her curiosity with regard to the one individual present who was distinguished from the rest of the company by virtue of possessing no particular distinction.

‘Don’t you know Guy Luttrell?’ he asked. ‘I thought you were a friend of the family. Your uncle is, anyhow, and I dare say he has a pretty accurate notion of how much Master Guy has cost an indulgent father. Oh yes, I suppose he is rather good-looking; most people call him so. I don’t think I very much admire that type of man myself. One foresees that he will be fat before he is middle-aged. He has been a bit of a *mauvais sujet*, I believe.’

‘I should say that he was very good-natured,’ Clarissa remarked, scrutinising the heir of the Luttrells through her glasses.

‘They always are; that is one reason why they are always so expensive. And Sir Robert can’t very well afford an expensive son in these hard times, poor man! Guy began life in the Guards, and amused himself very satisfactorily for a year or two. Then an end had to come to that, and he exchanged into some line regiment or other; since which he has been doing A.D.C. work in various places. He is said to be on the look-out for an heiress now, and I am sure he will have no difficulty at all in finding one. Why is it, Miss Dent, that your sex invariably prefers scamps to sober, irreproachable, hard-working fellows like me?’

‘I can’t think,’ answered Clarissa absently.

She was still engaged in endeavouring to take the measure of Captain Luttrell, who might be a scamp, but who had not so very much the appearance of being one. Tall, broad-shouldered and fair-complexioned, with a light moustache which did not conceal his well-shaped mouth, he was no bad specimen of the better class of contemporary British warriors. In features he was not unlike his father, whose trick of keeping his eyes half closed he had also

inherited; but Sir Robert's eyes, when open, were seen to be bright and iron-grey in colour, whereas Captain Luttrell's were sleepy and blue. Moreover, the younger man had a narrower forehead, a flatter top to his head, and somewhat more fleshy cheeks than the elder. These trifling indications of inferiority did not prevent him from being pleasant to look upon, nor did they cause Clarissa to modify the favourable judgment which she was disposed to pass upon him. To be sure, she had not the faintest idea of what a 'scamp' meant, and assumed that Guy Luttrell had done nothing worse than spend rather more money than he had in his pocket.

Later in the evening he was introduced to her by his mother, who said, 'Guy, I have been telling Miss Dent that she ought to come south with us this winter and get rid of her cough. Can you not manage to sing the praises of Pau for once, in spite of your being such a John Bull?'

Captain Luttrell, smiling sleepily and gazing down upon Miss Dent from the height of six feet two inches above the level of the floor, remarked that Pau really wasn't a bad sort of place, considering that it laboured under the disadvantage of being situated in France. 'There's hunting of a sort and shooting, if you don't mind going up to the mountains for it—and games of various kinds, if you're fond of 'em. I don't know any place out of England where you're so little bothered with beastly foreigners. We have a villa there—at least, my mother has; for it belongs to her. Has she been asking you to stay with her? Upon my word, I should go if I were you. You'll find it ever so much more like home than Cannes or Mentone, or some vile hole of that kind.'

Clarissa laughed and replied that if there was any place like home, she was not at all likely to make its speedy acquaintance. Lady Luttrell had very kindly offered to take charge of her in the event of her being expatriated by the doctor; but she feared her cough was not nearly bad enough to afford her an excuse for accepting the invitation.

'Ah well, that's one way of putting it, of course,' Captain Luttrell observed. 'I suppose what you mean is that you ain't going to leave England unless you're obliged; and there I'm altogether with you. The worst of it is,' he added, sighing heavily, 'that we poor wretches of soldier-officers *are* obliged. It won't be many months before I'm sent out of the country, I'm sorry to say.'

‘But not to the south of France, I presume?’ said Clarissa.

‘Oh dear, no! to a very much more objectionable part of the world than that. I assure you, Miss Dent, that I sometimes think we pay far too high a price for the honour and glory of being a big empire.’

He sat down and proceeded, after a leisurely fashion, to pour his personal and professional grievances into a partially sympathetic ear. Clarissa was of opinion that a soldier ought not to make quite such a fuss about incidental hardships; yet, when her uncle came to take her away, she had decided in her own mind that Captain Luttrell was a lovable, if not precisely an admirable, fellow-creature, while she could not but be flattered by the kindness of her hostess, who, on wishing her good night, said:

‘Now, mind! I carry you off to Pau with me before the end of the year—*c'est entendu!* If your uncle makes difficulties, we will call in the doctors and stop his mouth.’

‘It is not impossible,’ Mr. Dent remarked dryly, as he seated himself in the brougham beside his niece, ‘that your uncle might make difficulties, if such a project were seriously put forward. What else am I here for?’

But the significance of this query was lost upon the unsuspecting Clarissa.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HACCOMBE LUTTRELL.

THE grand but somewhat inhospitable coast-line which extends from Hartland Point to the Land's End is indented here and there by estuaries and natural harbours which look useful enough to a landsman's eye, but which sailors know better than to run for under stress of weather if they can possibly help it. Many a good ship has gone to pieces on the treacherous bars which must needs be eluded before those smooth and sheltered waters can be reached; and although it is possible to make Haccombe Harbour when a fresh gale is blowing from the W.N.W., no Haccombe man can see a vessel endeavouring to perform that feat under such circumstances without regrets which are naturally intensified if he happen to be a member of the lifeboat crew. Towards the end of November or beginning of December, however, a few weeks of hazy calms and light easterly breezes are not un-

frequently accorded to mariners, and it was at that quiet, rather melancholy season of the year that Sir Robert Luttrell was pacing up and down the broad terrace which fronted his house, throwing occasional absent-minded glances at the dim silver-grey expanse of water beneath him.

‘Yes,’ he said, with a sigh, in answer to an observation which had just been made by his companion, ‘it is a beautiful old place, and any man might be proud of owning it, provided that he had money enough to keep it up. When you have to be perpetually cutting down expenses right and left, you begin to feel that some luxuries are scarcely worth what they cost. I suppose I ought to do as others do, and let the house to some confounded brewer, or  
— or—’

‘Or banker?’ smilingly suggested Mr. Dent, who, clad in a grey suit and with his hands in his pockets, was the recipient of this slightly petulant outburst on the part of an old friend. ‘No, my dear Luttrell, I do not rise. I have become rich, it is true; but my life has been spent in a groove which I hope to run down quite smoothly and pleasantly until my death. At this time of day it would upset me dreadfully to jerk myself out of it and begin to play at being a country gentleman. As for cutting down expenses, it really does seem to me—’

‘Ah, my good fellow,’ pleaded Sir Robert, throwing up his hands deprecatingly, ‘please don’t say that again! It seems to you that half the servants might be dismissed, and half the house shut up, and half the amount of champagne drunk, and so forth, and so forth! But you don’t know what you are advising me to do; you don’t know what the irresistible dead weight of established custom is. Some people, perhaps, have strength of mind enough to make everybody about them miserable; I haven’t. I do what I can and hope for the best, while fully anticipating the worst. *Après moi le déluge!* Guy, I dare say, will sell the place when he succeeds me—always supposing that the place remains his to sell.’

Hacombe Luttrell, the imposing grey-granite mansion towards which Sir Robert’s back was at the moment turned, had been for some three centuries the abode of his progenitors; but as the entail had been cut off, the chances of its passing into the possession of his posterity were a little doubtful. Nobody knew this better than Sir Robert’s banker, former schoolfellow, and trusted adviser, who turned to gaze silently at the weather-worn



façade, with its ivy-clad walls and mullioned windows, and who drew his hand several times reflectively over his smooth-shaven cheeks and chin.

‘Why don’t you send him to America, Luttrell?’ he asked presently.

‘Who?—Guy?—what do you mean?’ returned the other, with a touch of irritability. ‘How the deuce can I send him to America?—and why the deuce should I?’

‘It was only a figure of speech. America, of course, comes to us, like Manchester and Liverpool and other places where wealthy men produce wealthy daughters for the benefit of impoverished landowners. But that appears to be the sole solution, doesn’t it?’

‘So Lady Luttrell says; but it is one thing to lead Guy to the water and another to make him drink. He isn’t very fond of drinking, you see—at least, not of drinking water.’

Mr. Dent shot a quick, inquiring look at the speaker. ‘I thought that was a thing of the past,’ he said.

‘Oh, well, I hope so—yes, I think so. He isn’t quite so young as he was, and in some respects, no doubt, he is a reformed character. But I very much doubt whether anything in the world will ever induce him to marry an ugly girl. You wouldn’t think,’ added Sir Robert wistfully, ‘that that fellow would be so abominably hard to please; but he is.’

‘We all become hard to please the moment that we are urged to consult our own obvious interests,’ remarked Mr. Dent a little sententiously. ‘If we didn’t, we should mar the perversity of the whole scheme of human destiny—which would be a very great pity from a spectator’s point of view. Is your son to accompany you to Pau this winter?’

‘He won’t accompany us; he may come out for a week or two after Christmas, but it is quite uncertain as yet, I believe, whether he will give himself the trouble or not. Why do you ask?’

‘As if you didn’t know! In all truth and sincerity I am grateful to you and Lady Luttrell for your kindness to Clarissa; I think she ought to spend the cold months in a milder climate. I don’t see how we could take her abroad ourselves, and if we accept your invitation on her behalf, we shall do so with a full sense of the obligation under which we are laid. But——’

‘Rubbish about obligations!’ interrupted Sir Robert; ‘if it comes to that, I am far more deeply indebted to you than you are ever likely to be to me. We shall be only too delighted to have

the society of your niece, who seems to me to be a charming young lady, and with whom I notice that Madeline has already struck up a friendship. For goodness' sake don't talk as though any trifling service that it may be in our power to render you could be compared with all that you have done for us !'

'Banks have no feelings,' returned Mr. Dent rather dryly ; ' we help others in order that we may help ourselves ; it is a pure matter of business.'

' I wasn't speaking of the bank, my dear fellow ; I was speaking of you personally.'

' Then you were speaking of a business man who is commonly considered to have a pretty clear idea of what he is about. You haven't much to thank me for, and I was going to say just now that I should have nothing to thank you for if this southern trip were to have the results which Lady Luttrell anticipates and desires. I agree with you that Clarissa is charming ; but she is at present quite raw, and what she will be like when she is ripe I can't pretend to foresee. All I know is that I am responsible for her until she attains her majority, and that it would never do for me to let her espouse a man whose motives, from the nature of the case, could hardly be regarded as above suspicion. I am sure you will forgive my bluntness.'

For a moment the expression of Sir Robert Luttrell's face seemed to imply that that confidence was not altogether warranted. He was by nature proud ; in his heart of hearts he thought that his son was a sufficiently good match for any banker's niece, and he did not quite like to be accused of harbouring ulterior designs when his only intention had been to do a good-natured thing. But Dent was too old and too good (possibly also too useful) a friend of his to be snubbed ; so he laughed and replied :

' I must decline to hold myself answerable for any notions or wishes that Lady Luttrell may have taken into her head ; but I quite see the reasonableness of your fears, and I will make a point of speaking to her upon the subject. I will even tell Guy, if you like, that Miss Dent must be regarded as forbidden fruit.'

' Thank you, no,' said Mr. Dent quietly ; ' I doubt whether that would have the desired deterrent effect. If you mention my niece to him at all, it would be more to the purpose to state that she will probably not be a rich woman, though I dare say she will be comfortably provided for. He might do very much better, both as regards fortune and as regards compatibility of tastes.

But the simplest and most satisfactory solution of all would be to prevent him from joining you at Pau this winter.'

'Very well; I'll do my best. Only you ought to be aware by this time that I never can prevent things from happening: isn't it the lifelong experience of every good Tory that things always do happen in spite of us? And, talking of the impossibility of preventing things, what is to be done about those mortgages?'

The conversation now assumed a character more interesting to those engaged in it than relevant to the progress of the present narrative. Mr. Dent, in response to a somewhat pressing invitation and in obedience to the behests of the doctor, who thought that a change to the mild climate of the west of England might take Clarissa's cough away, had brought his niece down to Hacombe Luttrell and proposed to leave her there for a week or so after his own return to London and business. As has been seen, he had some misgivings about the advisability of allowing her to proceed to Pau with her new friends and his old ones; yet he was scarcely prepared to place his veto upon a project which had so much to recommend it, and for the time being he had matters to discuss with Sir Robert which claimed his whole attention.

The discussion proved—as, under certain circumstances, financial discussions are very apt to prove—inconclusive and unsatisfactory, one party to it having only the distasteful measure of retrenchment to advocate, while the other was anxious to get ready money upon the best terms obtainable and with as little waste of time as might be. Neither of them, perhaps, was very sorry to be interrupted by the precipitate arrival of a dark-haired, blue-eyed maiden of fourteen, who clutched Sir Robert by the arm and gasped out breathlessly:

'Father, we all want to go fishing, and old Abraham says there's a nice breeze outside, and mother told me to ask you whether I mightn't have a holiday. Paul is coming and so is Miss Dent, and Mademoiselle would be very glad to have a free afternoon to write letters. You could come too, if you liked—both of you.'

'Thank you very much, my dear,' answered Sir Robert, laughing; 'but, so far as I am concerned, I have no hesitation in saying that I should *not* like to be as seasick as you will certainly be when you get out into that easterly roll. Dent, unless I am very much mistaken in him, shares my affection for the firm land.

Well, I suppose you may have your holiday, if your mother sees no objection. Paul must take the tiller, though, and the sheet is not to be made fast, and you are not to jump about—mind that!’

The girl endeavoured not to look more compassionate and disdainful than she could help; but her efforts were not crowned with complete success. ‘I *have* been out in a boat once or twice before now,’ she remarked, ‘and I haven’t been seasick for nearly two years; still I won’t forget to give your orders to the others.’

Then she flung her arms round her father’s neck, kissed him on both cheeks, called him an old dear, and ran back towards the house, making a liberal display of thin, lanky legs, to announce that the proposed expedition had received the sanction of the head of the family.

‘That child,’ remarked Mr. Dent, as he gazed meditatively at her retreating form, ‘is going to be a very beautiful woman one of these days, Luttrell.’

‘Do you think so?’ said Sir Robert. ‘Yes, I dare say you are right. Madeline is like her mother, who also was a very beautiful woman in days which don’t seem so very long ago. Oh, I know what you are thinking: that is what everybody thinks about girls who are blessed with good looks, and I suppose, taking everything into consideration, we ought to be especially thankful that she is likely to command such a high price in the matrimonial market. All the same, I prefer, with your permission, to thank God that that she has still three or four more years of childhood before her.’

‘Don’t quarrel with me for saying things which I haven’t said or even thought,’ pleaded Mr. Dent, laying his hand upon his friend’s shoulder. ‘Take me to see your Jerseys now, and we’ll forget all disagreeable subjects. One consolation is that, do what we will, we have precious little power over the destinies of other people.’

The destinies of Clarissa Dent and Madeline Luttrell, which will be unfolded in due time for the benefit of such readers as may have patience enough to follow them, were not greatly affected for better or for worse by the events of that mild, still day of early winter, and it is only worth while to chronicle these for the sake of showing how Clarissa (then a very impressionable young woman) fell to some extent under the influence of the Reverend Paul

Luttrell. Paul, who was Sir Robert's second son, would doubtless have developed into an ornament of the Royal Navy, had he not, immediately after passing out of the *Britannia*, surprised and vexed his parents by announcing his unalterable determination to proceed to Oxford and take holy orders. His will being a great deal stronger than theirs, he had carried his point and was now curate in a London parish; but he had lost neither his love for the sea nor his rudimentary knowledge of seamanship; so that old Abraham Lavers, who was generally held responsible for the safety of such Hacombe Luttrell visitors as cared to go out fishing, never hesitated to let the parson sail the boat when the latter formed one of the party. In matters pertaining to dogmatic theology, however, Abraham—being himself a Bible Christian—was less docile, and it was seldom that he and 'Master Paul' met without a prolonged desultory argument which left each disputant very much where he had been at starting.

Clarissa, sitting in the stern while the boat stole out towards the open sea before a faint easterly breeze, listened with interest and curiosity to statements of the unswerving attitude of the Established Church as regarded Baptismal Regeneration and to what Nonconformity had to urge in opposition to that doctrine. The tall, broad-shouldered young clergyman, whose grey eyes were clearer and whose face was more powerful, if less handsome, than his brother's, had upon the whole the best of the argument, she thought; but her sympathies were rather with the grey-bearded old fisherman, who certainly contrived to put his case in a forcible and homely fashion rather difficult to controvert.

'Church 'ere, Church there, 'tis Scriptur' or the Pope o' Rome we'm bound to foller, sir, you may depend,' he wound up by declaring; and although the young man laughed goodhumouredly, Clarissa half suspected that he changed the subject because he had no convincing retort ready.

The remaining members of the expedition—a lively, smartly dressed, and rather pretty young matron, a girl of masculine appearance and manners, and a couple of gilded youths—were fully occupied with one another; Madeline, busily baiting hooks, was engaged in earnest conversation with Mr. Lavers's grandson, a long-legged, sheepish-looking boy, whose dialect was barely comprehensible to unaccustomed ears. When old Abraham stepped forward to set a head-sail, the Reverend Paul remembered his duty to his neighbour, and began:

‘I hope you don’t mind a little bit of a lop. We shan’t find the sea quite as smooth as it looks after we get out beyond the point.’

‘I daren’t boast,’ answered Clarissa, smiling. ‘I have crossed the Channel four times in a steamer without any catastrophe; but that is all the experience I have ever had of the sea. Lady Luttrell was saying that you once intended to be a sailor: what made you change your mind?’

‘Perhaps you would hardly understand if I were to tell you,’ the young man replied.

‘Perhaps not; still you might try, if you didn’t mind. It would give us something to talk about.’

‘Yes; but I don’t very much like talking about it as a mere subject of conversation. It is tremendously important and serious to me, you see—the one serious and important thing that there is, in fact. However, I am not as cowardly or as shy as I was once upon a time, and whether you ask out of idle curiosity or not, I will answer your question.’

He did so in clear tones and in very unambiguous language, confessing the faith that was in him, with perhaps just a shade of defiance at first—as was not unnatural, considering that the language which he used was pretty sure to be stigmatised as cant by those who sat near him and who might be expected to overhear some of it—but gradually he warmed with his subject, and the girl whom he addressed, at all events, was not disposed to laugh at him.

‘You are very fortunate to be able to believe like that!’ she remarked, with a sigh, when he paused.

‘There is no great difficulty about believing,’ he answered; ‘people believe all manner of absurdities, real and apparent, such as that it is unlucky to upset the salt or to walk under a ladder: the difficulty is to act up to one’s belief. That is why so many civilised persons, who really can’t be accused of incredulity, find it very comfortable and convenient to call themselves Agnostics.’

‘I don’t call myself by any name so grand as that,’ said Clarissa meekly; ‘only I can’t quite manage Noah’s ark and Jonah’s whale and Joshua’s moon and Balaam’s ass. I wish with all my heart that I could; but it really isn’t in my power.’

‘Now, sir, if you’ll just bring her ’ead round to the wind and ketch ’old of this ’ere line, we’ll see what we can do,’ called out old Abraham; and as lines were given to the rest of the party

and Madeline, in a high state of excitement, placed herself close to Miss Dent, chattering volubly, well-worn subjects of controversy fell for the time being into abeyance.

The boat was rising and falling gently upon the long Atlantic swell, which—perhaps because it was so long—disturbed nobody's internal economy; full justice was presently done to the contents of the luncheon baskets, a very fair take of fish was secured in the course of the afternoon, and when the waning light gave the signal for a prolonged beat back towards harbour, Clarissa had as yet obtained no opportunity of ascertaining how much or how little her reverend neighbour believed or deemed it essential to believe. But after land had been reached, and the others had started in couples to walk up to the house, and she, lingering behind for a few minutes in the falling dew and the semi-darkness, had been caught up by Paul, he said, as if their conversation had only just been interrupted:

'The legends or poems or dreams of which you speak have so little to say to Christianity that you would never break your shins over them unless you secretly wished your shins to be broken. In the matter of belief, all that can be required of you is that you should be able to repeat the Apostles' Creed.'

'And what about the Athanasian Creed?' Clarissa inquired.

'Well, there are clauses in it which I do not repeat myself, and although that may be unorthodox, my rector and my bishop wink at such unorthodoxy. Once grasp the truth and you will see the insignificance of details. Only, when you do, you will find yourself involved in considerable difficulties with regard to conduct.'

'Why?' asked Clarissa.

'Because you are young, because I understand that you are rich, or going to be, and because our creed compels us to be perpetually doing things that we don't want to do and leaving undone the things that we should like to do.'

'I hope I shall always do what I believe to be right,' Clarissa declared, with a fine confidence in herself which appeared to have the effect of amusing her companion.

'I'm sure I hope you will,' he answered, laughing a little; 'but it doesn't quite follow as a matter of course that what you believe to be right will be right, you know. Anyhow, if you should ever feel a wish for a word of ghostly counsel from a person who may at least claim to be tolerably free from prejudice and

bigotry, a line addressed to me here will be forwarded to the Bermondsey lodgings which I usually inhabit.'

In this manner were laid the foundations of a friendship which did not remain without eventual sway over Clarissa's wayward career.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### WORDS OF WARNING.

LADY LUTTRELL'S boudoir was the prettiest and pleasantest room in a very pretty and pleasant house. Charmingly furnished, facing due south, fronted by a space of sunk flower garden, beyond which the landlocked bay and the wind-swept promontories of Great and Little Haccombe Head could be descried, it was warm in winter, comfortable all the year round, and reserved, by tacit understanding, for its proprietress as a quiet haven of retreat into which no unauthorised person might presume to penetrate. Sir Robert was authorised, but did not abuse his privilege. So unusual a proceeding, indeed, was it on his part to intrude upon his wife after breakfast—at which hour she was supposed to be occupied in interviewing the housekeeper or in reading and answering letters—that when he appeared abruptly on the day following that dealt with in the last chapter, her ladyship exclaimed, in apprehensive accents:

'Robert!—is anything the matter?'

Many things had been the matter of late in a household where normal expenditure largely exceeded normal revenue and where, owing to causes with which all owners of land are sadly familiar nowadays, revenue was becoming more and more abnormal in its insufficiency every year. But Sir Robert, it seemed, had not come to groan and grumble, as he sometimes did, or to suggest measures of retrenchment which he never would have consented to put into practice. He only said, as he sank into a low chair beside his wife's writing-table: 'Dent has to go back to London to-day.'

'Yes, I know,' answered Lady Luttrell, looking but partially reassured; 'he took leave of me just now. Does he—does he make difficulties?'

'About money, do you mean? No, he doesn't make difficulties: that would really be a work of supererogation, considering



what a fine crop of them already exists. But he said a word or two about that girl and her coming to Pau with us which I must admit that he was justified in saying. One does feel that it wouldn't be pretty to take unfair advantages. Personally, I am as innocent as the driven snow; I don't even know whether Guy means to come out after Christmas or not; but I am afraid Dent is not very far wrong in suspecting you of having a scheme in your mind, and I want to tell you, before it goes any farther, that I couldn't countenance anything of the sort.'

Easy-going Sir Robert seldom expressed himself in such peremptory terms; but when he did, it might be taken as certain that he meant to be obeyed. Lady Luttrell, throwing up both her hands, which were small and white and sparkling with jewels, hastened to repudiate the intention so gratuitously ascribed to her.

'What an idea!' she exclaimed. 'You, who know how fastidious Guy is, ought to know that it would be quite hopeless to select a bride for him. The mere fact of my having selected Miss Dent would be enough to set him against her; but I should never dream of selecting Miss Dent, who is neither beautiful nor witty nor *mondaine*. What chance could she have of attracting him?'

'I call her pretty, and Guy is approaching the age at which one ceases to be attracted by the special fascinations that you mention. I agree with Dent that the simplest plan would be to give him a hint that his presence at Pau will not be essential to our happiness this season.'

'That would be a very sure way of making him resolve to join us; of course he would wish to discover what reason we could have for behaving so unnaturally. After all, the poor girl cannot be prevented from meeting young men sometimes. Since Mr. Dent is so easily alarmed, I wonder that he should have said nothing about Paul, whose attentions were quite assiduous last night, I noticed.'

'Oh, well, Paul is vowed to celibacy, I suppose, like the rest of the High Church young parsons of the period.'

'My dear Robert, how little you know of your own sect! Paul is what I believe you call Broad Church—which means that he recognises no ecclesiastical authority at all and is removed by leagues from the High Church people, who have the affectation to claim the title of Catholics. Yet it stands to reason that there cannot be more than one Catholic Church, and——'

‘Yes, yes, my dear,’ interrupted Sir Robert hastily; ‘your position is unassailable; I am sure I have admitted that scores of times. All the same, there is no danger of Paul’s wanting to marry Miss Dent, while there might quite conceivably be a danger of Guy’s wanting to do so.’

But Lady Luttrell, who had a feminine capacity for opportune irrelevance, persisted. She did not, it may be presumed, wish to enter upon any further discussion of a possible event which might help to set the family on its legs again, and she knew very well how to drive her husband out of the room. Herself a staunch adherent of the Church whose fold she had not been asked to quit at a time when mixed marriages were rather more common than they are now, she had for many years counted upon Sir Robert’s indifferentism and had used every effort to make a convert of him; but, whether through indifference or through a very clear understanding of the disadvantages under which Roman Catholics still labour in this country, Sir Robert had stood to his guns, stipulating that the two boys should be educated in the faith of their forefathers. Madeline he had graciously conceded to her mother (because it really does not so very much matter what a girl’s religion may be), while for himself he only pleaded that he might be allowed to hold his own unobtrusive opinions in peace. Lady Luttrell had long since abandoned all hope of him; nevertheless, she was aware that she could at any time put him to flight by drawing her theological sword from its scabbard, and it suited her to do so now.

Clarissa, meanwhile, had been saying good-bye to her uncle, from whom she was sorry to part, although it cannot be pretended that she was at all unwilling to be left behind by him. It had been arranged that she was to stay for another week or two where she was, and then, after a halt of a few days in London, to proceed to the South of France with the Luttrells, for the benefit of her health and the enlargement of her experience and ideas. Naturally enough, the prospect pleased and excited her; naturally enough, she preferred glimpses of the outer world and the society of people some of whom were distinguished and some young, to the comparative solitude of Portland Place and a daily drive round the Park in a closed carriage with Aunt Susan. If she felt some faint twinges of compunction, they were speedily allayed by Mr. Dent, who said:

‘My dear girl, you owe us no apology; on the contrary, it is

we who ought to be begging your pardon for committing you to the care of strangers, rather than sacrifice our own comfort and convenience. Come back to us in the spring without a cough and without—well, let us limit ourselves to saying without a cough—and we shall feel infinitely indebted to you, as well as to Lady Luttrell.’

Clarissa did not wonder for more than a minute or two after her uncle’s departure what he had been going to say, but had refrained from saying. Her thoughts were at that time rather less bent upon matrimony than those of most girls. She considered it not impossible that she might marry some fine day; but she was in no hurry about it, and the shadowy hero who arose before her mental vision at odd moments was all the more unlike Guy Luttrell because he did not in the least resemble any human being who has ever trod this earth’s surface. He did not even bear much resemblance to the Reverend Paul, although she liked Paul and had arrived at the conclusion that he deserved her sincere respect.

For the matter of that, she liked the Luttrell family *tutti quanti*—Sir Robert, in spite of his inherent levity, which often puzzled her; Lady Luttrell, with her pretty French gestures, her quick intelligence, and her kindly, motherly ways; most of all, perhaps, Madeline, who had taken one of those sudden, intuitive fancies to her which children sometimes do form for their elders, and who made her the recipient of numerous unsolicited confidences.

‘What a pity it is that you are not poor, Miss Dent!’ the girl exclaimed one day. ‘Then you might be my governess, instead of that horrid old Mademoiselle Girault, and you could live with us always!’

Clarissa said that would be very nice, but could not go quite the length of wishing to be a governess. Whether she was rich or poor she hardly knew, never having had occasion to think about money or to realise how very important a factor wealth is in human happiness. It was Paul who, meeting her one evening on his return from shooting (for he was a very fair shot, and saw no necessary incongruity between a double-barrelled gun and a parson’s white dog-collar), thought fit to read her a short homily upon that subject, and to warn her, not very obscurely, of the dangers to which those who possess wealth and those who would fain acquire it are alike exposed.

‘It is your misfortune,’ he remarked, as he strolled along beside her, with his gun over his shoulder, in the grey twilight, ‘that unless you begin by distrusting most people a little, you will probably end by distrusting everybody altogether. You will have experiences—rich men and women invariably do have them—which will astonish and disgust you, and then, with your impulsive disposition, you will be apt to jump to wrong conclusions. If I were you I should keep cool, try to make as much allowance as you can for temptations which you yourself can’t feel, and bear in mind always that human beings are neither angels nor devils.’

‘I don’t know why you should call me rich and impulsive and imply that I am an idiot into the bargain,’ said Clarissa, who, if she took after her fellow-creatures in being neither angelic nor diabolic, took after them also in entertaining a decided objection to being preached at on week-days. ‘Uncle Tom tells me that I shall be tolerably well off when I come of age; but does it follow as a matter of course that I shall be afflicted with disgusting experiences? I suppose what you mean is that somebody will want to enrich himself at my expense, and that my opinion of the entire human race will be lowered in consequence. Impulsive and ignorant as I am, I really do think I have just sense enough to be able to distinguish between black and white—perhaps even to pardon a black sheep for wearing the fleece that nature has given him.’

‘Don’t be too sure,’ returned Paul, not a whit disconcerted. ‘It is easy enough to forgive a professional thief for picking one’s pocket; it isn’t so easy to forgive one’s friends for being a little short of wholly disinterested in their friendship. I don’t say that you, as a considerable heiress (which of course you are, or will be), cannot have any disinterested friends; that is the very thing that I am afraid of your being driven to assume. But I do say that you will need a lot of circumspection, and a pinch of philosophy besides. People may be very kind and very fond of you for your own sake; yet it may be uncommonly hard for them to refrain from breaking the tenth commandment sometimes.’

Clarissa stopped short and scrutinised her mentor as narrowly as the faint remnant of daylight would permit. ‘When you say “people,” do you mean your own people?’ she asked. ‘You sound to me as if you did—and I don’t think it is very nice of you.’

This time Paul did feel somewhat confused; for, as a matter

of fact, he had been thinking about his own people and had wished, if possible, to convey a hint to Miss Dent which might avert the necessity for subsequent excuses and palliations. But it is so seldom possible to convey such hints that a wise man and one who would fain keep out of hot water does not attempt the task. This man, by virtue of his youth, and in common with other members of his sacred calling, had a noble disdain for the perils of hot water; yet he could not quite screw himself up to the point of saying, 'My mother is one of the best of women; but we are horribly hard up, and she knows how essential it is that my brother should marry money. Therefore she will do all she can to marry you to my brother, who isn't a bad fellow in his way, but who has lived a life which will certainly make you think him a bad fellow when you have heard all about it.'

This being a speech forbidden by considerations of filial and fraternal affection, the Reverend Paul Luttrell had to take refuge in feeble subterfuges and safe generalities, which did not deceive his hearer. It was not that the motives of one individual, or of half-a-dozen individuals, in particular for making a friend of her were likely to be of a mixed character; it was only that wealth, like beauty or wit or any other personal gift, constituted an attraction which those who possessed it would do well to take into account. 'In short, if one doesn't expect too much of poor human nature, one avoids laying up disappointments and disillusion for oneself. I know by experience how many rich men are turned sour and stingy and take an absurdly distorted view of the world simply from being so constantly pestered for loans or donations.'

Clarissa, deeming it highly improbable that Sir Robert or Lady Luttrell would pester her in the manner described, perceived that Paul's object was to set her on her guard against some other peril which he did not care to specify, and no very extraordinary amount of insight was required in order to conjecture what that peril was. But supposing a fond and anxious mother did wish her eldest son to make a good match? That was surely a pardonable aspiration, the discovery of which (if indeed it existed) ought not to turn anybody sour. Moreover, there could be no opportunity for its fulfilment, since Captain Luttrell, according to his own statement, was about to proceed on foreign service.

'I won't forget your advice,' she said, laughing, 'and I will try to suspect people of liking me—when they do like me—because I shall have a small fortune of my own in a year or two.'

But I really cannot allow you to deprive me of all feelings of gratitude or to prevent me from enjoying myself at Pau this winter. I suppose you can't have the slightest idea of how I am going to enjoy it all! Very few girls of my age, I should think, have seen so little as I have.'

She had in truth seen next to nothing of this world and its inhabitants. Enclosed within the four walls of a boarding-school or spending a few weeks of seclusion at some British or foreign watering-place with her silent father, who had been wont to leave home in holiday time, but who had hated making new acquaintances, she had derived such information respecting men and things as may be derived from books, and no more. Now she was to be introduced—so, at least, both Lady Luttrell and Madeline assured her—to a gay and lively society, some foretaste of whose manners and customs had been afforded to her by her stay at Haccombe Luttrell and her observation of her fellow-guests; she was going to a land of sunshine and beautiful scenery, with exceptional opportunities of mixing with the French as well as the English denizens of the place; she was as full of curiosity and joyous anticipation as if she had been six years old and on her way to her first pantomime. Upon the whole, therefore, her clerical adviser might almost as well have held his tongue, and probably, if he had not been so young a man, he would have done so. As it was, he was conscious of having failed, and only remarked cheerfully:

'Oh, I hope you'll enjoy yourself, and I quite think you will. What with dancing and hunting and lawn-tennis and one thing and another, Pau is what most people consider a very enjoyable place. Personally, after having tried both, I prefer Bermondsey; but that is because—luckily for me—I am one of those queer beings who prefer work of any kind, however discouraging and repulsive, to perpetual play.'

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHÂTEAU DE GRANCY.

SOME of us, when we hastily turn our backs upon the fogs and frosts of our native land and fly southwards, in the wake of the swallows, as fast as a not very well organised service of express trains will carry us, yearn for a sight of liquid blue skies, of

palm trees and olives and aloes and even of white dusty roads—dissatisfied unless such evidences of a really warm climate greet us at our journey's end. But a large proportion of the English people who are sent abroad every winter by the doctor's orders care not one jot for these things, preferring to find, during their temporary exile, a somewhat improved reproduction of what they have left behind them; and that is why the department of the Basses-Pyrénées continues to be, as it has been for half a century or so, the favoured recipient of British guineas. The truth is that Pau is not much more southern in appearance or vegetation than Devonshire, and if spring sets in a little earlier in those latitudes than it does in ours, the vicinity of the mountains is apt to bring about frequent returns to winter, provoking melancholy comparisons between the heat of a coal fire and that which poor shivering mortals are able to extract, with the aid of the bellows, from a pile of damp logs. However, there is a very good English club at Pau, and polo is sometimes played on the Haute Plante, and golf and cricket and lawn-tennis are always obtainable; so that when to these advantages are added a pack of hounds and places of worship suited to every shade of religious opinion tolerated by the hospitable Anglican Church, it must be acknowledged that the place does its best to be endurable. Moreover, the view in fine weather of the wooded hills beyond the valley of the Gave and the purple summits and snowy peaks in the distance is something worth travelling a long way to enjoy.

The Château de Grancy, which stands on the eastward side of the town and, facing due south, commands that charming prospect, had for many years been the property of Lady Luttrell, who was once upon a time the beautiful Mademoiselle de Grancy, and who, on the death of her parents, had inherited the family dwelling, together with a modest fortune in hard cash, not one franc of which now remained to her. The house had scarcely more claim to be called a *château* than have certain Irish mansions to be known as castles, and, like them, it stood in somewhat conspicuous need of repairs; yet its rooms were lofty and spacious, the cracked plaster of its walls was for the most part concealed by creepers, the garden, though untidy, was full of flowers, and the general aspect of the place was sufficiently bright and homelike to explain the affection which had always been entertained for it by the Luttrell family.

Such as it was, it drew warm expressions of admiration and

delight from Clarissa Dent, whose good fortune it was to form her first impression of Pau on one of those brilliant, cloudless December days a yearly half-dozen of which would make the fortune of the locality, if it were not already made.

‘But you must not suppose that we always look like this,’ Lady Luttrell felt bound in honesty to caution her young friend. ‘As they say here, *il faut que l’hiver se fasse*, and your aunt was quite right to make you bring your furs with you. Still I am glad that you should see what we *can* do in the way of weather and scenery when we are upon our good behaviour.’

She was in reality pleased and flattered by the girl’s unaffected enthusiasm; for she loved the scenes of her own half-forgotten girlhood and returned to them every year with an increased sense of relief and thankful escape. Life in England had come to mean for her perpetual anxiety, perpetual vain efforts to make both ends meet, perpetual doubts whether the political game, with its enforced hospitalities and its terrible uncertainties, was worth the candle. What rendered Lady Luttrell so popular as a London hostess, and had been of no slight assistance to her husband during his public career, was her gay, light-hearted manner, and the few suspicious persons who, after she had welcomed them with such affectionate cordiality, accused her of being a humbug, were probably far from imagining how accurate their criticism was. If we were not all humbugs, in the sense of wearing the mask of comedy while engaged upon a somewhat tragic performance, social intercourse would become too depressing to be kept up.

When in winter quarters, however, there was no need for pretence on the part of this harassed lady, and the hospitality which she freely dispensed and accepted was a genuine satisfaction to her. Elaborate dinner-parties she left to the rich Americans who at that time were beginning to establish themselves as leaders of Pau society; occasional informal dances did not cost much, and the hosts of visitors, indigenous and exotic, who besieged the Château de Grancy were a good deal less hungry and less exacting than those who honoured Grosvenor Place and Haccombe Luttrell with their company. They were also a great deal more entertaining, being of diverse nationalities and representing amongst them the manners and customs of almost every European race. Frenchmen, Spaniards, Russians, Poles, Italians, and even here and there a German mingled with the predominating British contingent upon that neutral ground—a little surprised, perhaps, to find



themselves rubbing shoulders with one another, yet well-bred enough to accept the situation in a spirit of temporary fraternity—and Sir Robert, who was an excellent linguist, stood upon a pinnacle of public favour nearly as high as that occupied by his wife. As for Clarissa, after a fortnight of what seemed to her to be an unceasing flow of gaiety and dissipation, she felt as if she had obtained the experience of an ordinary lifetime; and indeed the fact was that she did see and converse with a large number of people.

‘I can’t understand what you mean when you say that you come here for rest,’ she remarked to Sir Robert, for whom a constant source of amusement was provided by the freshness of her ideas and language. ‘I should have thought this daily and nightly racket would have tired you out. To me, of course, it is delightful; but that is because I have never been through anything the least like it before.’

‘By the time that you have reached my age, my dear young lady,’ Sir Robert replied, ‘you will probably have discovered that nothing is so tiring as solitude. When one is alone, one begins to reflect upon one’s sins and sorrows, which is a very dismal thing to do; in a crowd one finds oblivion, and that is another name for rest. Besides, I can say what I like out here, whereas at home I must always bear in mind that the person to whom I am talking is as likely as not to communicate my interesting remarks to the newspapers and get me into no end of a row with my colleagues. You yourself constitute the chief responsibility that weighs upon me just at present. I tremble to think of what your uncle would do to me if you were to lose your heart to one of the handsome foreigners whose society I observe that you select by preference.’

She was in no danger of adding to the list of Sir Robert’s troubles in that way, although it was true enough that she endeavoured, as far as her limited powers of conversing in French would allow, to exchange ideas with dwellers upon the Continent rather than with her own countrymen and countrywomen. She had already an insatiable thirst for information, an ardent desire to get at the meaning and origin of phenomena, which led her to grasp every opportunity that appeared to be within her reach. In later life this tendency was productive of much vexation of spirit to herself and others; at that time it did no harm to anybody, while it conveyed to her the pleasing, but erroneous,

impression that she was in a fair way towards finding out all about it.

For the rest, she could not have been better placed, so far as the forming of impressions, erroneous or otherwise, went, than she was in that house; for the Luttrells knew everybody and everybody else into the bargain, their position in the English political and social world enabling them to disregard the precautions with which less distinguished people felt bound to hedge themselves about. Damaged reputations contrived without much difficulty to effect an entry into the Château de Grancy; enriched London tradesmen, wintering abroad, enjoyed there the privilege of an introduction to their customers; and if some straitlaced ladies lamented that dear Lady Luttrell's receptions were not a little more select, it had to be admitted that they were often extremely amusing. Just before Christmas Madeline was set free by the departure, on leave of absence, of stern Mlle. Girault, her governess, and then it was that Clarissa was for the first time persuaded to mount one of the wiry little horses of the country, who, she was assured, was so quiet that no ill could possibly befall her so long as she remained upon his back.

Clarissa was no horsewoman; but as her education had included a few dozen riding lessons, she achieved some preliminary excursions without mishap and soon felt sufficiently sure of herself to accompany Sir Robert and Madeline to a near meet, although it was understood that she was not to attempt to follow the hounds. Sir Robert, whose half-hearted efforts at economy did not go to the length of preventing him from bringing a couple of English hunters out to Pau for the short time that he spent there every winter, would not permit his daughter to risk her neck in that way, despite her urgent entreaties.

'No, no, my dear; wait till you are married,' he said. 'Your husband, if you select him carefully, may be one of the many men who approve of hunting ladies; your father isn't. Besides,' he added, on the particular occasion in question, 'you can't desert Miss Dent, for whose prudence and safety we have all made ourselves responsible.'

Sir Robert perhaps meant that he did not care to sacrifice his chances of seeing a run by accepting responsibility for anybody's prudence and safety but his own in the hunting field. As he jogged along beside the two girls on that fine morning, keeping as clear as he could of the throng of vehicles which were proceed-

ing towards the same trysting-place, he may have been thinking how sadly brief his holidays were and how necessary it was for him to make the most of them.

‘You are fortunate young people,’ he remarked presently, with a sigh; ‘nothing to do but to amuse yourselves and bask in the sun till you are tired of it! How would you like to be under orders to return to London in a week, as I am, with a Lenten penance of routine work and interminable, obstructive jabber before you?’

Clarissa thought she would like nothing better than to share in administering the affairs of a great empire; but Sir Robert assured her that he was blessed with no such privilege.

‘The great empire blunders along somehow or other with a loose rein; the sole concern of the modern statesman is to secure votes, and you can’t conceive what a dull, dreary game that is! It is a thousand times better fun to gallop after a bagged fox.’

That form of sport was soon accorded to him, and as Clarissa and Madeline, in obedience to instructions, turned their horses’ heads homewards, the latter remarked confidentially:

‘I didn’t say anything to my father about it, for fear of his beginning to fuss, but I shall get Guy to take us both out with the hounds when he comes. I know that little horse of yours can jump, because I’ve tried him.’

Clarissa was gazing at the faint outline of the distant Pyrenean range, between which and the high, level land over which they were riding a thin veil of haze was spread; the occupants of returning equipages were nodding and waving their hands to the two girls; a few non-hunting equestrians, overtaking them, drew rein to inquire whether Miss Dent’s card was quite full for a ball which was to take place that evening; life, for the moment, seemed so pleasant and beautiful and exhilarating that it left scarcely anything to be desired—assuredly not the advent of Captain Luttrell, who might prove a disturbing factor in the situation.

‘Is your brother coming out, then?’ she asked, after a time.

‘Yes, thank goodness!’ answered Madeline. ‘Mother had a letter from him this morning, and he is to be here in about a fortnight, she says. You met Guy in London at dinner, I know. Didn’t you think him awfully good-looking?’

‘I thought he was good-looking,’ answered Clarissa, without enthusiasm; ‘but it doesn’t really matter very much what a man’s looks are. His conduct is so very much more important.’

‘But he *is* good-looking,’ persisted Madeline. ‘Besides which, he is the best rider, the best shot, the best dancer—in short, the best all-round man you ever met in your life. If that is what you call conduct, you may put Guy at the top of the class.’

Clarissa explained that the accomplishments enumerated did not, in her opinion, come quite under the head of conduct. What was required of a man, and especially of a gentleman, was that he should be strictly honourable, that he should be distinguished, so far as his abilities enabled him to be so, in his profession, that he should be free from vices, and that he should be a good son and a good brother.

‘Well, he is a first-rate brother, anyhow,’ Madeline declared. ‘He is always ready to do what I ask him—which is more than can be said for Paul, who, between you and me, is an awful prig. I don’t know much about it, but I suspect Guy has been rather a naughty boy sometimes, and I like him all the better for it. Anything is better than being a milksop, don’t you think so?’

Perhaps, at that period of her life, Clarissa was a little inclined to think so; but she felt it right to preach a very different doctrine to her juvenile companion. Anybody, she pointed out, can be as wicked or as careless or as selfish as you please; nothing is more easy. The hard matter is to have a high standard and to act up to it. Not, to be sure, that it was any concern of hers whether Captain Luttrell’s standard was a high or a low one.

‘But I want you to like him,’ the child said; ‘I don’t want you to decide whether he is as sure of going to heaven when he dies as Paul is. It seems to me that very few really nice people will go to heaven, and they say that no heretics will; but I don’t quite believe that, do you? Of course you can’t, as you are a heretic yourself.’

Clarissa, not feeling competent to tackle so abstruse a question, and being more than a little doubtful as to what her own religious convictions were, changed the subject. ‘Suppose we canter on,’ she said. ‘I dare say I shall like your brother, and I dare say it won’t break his heart if I dislike him. What I am quite certain of is that I shall not join you if he takes you out hunting. The bare thought of jumping over a bank or a ditch makes me cold with fright.’

Madeline, as she had been intended to do, protested vehemently against such groundless pusillanimity and embarked upon a prolonged narrative of her personal early experiences in the saddle,

the upshot of which was that, so long as you sat tight and left your horse's mouth alone, you could do anything. The theme being one upon which she was fond of dilating, it lasted her until the outskirts of the town were reached, when she so far remembered what had started it as to add :

'But Guy will teach you more in an hour than I could in a month ; he knows everything that there is to know about horses and riding, and he has won lots of steeplechases. And he isn't a bit conceited about it, either. The wonder is—and it just shows how good he is—that he should come out here to see us when he might have ever so much better fun by spending his leave in England.'

'His self-sacrifice seems to be duly appreciated, at all events,' remarked Clarissa dryly.

But it was not in the least appreciated by his father, who, on returning home that evening, mud-bespattered, contented, and comfortably weary, was made acquainted in an offhand, casual manner with a piece of news which Lady Luttrell had not judged it opportune to impart to him before he set out.

'Upon my word,' he ejaculated, 'this is a little too bad!—though I am bound to say that it is only what I expected. No sooner will my back be turned than the mice will begin to play ; my express injunctions will be set at nought, and I shall be made to break faith with a friend to whom I am under the greatest obligations ! The whole plot, of course, is absolutely transparent, and the whole blame, of course, will be thrown upon me. This is the reward that one gets for being a slave to one's Queen and one's country !'

'What plot and what blame?' the innocent Lady Luttrell wanted to know. Was it possible that, in spite of what she had said to him in England, Robert still set her down as a vulgar, foolish matchmaker, and imagined her capable of such a *bêtise* as to summon Guy to the south of France in order that he might cast himself at Miss Dent's feet ?

Robert replied that it was possible—not only possible but actual. 'Although I beg to withdraw the adjectives, which are of your selection, my dear, not mine. There is nothing vulgar in being a matchmaker, nor, in the majority of cases, anything foolish. In this instance, as I ventured to tell you before, there appears to me to be a certain lack of decency ; but that must be between you and your conscience. Every fair-minded person (but

where is one to look for a fair-minded person?) will allow that I ought not to be held answerable for what may take place after my public duties have compelled me to quit the scene.'

'But you are a monster—a veritable monster!' cried Lady Luttrell. 'May one not be permitted to embrace one's son before he is ordered off to a pestilential climate from which he will perhaps never return?'

'All right,' answered Sir Robert; 'I am a monster. None the less so, no doubt, because I have been unable to prevent the ill-timed embraces of which you speak. All the same, I'm hanged if that fellow shall ride my horses to a standstill. I shall send them back home at once by long sea.'

But Lady Luttrell knew very well that he would not do that. Why should he, considering that it would be out of the question for him to hunt any more that winter? She likewise knew, and was glad to know, that her husband would trouble her with no further remonstrances, while her own conscience had nothing whereof to accuse her. There were, of course, desirable possibilities connected with Guy's visit to Pau; but the control of these must be, and should be, left in the hands of a beneficent Providence.

*(To be continued.)*

## *BURMA.*

THE story is told of an English member of Parliament, who, in talking to a gentleman just from Burma, said, 'You are from Burma; ah, yes, a very interesting country. I had a brother who was there once, but he always called it Bermuda.' The ignorance of this M.P. of one of our latest and most wealthy possessions is not so very uncommon; for, beyond the popular impressions that Upper Burma is the land of dacoity, the country of 'pestilential swamps,' and the kingdom which produced King Theebaw, of umbrella-and-massacres fame, little is definitely known by the general public. Globe-trotters in Upper Burma are few, and the books that have been written on this interesting country can be numbered on the fingers. Englishmen have yet to discover that the annexation and pacification of Upper Burma have given to the adventurous another happy hunting-ground of the elephant and the tiger, and have added for the enjoyment of the non-adventurous and pleasure-seeker another holiday land of surprising beauty and unequalled interest. In the winter months the climate is perfect, and the whole country, from Rangoon to Bhamo, can be traversed with as much safety as England. From the country people one may be sure of a kindly welcome, and if one is of the turn of mind inclined to study 'questions,' religious and social ideas, and motives of action leading to definite national developments of character, Burma is the country for philosophical inquiry and speculation. To the artist it offers combinations of lovely natural scenery and marvellous light and colour; of brilliant costumes and stately architecture, not to be surpassed in any other land that I have yet visited. I count the month spent in Burma as one of unalloyed pleasure, and I trust that some account of Burma and the Burmans, gained on the spot by personal knowledge and experience, may induce others to visit this most original and charming land.

Burma is a country dominated by an idea, or rather a set of ideas, which owe their origin to the influence of Buddhism. The Burman holds the view that this life is a sorry thing at the best, and that the wisest course is, therefore, to get through it with as little care, worry, and anxiety as possible. The world is, nevertheless, at the same time full of good things, which all can enjoy;

therefore, why toil for wealth which brings only a burden of care in its train? Why strain every nerve to possess, when possession means the anxiety to hold and preserve? The bounteous earth supplies rice for the needs of all her children, and while there is love and laughter and gaiety to solace us, while leisure can be secured and peace maintained, let us enjoy and be happy. Here we strike the key-note of the life of the Burmans. Strangers call them lazy, but they are not idle except on principle; they can work splendidly when they choose, but they have long ago decided that to turn the world into a workshop, to toil incessantly for a mere subsistence, or in order to gather up riches, is folly, as doing so destroys the pleasure of existence. As soon as a farmer has made a little money by selling his crop, he gives a play, or *pwée*, to his town or village. The stage is put up in the open street, and all his neighbours enjoy the result of his good fortune with himself. He is happy as well as they. Do our utmost, life is still full of care, therefore make the best of good fortune while it remains, and share it with others, so that the sum of human happiness may be increased. This is Burman philosophy. Others, again, accuse them of cowardice. True, Mandalay was given up without the Burmese troops, who were badly led and still worse armed, striking a blow; but the sullen resistance and desultory fighting of the Dacoits, the remarkable indifference and courage with which they met execution, show that it is not want of courage which makes the Burmans bad soldiers and untrustworthy police. At the bottom of their incapacity to serve as soldiers and police is, in fact, the same dominant idea, namely, that no sustained effort is worth while, and as change of occupation is agreeable, it should be sought at any cost. A military officer told me that a Burman soldier would desert for a month, and would express the greatest surprise at being arrested on his return. 'He had left his clothes behind, and did not want any pay. Why should he be punished? He was tired of the monotony and routine of a soldier's life, and had gone for a while into the country.' This seems to him to be a perfectly natural and proper thing to do. The consequence of these views, which have prevailed for centuries, is that no one is very rich and no one very poor in Burma; that the country is undeveloped and but half cultivated; and that a gay, happy-go-lucky, ignorant people fell easily before the arms and under the yoke of the indefatigable, pushing, fighting British, bent on developing outlets for English trade at all hazards and at any cost.



Firm believer in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, the Burman holds that the soul must pass through 140,000 existences before Nirvana, the sublime condition of self-loss, can be reached. From this weary round of repeated lives he cannot escape, unless by some supreme act of charity he can achieve sufficient merit to pass at death at once into the heaven of the Nats or Dewahs. Of such acts is the building of a Pagoda to the memory of the holy Gautauma Buddha. Hence it is that Burma is the land of pagodas. From the summit of every mountain, of every hill or hillock, from above the cliffs and rocks and from among the woods of the islands of the broad Irrawaddy, rise the graceful forms and gilded pinnacles of numberless pagodas. Often they are crowned by a golden htee or umbrella. Pagodas are rarely temples in the true sense; they are usually solid tapering buildings placed over real or imitation relics. Close by, among groves of palms and bananas, are generally to be seen the carved and seven-storied roofs of the Kioungs, or Buddhist monasteries. Gay and light-hearted as are the Burmans, they realise another and future existence as vividly as they do the present life, and the teachings of the great Buddha are ever present to their minds, and influence them profoundly. In the Buddhist religion there is no God, and no priesthood; but all men are given the opportunity of following the great example, by retiring from the world into monasteries, renouncing the temptations of the flesh and the devil, and living an austere self-denying life engaged in contemplation, devotion, and teaching. Monasteries, or Kioungs, are to be found in Burma in every village however poor, and large numbers of them, splendidly constructed and liberally supported, exist in the cities. To these the young men of Burma retire in thousands at an early age to live the life of celibacy, poverty, and charity. Every morning at sunrise, the Phongyees, or Monks, may be seen passing along the streets, wrapped in the ample folds of their yellow robes, with bare, bowed heads, and bearing a black bowl in both hands. Into these the charitable place their gifts of rice and food; not, however, at the request of the monk—he but gives the layman and housewife the opportunity of performing an act of charity and thereby earning merit. The Phongyees are also engaged in teaching Burman boys reading and writing, and the great moral precepts and doctrines of Buddhism. I have often been into the Kioungs, into the splendidly carved and gilded monasteries of Mandalay, and into the tumble-down and poverty-

stricken buildings of the jungle villages, and have seen the monks at their pious work, teaching boys, who, sprawling on the floor on knees and elbows, shout at the top of their voices, either in Burmese or in the sonorous Pali, the first immutable precepts of morality, which are the bases of every Church and Faith in every land.

A Burman boy is bound by unbroken custom to enter a monastery and become a novice for a certain period of his life. With great ceremony his head is shaven, he dons the yellow robe, and is presented with the alms bowl. Most boys remain three months, perhaps longer, in the Kioung; some stay on, and at twenty-one are admitted as monks. No vows are taken beyond those of celibacy and poverty. A monk is free to leave the monastery when he feels no longer a call for a religious life, or if he wishes to return to the world or to marry. He is in no sense a priest; he pursues the religious life, not to aid and save others, but to save himself. As an example, he indirectly aids others. The monks are held in great reverence throughout Burma, and scandal does not sully the high reputation they have attained.

It always seemed to me extremely strange and wondrously interesting that among so happy and pleasure-seeking a people, with a religion of a more impersonal, dispassionate, and spiritual kind than any which influences mankind, hundreds of thousands of young men should be found ready to sacrifice home, love, marriage, wealth, and ambition, to live the simple austere life of the monk, solely with the hope of being sooner released from the durance vile of the flesh in the round of weary existences to which the spirit is doomed by fate. The love of indolence is, or may be, one of the attractions of a monastic life, as it most certainly is a result; for it cannot be denied that whatever may be the virtues of the Phongyees, industry is not one of them. No well-cultivated farms surround the monasteries and testify to the industry and intelligence of the brothers, like the farms of the Trappists in Africa; and the monastery is not, as it might be, the centre of teaching of technical arts and advanced knowledge. Recognising the value of the far-reaching, the cohesive, and the self-maintained organisation of the Phongyees or monks, with Kioungs and schools in every city and every hamlet, the English Government have tried to induce the Buddhist monks to accept State aid and to undertake the national education of Burman boys on a definite system; but, hitherto, without success. To accept the proposals

of the Government would mean interference and inspection of governors of an alien race and alien faith, and this the monks will not brook. In the meantime, the monasteries, deprived of the support of the royal bounty, are falling into poverty, and the education of the people in Upper Burma is being greatly neglected. In Lower Burma, which has been longer under British rule, the salutary influence of Buddhism is much weakened, and though every Burman boy still becomes a monk for a short time, and may learn to read Burmese in the Kioung, and to commit the Buddhist precepts to heart, practical and advanced education is in the hands of the Christian sectarians.

As the men are the life and soul of the religion of Burma, so the women are the heart and soul of the life of the country. Mongolian in race, and Indian now by conquest, they have achieved for themselves a freedom which may be envied not only by their Indo-Chinese sisters, but by European women as well. The Burmese are absolutely the freest women in the world. Marriage is an equal contract, all property being held jointly. Property inherited by a woman before or after marriage, or earnings made by her, are absolutely her own. Marriage is an affair of the heart, and among this easy-going and affectionate people love-matches are not delayed till the husband can provide a home and an income, but the girl-wife and boy-husband are taken into the house of either parent, and maintained till a separate household can be set up. If love is lost, or there is found to be incompatibility of temper, or if either wife or husband become a drunkard, a gambler, or vicious in life, divorce or separation can be easily obtained by application to the magistrate, with equal division of the joint property. Divorces are, however, rare; family life is said to be very affectionate, and children are adored. Wives are consulted in all the affairs of life, and a farmer would hardly dare to sell his paddy harvest without the consent of his wife; in fact, she is found to be a much closer bargainer than he is. Women are the retail traders of the country. Nearly every house is a shop for the sale of something, and even the daughters of well-to-do officials think it no degradation to set up a stall at the Bazaar. The earnings thus made are her own, and will enable her to wear a smart silk taminein at the boat races, or to make offerings at the shrine of Buddha, and thus add to her sum of merit or Kan. Many of the Government contracts in timber, forage, &c., were made, I was told, with women; and it surprised the European traders to find

how versed they were in the arts of 'holding up the market' and obtaining the best price. Notwithstanding, however, their liberty, their control of property, and their ability in commerce, the chief aim of the young Burmese woman is to be pretty, and in this she succeeds. No Mongolian can be beautiful, according to the European standard; but apart from this standard there is much to admire in the Burmese girl. A round face, with olive skin and dark bright eyes, is surmounted by coils of smooth black hair, in which is jauntily stuck a flower or two. The upper part of the body is modestly covered with a white cotton jacket. Bound closely round her slender hips, and falling to the ground, is worn the tainein, or skirt, which is generally of silk woven into a brilliant and harmonious combination of colours. A gay-coloured silk wrap is thrown across the shoulders and brought over the head when it is cold. Sandals held by a strap between the big and second toe protect the bare feet. All the women, young and old, smoke immense green cheroots, ten inches long. It is not at all unusual to see a bevy of women and children, dressed as brilliantly as a bed of tulips on a spring day, engaged in puffing great clouds of smoke out of cheroots twice as long as their smiling, pretty faces. I have seen in the Bazaar at Mandalay an adoring father try to make a wee baby of about a year old take a pull at a cheroot very nearly as big as itself. The children of the poor go absolutely naked till about ten years of age; they do not even wear the necklace of beads or the piece of string and a rupee, which pass for costume in Bengal. The men are as brilliantly dressed as the women. Their long black hair is gathered into a knot beneath the folds of a pink silk turban. A white jacket and a pasoh make up the costume. The pasoh is a skirt made of a single width of silk about five yards long. Brought close round the hips it hangs in full folds in front. The favourite colour is rose-pink, woven into plaids, stripes, and checks.

There are two ceremonies which mark the important passage of the borderland between childhood and womanhood or manhood. In girls it is the boring of the ears, and in boys the tattooing of the legs above the knees. To the ceremony of the boring of the ears, friends and relatives are invited, and it is made the occasion of a house festival. With the prick of the needle the little maid of fourteen is promoted to the privilege of flirting and love-making, and the serious business of life then begins. A succession of straws is gradually inserted into the hole bored till it is large

enough to admit the tip of the finger, or even larger. In these ugly holes glass, silver, gold, or jewelled tubes, or short rods are worn. In the ears of the women of the Kachin hills I have seen rods of silver worn six inches long and an inch in diameter; and it is not unusual to see a woman when travelling place her cheroot or railway ticket into the gaping hole in the lobe of the ear.

Every Burmese man is tattooed from the waist to just below the knee. The colours are indigo-blue and dark red, and the subjects lions, tigers, &c. The operation is very painful, so that these ornamental skin breeches are tattooed gradually, the boy being at the time placed under the influence of opium. A Burman would consider it to be a sign of unmanliness not to have his legs tattooed.

In the villages every house contains a loom, and on these are woven the really beautiful stuffs worn by the natives. Some of these materials are damasks of complicated patterns. The mystery of the 'cards' and the jacquard loom has never penetrated to these primitive regions, and I found that close-patterned damasks of varied and brilliant colour were produced by the weaver passing to and fro through the warp-threads tiny shuttles carrying weft. I counted once 100 shuttles used on a silk damask twenty-four inches wide. I have witnessed few prettier examples of village and hand industries than seeing women and girls, gaily clad and chatting merrily, sit skeining and winding bright-coloured silks under the palms and papayas of the woodland lanes of Amaurapoorā; or busy at the loom, weaving with deft fingers, by means of a hundred shuttles, under the shade of bamboo shelters set against the plaited walls of toylike houses. Work as hard as they may, the earnings of these willing and clever workers are but two annas a day, that is, less than two pence. Many months go by before an elaborate damask tamine is finished. On the pulleys of the loom may be often seen little bronze figures of nats, or fairies, placed there to win the good offices of the guardian spirit; for, firm as may be the belief of the Burman in a pure Buddhism, he has not shaken off the older belief in spirits, fairies, and angels, good and bad. They are present with him in the woods and streams, they guard his house, they watch beside him, they hear his prayers, and they record his good deeds. To be caught into the heaven of the nats after death, where existence is a round of exquisite pleasures, cannot fail to be more attractive than after cycles of self-abnegation to be admitted into the nirvana of self-forgetfulness. The

nats are the friendly go-betweens which make spiritual Buddhism possible ; and was not the holy Gautauma their Saviour as well as that of mankind, for did he not retire to their heaven to show his mother and the fairies the perfect way of life ?

The houses in Burma are of the simplest construction. It is said to be possible to build a house there without the use of a nail. To bamboo poles are tied, at about eight feet from the ground, planks, which are laid at right angles to one another ; walls of split bamboo, plaited into intricate and pretty designs, and a thatched roof of palm leaves complete the structure. Flaps, which are raised or taken away during the day, answer the purpose of doors and windows. Within, the furniture consists of plaited bamboo mats, mosquito nets under which to sleep, a wooden cradle hung from a beam, a few pottery water-jars, one or two cooking pots in which to boil rice, a ladle made of half a cocoa-nut with a handle, a few little bowls or saucers in which to carry the curry, and a red-lacquer round dish, which serves as table and dinner service, and on which the great pile of rice is served. Life is thus seen to be simple, and wants few, and an anna will consequently go further in Burma than a shilling in England. In dry weather the cooking of food and the weaving and winding of silk are all done out of doors. Notwithstanding the great simplicity of life among peasants and artisans, I did not find it coarse and degraded. I went into numbers of the cottages in the jungle and riverside villages, and also in Amaurapooora and Mandalay, and, excepting in the latter city, I thought the peasants were well lodged, and apparently fairly well off and happy.

No account, however short, of Burma can be complete without telling something of the broad river which flows as the artery of its life-blood from one end of the country to the other. The Irrawaddy is said to be the largest body of melted snow in the world, not even excepting the Ganges. When swollen by the rains and melted snows it comes down as a mighty torrent through the narrow and rocky banks of the upper and second defiles, rising, it is stated, in the former often ninety feet above its normal level. Bursting in whirlpools and hurrying eddies from its narrow limits, it spreads over the low-lying country a vast expanse of water, and leaves behind, when it retires again to its bed, malaria and fever, which have won for Upper Burma the reputation of being a 'pestilential swamp.'

Far other was the great river when we went up and down its

long reaches in the sunny days of a Burmese winter. Shallows of long spits of yellow sand alternate with deep water, and all day long the sing-song call of the Burmans at the bows taking soundings with long poles, rings in our ears as the great boat zigzags from bank to bank of the broad river, and the idle day glides idly along. Never can I forget the sense of peace and contentment and enjoyment which possessed me the ten days we were on the Irrawaddy.

Travelling is easy. The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company daily run steamers which are especially constructed to meet the requirements of the country and the people. Drawing but four-and-a-half feet of water, they can pass over the shallows of the river in the dry season, and escape being caught in its whirlpools when in flood. Built usually as three-deckers, these Irrawaddy flotillas accommodate in the rear a motley crowd of Burmans, Chinese, Kachins, Chins, and Shans, while the bows of the second deck are reserved for English travellers. Here there are four or eight comfortable and roomy cabins, which will accommodate a small party. The dining table is set under an awning right in the bows: comfortably lounging in a long chair, one can pass the day dreamily watching the passing scenes on banks and river, or listening to blood-curdling stories of the captain about dacoits or King Theebaw and his murderous queen. The artist will find the day full to overflowing with delightful impressions; the vacant-minded will be bored.

Let me try and realise to you a day on this entrancing river. We have been tied up to the bank for the night; at dawn of day the mist lies low on the river, and the air is chilly, so that one instinctively turns up the collar of his coat. Presently the mist lifts, and the tropical sun shines out strong and clear. From the wooden houses on piles in the village on the hill, stream out in twos and twos the village maidens clad in clinging rainbow-tinted garments, and bearing red clay water-jars on their heads. They come down the incline to the river and fill their jars, or they take their morning dip, still modestly clothed, and each girl is a picture, classic in suggestion, oriental in colour. Gaily chatting they pass up the hill and out of sight, while the yellow-robed monks from the Phongyee Kioung, half hidden in the grove of palms and bananas, proceed solemnly along the roads, with heads bent low and with black bowls in their hands. A little later, pigtailed Chinamen, tall Sikh soldiers, Shans with their huge

sun-hats, half-naked coolies, and the silk-clad Burmese men and women come crowding down to the water's edge, and on to our boat if it happens to be a 'market boat' and carries a 'bazaar' in full swing on board. Then, for an hour or more, the most lively chaffering and bargaining goes on over silk tameins and pasohs, Manchester goods, Birmingham hardware and jewellery, and Burmese lacquer work. The steam whistle sounds. The chattering crowd is merrily jostled off the boat, the anchor is weighed, and we are off. The scenery is not exciting; no snow mountains rise on the horizon, and the banks are rarely precipitous. The rich green woods and the grey and purple mountains, the great expanse of level water, recall the English lake scenery, but it is the English lake scenery with the colour of Venice and the sun of the tropics. Idly gliding down stream pass gondolier-like fishing boats, with high carved steering chairs and fishermen dressed in pink and crimson and yellow; or dug-outs are paddled up stream, with a spot of brilliant colour in bow and stern; immense rafts of teak wood from the forests slowly drift by towards Rangoon. As the day draws into afternoon, sheeny tints of mauve and pink shoot across the water and sky; the sun sets gloriously; quickly the land is dark, but for a wondrous half-hour sky and water are blended in the gold and crimson of the afterglow.

More solid interests and pleasures, however, await those who are less sensitive to colour, for the banks are crowded with architectural monuments and the ruins of pagodas and shrines. At Pagahn, for eight miles along the river bank and for two miles inland, the ground is covered with ruins of the splendid fanes of the thirteenth century. At Amaurapoorá and Sagain days may be spent exploring ruins and temples which are as fine as the tombs of the Caliphs at Cairo. At Mandalay, the royal city of King Theebaw, gilded temples and palaces, fast crumbling also into ruin, will well repay a visit from all interested in the architecture and history of a strange Oriental people; and at Rangoon the Schway Dagon is, as the holy centre of a great living faith, of surpassing interest. In fact, Upper Burma is at present to the Englishman of education, the artist, the historian, and the archæologist, an undiscovered country, but one which, regarded from any point of view, is well worth visiting and studying.



*IN THE LAND OF CLARET.*

BORDEAUX is the city of France in which an Englishman ought to feel most at home. To say nothing about our pleasant early dominion in this part of the Republic, when we established an Anglo-Saxon strain which the centuries cannot yet have eliminated, we are the chief consumers of those excellent wines of the Médoc the châteaux of which decorate the left bank of the Gironde. The Briton here is respected less as a mere tourist than as a possible customer—perhaps even a wine merchant of far-extending connections. He need, in fact, be only moderately amiable and enterprising to obtain a taste of the lavish hospitality for which the wine kings of the land are celebrated. And what hospitality it is! Vintage after vintage is pressed upon the willing palate. The stranger hears with reverence of the worth per glass of the ruby liquor he is invited to toss down his uneducated gullet as if it were cheap as milk. He praises everything, as well he may. And late at night he is driven back to his hotel in a whirl of ecstatic exhilaration, convinced that there is no country like the Médoc, and no city like this its great metropolis.

Besides, our compatriots have made so deep a mark on the commerce of the place. One of the leading houses was founded nearly two centuries ago by an Englishman. The present head of the firm is a man with whom any one (and especially a pauper) may be proud to shake hands. He lives palatially near the city, on an estate for which he would not accept less than a hundred thousand pounds; he owns vineyards that have earned gold and silver medals in divers exhibitions; and a fleet of fishing boats and some oyster beds indicate the lucrative nature of even his hobbies. He has also a villa at Arcachon, and his cellars in the city are quite as remarkable for their extent and furnishing as for the venerable cobwebs which mantle their walls and sway eerily in the gloom over the visitor's cranium. I might go farther and say that his chief cellarer is one of the most stalwart specimens of manhood to be found in the south of France. But this is a characteristic feature of the warehouses of the Médoc. We in England are prone to fancy that the society of claret tends to leanness rather than adipose. But, in

fact, you would find it hard to match twelve selected cellarers from Bordeaux and the district by twelve selected brewers' men from the United Kingdom. This is a stout, yet merited, compliment.

There are other English and Anglo-French here comparable to the above merchant. Château-Loudenne, on the Gironde, a long run from Bordeaux, is, for instance, the great claret estate of Messrs. W. and A. Gilbey. Here there are at least two hundred and fifty acres of vines, not of the best growths indeed, nor yet the second best, but warranted, thanks to the care expended in production and vinification, to turn out a thoroughly good first-class ordinary wine. Seen from the muddy river, whence it is most readily approached, there is a Dutch-garden primness about Messrs. Gilbey's estate. But that is an indispensable feature of a well-conducted vineyard. They want to produce good wine here, not scenic effects. The surprising thing is that many of the châteaux are nevertheless surrounded by uncommonly handsome, well-wooded demesnes. Lust of vineland has not altogether eaten into the hearts of the vine-growers: they can still spare a fourth or fifth of their acreage for pleasure grounds and meadows. There are trees enough at the back of Messrs. Gilbey's property; but the river slopes are devoted to vines, cellars, and quays. These represent an expenditure of 60,000*l.* over and above the 28,000*l.* which the château cost in 1875. Four hundred tuns of wine is the average yield of Château-Loudenne. Few other Médoc vineyards can boast of such a harvest.

As typical of the cosmopolitan element which exists in the Médoc, it need only be said that the immortal Château-Lafite belongs to the Rothschilds. In 1868 Baron James de Rothschild paid no less than four and a half million francs for this snug and picturesque property. The great wealth of its owners has enabled Château-Lafite to become a byword, not only for its wines, but also for the benignity and helpfulness of its manorial rule. A free primary school for the children of the district is but one of the advantages of living as a dependent of the Rothschilds in the Médoc. Rather more than a hundred years ago this famous château belonged to the President of the Parliament of Guyenne. But the Revolution brought sad disorder upon the owners of vineyards as well as upon the bearers of hereditary titles, and the President lost his head to the guillotine. His estate was sold for the benefit of the nation. After several vicissitudes it has settled

down under the Rothschilds, who may be trusted long to hold it. Among European magnates the possession of a Médoc château is almost as much a fashion as that of a deer forest with our home millionnaires. Hence the tendency of prices is to rise, and that considerably.

This, too, in spite of that much-cursed pest, the phylloxera vastatrix, which since 1869 has played an exciting part in the lives of the Médoc vine-growers. On the whole, the Médoc has not suffered from it like other districts of France. It has never here, as elsewhere, gone from root to root until it has destroyed a vineyard, neck and crop. This is due to the nature of the soil more than anything else. Sand and gravel are not favourable to the insect's development and propagation, and these are the main constituents of the Médoc slopes and plateaux. Where a vineyard consists in part of such materials and in part of low-lying marsh or alluvial land, it is the latter that suffers. The thing to do, then, if possible, is to try and drown out the scourge by inundations. But not every vineyard can be treated in this way, and most proprietors have had to bow to the inevitable and replant their lands with American roots or grafts, which seem to attract the insect less than what may be called the indigenous vines, many of which are more than a hundred years old. Rot, mildew, the 'cochyliis,' snails, and a dozen or so other annoyances are met by the growers as a matter of course. The phylloxera came as an added and most formidable evil. The various parasites which enjoy the young shoots and leaves of the vine, and even its grapes, are battled with by men, women, and children, as well as droves of hungry ducks and fowls, kept for a time on short commons that they may not be too particular about the grubs their keen eyes detect in the vineyards. But to many the phylloxera seemed like a 'visitation of God'—a calamity to which they could only submit with groans. Unlike other plagues, it attacks the root of the plant and devastates invisibly.

In truth, the man who buys an unclassified château and cultivates grapes for a living must not expect an easy career. The demand for the best Médoc growths is constant; but it is uphill work indeed for the proprietor who aspires to make a wine that shall force its way, quite unheralded, into the society of these noble fluids. There are many thousand tuns of excellent wine in Médoc cellars seeking buyers in vain, all because of the universal prejudice in favour of reputations already established, and in con-

tempt of the unknown. As if this, the phylloxera and kindred inflictions, were not enough hardships for the newcomer to face, he has also the usual atmospheric anxieties, which may or may not be justified by actual disaster. There is frost and there is hail; and if the vineyard lie in low stiff soil, a superabundance of rain may play terrible havoc with his hopes. It is interesting to see how frost under certain conditions is here combated. A community of growers combine and arrange for a line of bonfires of dried leaves and green wood. These are lighted about two hours before sunrise, when a frost by radiation of not more than two degrees is to be expected. The thick canopy of white humid smoke which ensues may be relied upon under these circumstances to protect the plants. One knows from Mr. Blackmore's 'Kit and Kitty' that the same plan has been long in force in England also, as a safeguard for the apple blossoms in the large home-county orchards. Experiments prove that under this blanket of smoke the temperature will be some two degrees higher than outside it. Wooden screens are also in use for the same purpose. On the other hand, hailstorms cannot be guarded against except by insurance—for which, however, there is every facility, assuming that the grower has plenty of money in his pocket.

As for the cost of a vineyard in the Médoc, that, of course, varies enormously. Soil, vicinity, and aspect may be regarded as the prime considerations. In the Margaux district you need not expend more than three thousand five hundred francs a year upon the rent and working of a hectare (two and a half acres) of vines; and you may reasonably anticipate four and a half tuns of wine from the grapes, saleable at a thousand francs the tun. With all deductions, in fact, about four and a half per cent. is to be made on an average vineyard of this kind. But everything depends upon the wine you produce, which in its turn depends mainly upon the soil, the plants, the care bestowed in cultivation, the picking and pressing. An ordinary peasant's vineyard, of the same dimensions, in an ordinary wine district of the Médoc will not yield such good results. Two or two and a half per cent. is all he may look for, according to his economy in the use of hired labour. It is in vine cultivation as in commercial enterprises. The large capitalists have the best chances of success. It is they who are most systematic, most scientific in their methods, and, having the most complete means at their disposal for turning out a wine free from imperfections, have also the means of making their results known

to a world that is eager for the best of everything. There must be no relaxing of care or precaution in a Médoc vineyard with a reputation. The rich growers can assure themselves that this is so on their estates. And they can also, in consequence, rely with tolerable equanimity upon an average annual income from their vines of from five to eight, or even ten, per cent. on their expenditure. Such vineyards *de luxe* as that of Château-Lafite form a class apart. They are not worked for commercial, but æsthetic, results. The cost per acre of the Rothschilds' vines has been estimated at about 1,600*l.* It is as well to remember this when you order a bottle of Château-Lafitte (say of the 1875 vintage) and find it marked on the bill at 1*l.* or so.

Few sights can be more enlivening to a *bon vivant* than a *premier cru* vineyard of the Médoc, early in September of a good year. Such a man may, for the sake of the argument, be supposed indifferent to the lack of mountains and craggy steps in the landscape. He sees on all sides gentle slopes, bared to the sun, the vines loaded with grapes, having the hue of ripeness either already upon them or beginning to appear. The proprietor or his agents are sure to be in the neighbourhood, watching the fruit and the weather with keen solicitude; and they may not be unwilling to seek brief distraction from their cares in conversation with the stranger on the white roads that climb between the trim, ticketed vineyards. Here and there is a bullock wagon with barrels on it, the man in charge in a jacket as blue as the skies, and looking as healthily swart as do most of the inhabitants of the district. The breeze that periodically raises a mild cloud of dust is warm and caressing. And the broad Gironde, which you may see like a silvery furrow in the landscape, has at a distance none of that unpleasant dirty-yellow tint which its rich cargo of sand gives it in reality. No vine-grower, however, whose lands abut on the great river ever thinks of the stream save with affectionate regard. It is the supreme fertiliser. If you take a tumbler of its turbid fluid and let it stand awhile, you may, from the quantity of precipitated matter in the glass, form an idea of its alluvial value. It is also an incomparable medium of transport.

The railway station of Margaux is as convenient a terminus for the visitor's preliminary journey of inspection as may be had from Bordeaux. Here one gets immediately into the precincts of a noble wine, peculiarly in demand by English consumers. Nor is it too far from the capital to exhaust the traveller's patience, if

he have the very bad luck to choose a goods train for his journey, instead of one of the infrequent expresses of the Médoc railway. It is not an exceptionally beautiful region. The châteaux here do not go in for dainty little parks as well as world-famed vineyards; nor are there green meadows pervaded by crystal brooks in which the kine stand knee-deep, lazily lashing the flies from their ribs. Still, the country is pleasantly undulated, and if the heat becomes extreme it is easy to seek the shady side of one or other of the numerous châteaux, or, better still, the vine-clad arbour of the village inn, where Master Boniface will be delighted to serve you with some wine of his own pressing, good enough to be worth (he tells you candidly) much more than the modest three-halfpence or twopence per glass at which he is compelled, by competition, to sell it.

The village, with its two thousand inhabitants, is singularly neat and white. To each house there appears to be a vineyard. Thus Monsieur Eyquem, the carpenter, is able to supplement his handicraft income by the sale of some eight tuns of excellent 'ordinary'; and Monsieur Grenier, the blacksmith, does much the same with his four tuns of wine. There are grapes everywhere. One need walk but a dozen paces from the railway station to get alongside the first of a series of vineyards, all deserving of close inspection and heartfelt admiration. The soil at once attracts notice by the multitude of its pebbles, large and small. You would think it far too coarse for the vine. But it is nothing of the kind. The stones are here really incidental attributes of the silicious upper crust, and the subsoil of sand, clay, marl, and ferruginous substances is the very kind to drain off aright the superfluous moisture, and at the same time keep the roots of the plants from withering with thirst in a droughty season.

If you are critical, you may now mark with a certain interest the different details of the vineyards on the right hand and the left. One grower, for example, believes in the idea that it is wise to set the rows from east to west. By this method, it is averred, the westerly storms are rendered as little hurtful as possible: the extreme end plants bear the burden of the gales, and suffer that the rest may thrive. But the neighbouring grower thinks differently. He has a fancy that the sun is the chief factor to be conciliated for success. His plants may therefore take their chance of the Atlantic storms. In fact, the whole length of his vineyard lies to the west, so that, by a north-and-south arrangement of his

plants, these may get the most advantage from the direct penetration of the sun's rays among the leaves and fruit and twigs of the vines. Looking more narrowly, you may see that whereas one grower has for heating and precautionary purposes practised a partial flaying of his vine stems, the other grower has done no such thing. The latter's knotted and gnarled old plants wear a sort of cuticle of moss and lichens, in which his neighbour's fancies (with fair justification) disease may lurk. The latter gentleman would no doubt jeer more than a little at M. Sabaté's ingenious, if grandmotherly, notion of clasping the vine stem with a nice close-fitting metallic glove to warn off such parasites as love vine bark. Yet conceivably, ere long, this fad (to give it a hard name) will be put into force, like many another that was scoffed at when first suggested. Again, the subjects of trimming and training offer scope for the significance of further diversity of opinion. The one grower uses horizontal wires between wooden uprights, and his plants have plainly been given to understand that they must lie low. But the other's vines are of a much more exuberant quality: they have grown a good four feet into the air, and lusty shoots may be seen soaring high over the purple clusters. Here is no wire at all. The plants are tied to wooden transverse pieces. But a strong additional character touch is given to the latter vineyard by the tiresome barbed-wire fence, which keeps the pilgrim aloof both from the vines and the grape clusters which have fallen from the vines into the interjacent furrows. The mind, on this evidence alone, is disposed to class the one proprietor as a generous enterprising gentleman, and to stigmatise the other as a mean man.

And here one is confronted immediately by rather a nice case of conscience. No common mortal can walk among the vineyards of the Médoc in September without lusting for some of their grapes. There are clusters as large as one's head, and there are tiny little bunches that seem designed for the hand. September by Bordeaux is a terribly thirsty month, and where there is no potable water, and ready-made wine is not conveniently near, what is one to do between the dusty white glare of the high road and the torrid cloudless heavens? The rights of property are of course deserving of respect; but one also owes a duty to oneself. Between these conflicting obligations *what* is one to do?

Well, for my part, I confess I helped myself. There are no local eyesores in the shape of trespass boards. Besides, I had traditional warrant on my side. The Mosaic law is most emphatic

on this very point. 'Let no wayfarer upon a journey be refused the taste of ripe fruit if he desires it, whether of the country or a stranger; but let him take and eat and welcome, as if it were his own, provided he carry none away with him. . . . Nay, if men should be so scrupulous upon a point of modesty as to forbear touching or desiring anything, let them be invited and intreated to take and please themselves.' This same genial law put all the perils of responsibility upon the landlord's shoulders. If he denied the pilgrim's right to the grapes, he was to receive 'forty lashes save one from the hand of the common executioner.' And so, in the strength of the Mosaic law, I ate my fill of the Margaux grapes, and found them exceedingly luscious.

Still, it would never do for every one to act on these delightful principles; especially in the vineyards of Château-Lafite, at 1,600*l.* cost per acre. Indeed, when later in the day I told of my conduct to a certain large parish priest with whom I found myself cooped in one of the cars of the Médoc railway, his countenance informed me in an instant that he was much shocked. 'No, monsieur,' he answered, in reply to my question, 'it is not the custom here to make so free.' However, as he hinted that he owned a small vineyard of his own, I ventured to hope that a natural, though not magnanimous, fear for his own property, rather than his true instinct, spoke out in his words.

One of the most surprising vineyards at Margaux is that of the Château-Marquis d'Alesme. It is not very extensive, seeing that only twenty-five tuns of wine are produced from it. But the wine is of a lofty order, as becomes a fluid which bears a coronet on its bottles. Nor is this all its inducement to attain the heights of excellence. The vines are most carefully cultivated, enclosed from the high road by precise railings, with white posts at regular stages, and with standard rose trees as terminals to the rows. Anything prettier in its way than the effect of these loaded vines, with their finishing of roses, white, blush-pink, deep crimson, and clouded yellow, one can hardly expect to see in all the length and breadth of the Médoc headland. And the château is in keeping with its vineyard—gay, spotless and inviting, though small. The words 'Cru Alesme,' in gilt letters, on its portal impress themselves on the memory. There is also a date, '1626,' which tells us something of the age of the vineyard, if not of the vines. Who knows? Perhaps this was one of the properties the presses of which contributed their quota of good Bordeaux wine for the



comfort of King John the Good, captive in England after Poitiers. At any rate, many tuns of wine were then sent from the Gironde to Boston for the French king's drinking, at Somerton Castle in Lincolnshire. The Black Prince at that epoch was wont to spend the summers he could spare for campaigns in a château near Bordeaux (Château-Beaumont-Bertrand), which still preserves a fine feudal aspect, and has also acquired fame for the fifty tuns or so of red wine pressed annually from its vineyards.

However, all other châteaux at Margaux must acknowledge their inferiority to the famous property of Count Pillet-Will: the Château-Margaux itself. To the wines of Château-Margaux may be applied the truly French compliment that has been lavished on the wines of Sauterne, and digested without an effort by the growers: here we have *l'extravagance du parfait*.

As a building, this house of Count Pillet-Will is nothing much. Its owner is satisfied to spend but three or four days here annually. Some centuries ago there was a real castle where now one sees but a moderately fine white rectangular villa, with a stately portico that looks as if it had been taken forcibly from a Greek temple and affixed, regardless of appearances. A fortified castle, too! But no trace of it remains. The modern château is approached by a graceful avenue of platanes and chestnut trees, and where anciently were battlemented walls you see a stretch of cool greensward, brightly tricked out with red geraniums. There is no great effort at order in the château gardens. The effect is, upon the whole, rather agreeable than otherwise—the eye welcomes it after the precision of the vineyards.

Once inside the 'commercial' part of the château, there is order enough to satisfy the most exacting of martinets. Not here, as in the Bordeaux cellars, is one's head tickled by preposterous flaunting cobwebs. The cellar, with its vast barrels side by side, is a solemn place. Things are on so huge a scale. It is like being in the presence of the ruins of Palmyra or Thebes. And the stillness, too—save for the cellarer's resonant voice—is of the kind one associates with these deserted temples of the East. Yet here, in reality, there is nothing suggestive of death and decay. The very spirit of life abides in this great cool chamber. Of late years no wine in all the Médoc has obtained such fame (and such prices) as this of the Château-Margaux. No wonder the cellarer—a Hercules and Antinous in one—carries himself with dignity as he conducts the visitor among the barrels,

which he taps lovingly ever and anon, and so into the caves, where a hundred thousand bottles of the rich red wine lie ripening in peace and comfort. An average year yields 250 tuns of Château-Margaux. The hot early summer of 1893 brought phenomenal results in the shape of 400 tuns. But it was the same in that year all over the Médoc: the demand for barrels was then so large that coopers made fortunes and prices nearly doubled.

The industrial part of a Médoc château divides itself into three main divisions: the press room, the cellar proper, and the caves containing the bottled wines. Each is interesting, but the first is undoubtedly the most attractive when the vintage has begun. A busy scene then goes on here. Men, women, and children are hard at work in the vineyards picking the grapes; the women and children receiving half the pay of adults, which may be put at fifteen pence a day and their food. Where a classified wine is to be made, the utmost care must be taken that no unripe, burst, or rotten grapes are harvested. A supervisor is present to see to this precaution. Here and there about the vineyard are men with wooden panniers on their backs. These, when filled, are emptied into the receiving vats on cars, drawn in many cases by bullocks. And when the latter have their load complete not a moment is lost in conveying the luscious burden to the château, where men are in readiness immediately to urge the grapes into the first stage of vinification.

The contents of the vats are turned into vessels provided with either an upper grill or a trough, so contrived that as the grapes are separated from the stalks they fall into a lower receptacle. The grill system is the more in vogue. Upon it men disengage the grapes, either with their hands or with little wooden rakes. Needless to say, they work with as much delicacy and quickness as possible. Very few are the châteaux at present in which machinery is used instead of men. The Château-Ségonzac, in the Blaye district, is, however, a notable exception to the general rule. Here the grapes are disengaged mechanically and afterwards crushed by indiarubber cylinders with marvellous nicety, so that not a pip is bruised. The 'must' is subsequently conveyed into the vats through piping. It seems safe to prophesy that steam power will in time be adopted in all the larger châteaux of the Médoc, as well as in the Château-Ségonzac.

The crushing tubs are roomy little shallow apartments in

wood. Hither the grapes are brought when stripped, and five or six men at once get among them, barefooted. As exercise, this treading of grapes may be good for the leg muscles, but it must become mortally wearisome. Moreover, the fumes of the juice about the ankles may be supposed quite potent enough to affect a weak head. However, this old mode of pressing is general in the Médoc, and is at least picturesque. The juice meanwhile is drawn off through a tap and transported across to the enormous vats in the same room. These, when filled, are tight-closed for the important process of fermentation. An uncertain period has to elapse ere this is through—perhaps a week, perhaps a month. Then comes the transfer of the wine to the fine new barrels in the great cellar. The barrels are not filled in rotation from first one vat and then another, but an equal quantity is put into each from the first vat, then from the second, and so on, thereby assuring a uniformity of quality in the wine. This done, the cellarer has for a time chiefly to see that his domain keeps properly dry and is subjected to no violent alterations of temperature.

But no sooner is the spring at hand than the rackings begin. This means that the wine has to be transferred to fresh barrels, to separate it from its deposits. Thrice in the first year is it racked, always in fine dry bright weather, and great care is necessary that the wine should lose nothing of its aroma in its change of residence by reckless exposure to the air. If the wine is very full-bodied, and is to be bottled as soon as possible, at the end of its first year it is subject to a 'whipping' or 'fining,' to clear it. For this either gelatine or the whites of eggs are used. Of the latter, six to eight suffice. They are beaten up, dropped into the wine, and the whole is then violently stirred with a cleft stick or rod furnished at the end with eight or ten tufts of hair. Gelatine is more applied to white wines, and is made to assimilate by the same methods.

For the second year the same series of rackings help on the purity of the wine, and at the end of this year also a whipping must be administered, except in the case of very light wines with the desired limpidity. A fortnight or three weeks after the whipping the bottling may begin, unless the wines are of a high class, exacting more time to mature.

Of the bottling not much need be said. It is, however, well not to practise economy in the matter of corks. Some proprietors

save a franc or two per thousand on their corks only to lose far more by burst bottles. That new bottles are customary for new wines we know from the Scriptures, as well as from the cellarer himself—honest, important gentleman.

Once bottled, the wine may rest in peace, and acquire the many virtues that in the Médoc attend upon a career of entire passivity.

One learns these details from the cellarer, and also from Monsieur Feret's exhaustive volume about the Bordeaux wines. They may seem dry to the reader not pecuniarily, or even, as far as his palate is concerned, deeply interested in claret. But, as revealing the processes by which an enormous industry is successfully worked, they deserve some attention. The cellarer at Château-Margaux, however, makes ample atonement for any *ennui* he may have occasioned the visitor by subsequently uncorking a matured bottle of his ruby-coloured wine. Little pressure is necessary, as a rule, to persuade the château's guest to profit by this opportunity.

And so into the hot September air again, which feels sweltering after the regulated coolness of the cellars and caves. Near the château an inviting little Médoc hostelry may be entered for a late *déjeuner*. The hostess can be trusted to do her best even for an unexpected tourist. But the average French rural hostess's 'best' is a very poor affair, and the result will probably not exalt Margaux in the traveller's esteem. Nowhere in the world can you get such bad champagne as at Rheims, though near the cellars of Messrs. Heidsieck. It is not anomalous, therefore, that here, at the Margaux inn, they should give you but indifferent red wine, within a stone's-throw of some of the finest purple grapes in the world.

*RETURNING A VERDICT.*

It was in the country, at the last Quarter Sessions, a case of theft. James Bailey, in the employ of Samuel Nichols, a fishmonger, was charged with stealing certain trusses of hay and bushels of corn. The jury had retired to consider their verdict.

‘Of course,’ observed the foreman, who had seated himself at the head of the table, ‘we’ve only come out here as a matter of form. There’s no doubt that the young scamp did it.’

William Baker, leaning towards him, shading his hand with his mouth, whispered, with the evident intention of addressing him in the strictest confidence, ‘I say guilty!’

Some of the jurymen were standing about the room talking to one another audibly on subjects which had not the slightest connection with the case they were supposed to be considering.

‘What I want,’ said Slater, the butcher of Offley, to old George Parkes of Wormald’s Farm, ‘is a calf—a nice one—just about prime.’

With his heavy hand old Parkes nursed his stubbly chin.

‘Ah!’ he reflected. ‘I haven’t got nothing, not just now, I haven’t. Might have in about a month.’

Slater shook his head. ‘Must have it Friday.’

‘Ah!’ Mr. Parkes paused. ‘I haven’t got nothing.’ Paused again. ‘I might have, though.’

A. B. Timmins, secretary of the local branch of the Primrose League, was calling across the room to Mr. Hisgard, a well-known amateur vocalist, with a view of retaining his services for an approaching ‘smoker.’ The foreman looked about him. He raised his voice, rapped on the table.

‘Gentlemen, please—business!’ Somebody laughed, as if the foreman had been guilty of a joke—so he improved on it. ‘Business first, pleasure afterwards.’ The laughter held his peace—the joke fell flat. The jury seated themselves—not with any air of over-anxious haste. The foreman continued—he was one of the most flourishing auctioneers in that division of the county—and now spoke with that half persuasive, half authoritative manner with which many of them were familiar in the rostrum. ‘We must remember, gentlemen, that the court is waiting. So, with your permission, we will come to the point at once. Those

who are of opinion that the prisoner is guilty will please hold up their hands.' Seven hands went up. 'Those who are of the contrary opinion.' One hand was raised—Jacob Longsett's. Mr. Grice, the foreman, eyed the three gentlemen who had made no sign on either occasion. He addressed himself to one of them. 'Well, Mr. Tyler, which is it to be?'

'The fact is, Mr. Grice,' said Mr. Tyler, 'that I've had a bad earache—it was the draught which must have given it me. I think I didn't quite catch all that was being said now and again; but I'm willing to say what the other gentlemen do!'

'You mean that you'll vote with the majority?'

'That's just what I do mean, Mr. Grice.'

'I ain't going to say nothing,' declared George Parkes, who had also refrained from expressing an opinion. 'I don't know no good about young Bailey, nor yet about Sam Nichols neither. Sam Nichols, he's owed me nigh on four pound these three years and more.'

'I don't think,' observed the foreman, 'that we ought to allow personal considerations to enter into the case. It's our duty to speak to the evidence, and to that only.'

'I don't care nothing about no evidence. The one's as big a thief as t'other.'

Old George clenched his toothless jaws and blinked.

'What'll he get if we bring him in guilty?' asked Mr. Plummer, the third abstainer.

The foreman shook his head. 'That oughtn't to influence our decision.'

Mr. Plummer differed, and said so.

'It'll influence mine. James Bailey is not yet eighteen. To send him to prison will do him more harm than good. If his case is to come under the First Offenders Act, we shall know where we are.'

'We might make a recommendation to that effect,' suggested Captain Rudd.

'Excuse me,' interposed Mr. Moss, 'but I doubt if I could agree to our doing that. I'm afraid that Master Bailey deserves some punishment. This is not the first time he has done this sort of thing. He was dismissed from his last two places for dishonesty.'

Again the foreman shook his head.

'That didn't come out in the evidence. You know, gentle-

men, what we have to do is to dismiss from our minds any knowledge of the parties which we may have outside the case, and confine our attention to the sworn testimony.'

Mr. Moss smiled, declining to be pooh-poohed.

'That's all very well in theory, Mr. Grice, but in practice it won't do. Nichols, with his fish-cart, has done a daily round in this country of some twenty miles or so for the last twelve or fourteen years. I doubt if there is a person in this room who has not some knowledge of him. As for Bailey, his mother lives within a hundred yards of my house; I have known him ever since he was born. I am acquainted, too, with his last two employers, and with the circumstances under which he left them.'

'I know nothing of either of the parties,' said Captain Rudd.

'You are a newcomer. I doubt, as I say, if any other person present can say the same.'

If any other person could, he didn't. There was a pause—broken by the foreman.

'Let us understand our position. Eight of us say guilty—Mr. Tyler goes with the majority; two of us have not yet made up our minds; and Mr. Longsett is the only one who says not guilty. May I inquire, Mr. Longsett, on what grounds you favour an acquittal?'

'You've no right to ask me anything of the kind. This is not the first jury I've served on. Although you're foreman, you're only like the rest of us. What you've got to do is to ask me if I say guilty or not guilty. I say not guilty.'

'I believe, Mr. Longsett,' insinuated Mr. Moss, 'that Bailey is a relation of yours?'

'That's no business of yours.'

'Then are we to understand, Mr. Longsett'—the foreman spoke with almost ominous suavity—'that you have arrived at a point at which you are impervious to argument?'

'I say not guilty.'

'Even though it may be demonstrated, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the prisoner is guilty?'

'It's no good talking to me, Mr. Grice. I say not guilty.'

The foreman, stretching out his hands in front of him, looked round the table with an air which was eloquent with deprecation. Old Parkes banged his fist upon the board.

'And I say guilty, and I hope they'll give him seven years—the thieving varmint!'

‘ Arrived at a state of sudden conviction—eh, George ?’

This was Mr. Timmins, who was middle-aged and jaunty.

‘ Some people are easily convinced,’ growled Mr. Longsett.

‘ You’re not one of that sort, are you, Jacob ?’

This again was Mr. Timmins.

‘ You won’t convince me.’

Nor, judging from the expression of Jacob’s visage, did there seem to be much probability of their being able to do anything of the kind. There was another interval of silence—broken, this time, by Captain Rudd.

‘ Then because this gentleman chooses to differ from us, without condescending to give us his reason for so doing, are we to stultify ourselves, and is justice to be balked? Is that the situation, Mr. Foreman ?’

‘ Excuse me, Captain Rudd, but Mr. Longsett is not alone. I also say not guilty. The observation of Mr. Parkes, expressing a hope that the prisoner will get seven years, shows to me that a spirit of malignancy is in the air, and to that spirit I am unable to subscribe.’

The speaker was Mr. Plummer. The others looked at him. The foreman spoke.

‘ Pardon me, Mr. Plummer, but why do you say not guilty ?’

‘ Because I decline to be a participator in the condemnation of this mere youth to a ruthless term of penal servitude.’

‘ But, my dear sir, he won’t get penal servitude—Mr. Parkes was only joking. He’ll get, at the outside, three months.’

‘ That would be too much. It would be sufficient punishment for one of his years—my views on the subject of juvenile delinquency I have never disguised—that he should be requested to come up for judgment when called upon.’

‘ But, my dear sir, if the magistrates leave us a free hand to do our duty, why can’t we leave them a free hand to do theirs? The issue we have to decide upon is a very simple one; the responsibility of acting on that decision will be theirs.’

Mr. Plummer settled his spectacles on his nose, and was silent. Captain Rudd addressed him.

‘ I suppose you will not deny, sir, that all the evidence goes to prove the prisoner’s guilt ?’

‘ There are degrees in guilt.’

‘ Possibly—but you admit that there is guilt, even though it may only be in the positive degree ?’



Again Mr. Plummer was still. Mr. Slater called to Mr. Longsett across the table—

‘You’re a sportsman, Jacob, and I’m a sportsman. I tell you what I’ll do. I’ll toss you, guilty or not guilty. I can’t stop messing about here all day—I’ve got my beasts to dress.’

Mr. Longsett was obviously tempted; the offer appealed to the most susceptible part of him. Still, he shook his head.

‘No,’ he grunted, as if the necessity of announcing such a refusal pained him. ‘I shan’t.’

Mr. Plummer was scandalised.

‘Such a proposal is disgraceful—it ought not to be allowed to be made. Making of justice a mockery!’

Mr. Slater declined to be snubbed—at least by Mr. Plummer.

‘Seems to me as if you don’t quite know where you are. First you want to preach to the magistrates, then you want to preach to the jury: perhaps you think you’re at the corner of High Street?’

There were those who smiled. The reference was to Mr. Plummer’s fondness for open-air expositions of ‘the Word.’ Mr. Grice drummed with his fingers on the table.

‘Come, gentlemen, come! we’re wasting time. As business men, we ought to know its value. Now, Mr. Longsett, I’ve too much faith in your integrity not to know that you’re open to conviction. Tell us, where do you think the evidence for the prosecution is not sufficiently strong?’ Mr. Longsett did not justify the foreman’s faith by answering. ‘Be frank, on what point are you not satisfied?’

After more than momentary hesitation Mr. Longsett replied, without, however, raising his eyes.

‘It’s no use talking to me, Mr. Grice, so that’s all about it. I say not guilty!’

Mr. Moss explained.

‘The plain fact is, Mr. Foreman, Mr. Longsett is a relation of the prisoner; he ought not to have been on this jury at all.’

This time Mr. Longsett did raise his eyes—and his voice, too.

‘I’ve as much right to be on the jury as you have—perhaps more. Who do you think you are? I pay my way—and I pay my servants, too! They don’t have to county-court me before they can get their wages. Only the other day I was on a jury when they were county-courting you. So it isn’t the first jury I’ve been on, you see.’

Mr. Moss did not seem pleased. The allusion was to a difference which that gentleman had had with one of his servants, and which had been settled in the county court. Again the foreman drummed upon the board.

‘Order, gentlemen, order!’

Mr. Timmins turned to Mr. Hisgard. He winked.

‘Have a game at crib, Bob? I knew Jacob would be here, so I came provided!’

He produced a cribbage-board. Once more the foreman interposed.

‘Keep to the business we have in hand, please, gentlemen.’

‘Oh, they can have their game—I don’t mind. Perhaps I came as well provided as any one else.’

As he replied Jacob took from his pocket a brown paper parcel of considerable dimensions. Tom Elliott, who was sitting by him, instantly snatching it, passed it on to Mr. Hisgard.

‘Have a sandwich, Mr. Hisgard?’

‘No, thank you. But perhaps Mr. Timmins will?’

He passed the packet to Mr. Timmins. That gentleman made a feint of opening it. Mr. Longsett, rising from his chair, reached for his property across the table.

‘None of that; give it back to me.’ Mr. Timmins tossed the packet to the other end of the table.

‘Now, Timmins, what do you mean by that? Do you want me to wipe you across the head?’

Mr. Timmins addressed Mr. Grice. ‘Now, Mr. Foreman, won’t you offer the jury a sandwich each? It is about our dinner-time!’

Mr. Grice eyed the packet in front of him as if he were more than half disposed to act on the suggestion.

‘I really don’t think, Mr. Longsett, that you ought to eat sandwiches out of a pure spirit of contradiction.’

‘Never mind what you think—you give me back my property or I’ll give the whole lot of you in custody.’ The parcel was restored to him. He brandished it aloft. ‘There you are, you see! A lot of grown men go and steal another man’s property, and you treat it as a joke. A mere lad goes and looks at a truss of mouldy hay, and you want to ruin him for life. And you call that justice! You ain’t going to get me to take a hand in no such justice, so I tell you straight!’

‘It went a little farther than “looks,” didn’t it, Mr. Long-

sett? "Looks" won't carry even mouldy hay three miles across country.'

'And "looks" won't carry my property from where I'm sitting down to where you are! If Jim Bailey's a thief, so's Tom Elliott—there's no getting over that. Why ain't we sitting on him instead of on that there young 'un?'

'See here, Jacob.' Mr. Timmins stretched out towards him his open palm. 'Here's a sporting offer for you: if you'll bring Jim Bailey in guilty, I'll bring in Tom Elliott!'

'I won't bring in neither; the one's no more a thief than the other.'

'Nice for you, Tom, eh?'

'Oh, I don't mind. I know Jacob. It's not the first time a member of your family's been in trouble, is it, Jacob?'

'By ——! if you say that again I'll knock the life right out of you!'

The foreman rapped upon the table.

'Order, gentlemen, order! Keep to the business in hand, if you please.'

Mr. Longsett confronted him, towering over Elliott, with clenched fists and flashing eyes.

'Keep him in order, then—don't keep on at me! You make him keep a civil tongue in his head, or I will.' He glared round the board. 'I don't care for the whole damned lot of you. I'm as good as any one of you—perhaps better! I'm here to do my duty according to my conscience and conviction, and I'm going to do it, and I say not guilty, and if we stop here till Christmas you won't make me say no different!'

This announcement was followed by an interval of silence; then Captain Rudd attempted to voice the sense of the meeting.

'In that case, Mr. Foreman, we may as well intimate to the court that we are unable to agree.'

'What'll be the consequence of that?'

'The prisoner'll have to stand another trial, when, should none of his relations happen to be upon the jury, there will be no hesitation about bringing in a verdict of guilty—in which case the young scamp will get his deserts.'

Stretching his body across the table, Jacob shook his clenched fist in the speaker's face.

'Look here, Captain Rudd, you may be a captain, but you're no blooming gentleman, or you wouldn't talk like that. Captain

or no captain, the next time you say anything about Jim Bailey being a relation of mine, I'll crack you in the mouth!' Straightening himself, Jacob shook his fist at the eleven. 'And I say the same to every one of you. It's no affair of yours what Jim Bailey is to me—so just you mind it.'

The Captain curled, at the same time, his lip and his moustache, his bearing conveying the scorn which he doubtless felt.

'If you suppose, sir, that I shall allow you to play the common bully with impunity, you are mistaken. You forget yourself, my man!'

'Oh, no! I don't forget myself—it's you who forgot yourself. And as for playing the common bully, it's you began it. You're trying to bully me when you taunt me with Jim Bailey being my relation; you think if you keep it on long enough you'll frighten me into acting against my sense of duty.'

The foreman intervened sharply: 'Order! Mr. Longsett, your language is improper and irregular; if you are not careful I shall have to report it to the court.'

'It's no more improper and irregular than theirs is. We're here to say guilty or not guilty, not to pry into each other's private affairs. If they don't make no personal remarks, I shan't.'

'Listen to reason, Mr. Longsett. Do I understand, Mr. Plummer, that you will acquiesce in a verdict of guilty if we prefer a recommendation to the court that the case shall be treated under the First Offenders Act?'

'You are at liberty to so understand, Mr. Grice.'

'And you, Mr. Longsett? If we are unable to agree the prisoner will have to go back to prison, and, on his again standing his trial, I have no hesitation in saying that he will be found guilty, when he will be likely to receive much less lenient treatment than now, when we are ready and willing to recommend him to mercy.'

'We're going to agree.'

'That's good hearing. You agree to a verdict of guilty coupled with a recommendation to mercy?'

'I don't do nothing of the kind.'

'Then what do you agree to?'

'I agree to a verdict of not guilty—that's what I agree to.'

'Then, in that case, we're likely to disagree. You can hardly expect eleven men to go against the weight of evidence for the sake of agreeing with you.'

‘There’s no hurry that I knows on. We’ll wait a bit. I have heard of juries being locked up for eight-and-forty hours. I dare say before that time some of you’ll have changed your minds. Seems to me that there’s three or four already that can change their minds as easy as winking.’ He began, with a certain amount of ostentation, to untie the string which bound his brown paper parcel. ‘I’m getting peckish. If you don’t mind, Mr. Foreman, we’ll talk things over while I’m eating.’

The unfolding of the paper revealed the fact that it contained a comfortable number of succulent-looking sandwiches. The eleven eyed them—and their owner—sourly. Carefully taking the top one of the heap between his finger and his thumb, Mr. Longsett took a bite at it. Seldom has the process of attacking a sandwich had a more attentive audience.

‘I say, Jacob,’ observed Mr. Timmins, ‘aren’t you going to give me one?’

‘What, give you the food from between my own lips! Not if I know it. We may be here till this time to-morrow. I’ve got to think of myself, Mr. Timmins.’

‘I’m not going to stop here till this time to-morrow, Jacob Longsett!’

As he spoke, old Parkes banged his fist upon the table.

‘All right, George Parkes, nobody asked you to, so far as I know. Seems to me you’re uncommon keen to send the lad to gaol.’

‘I don’t wish the lad no harm.’

‘Seems to me as how you do.’

‘I say I don’t!’

Mr. Parkes punctuated each of his remarks with a bang upon the board.

‘Then why don’t you do what you’ve sworn to do, and bring him in not guilty along of me?’

‘I don’t care what I brings him in. It don’t make no odds to me. It ain’t none of my affair. I’ve got my own business to ’tend to, and when a man’s got to my years he don’t care to meddle in no one else’s. I’m willing to bring him in not guilty along of you, Jacob Longsett.’

‘That’s more like it. If there was more like you and me, George Parkes, we’d soon be outside of this.’

Captain Rudd, who had listened to this short dialogue without evincing any signs of approbation, once more endeavoured to urge the foreman to action.

‘Don’t you think, Mr. Foreman, that the time has arrived for you to communicate the fact of our disagreement to the court?’

Mr. Longsett made haste to differ.

‘Excuse me, Mr. Foreman, but, if Captain Rudd will allow me, I don’t think it has. We haven’t been here hardly any time. There’s no hurry, so long as we’re doing our duty. I dare say we’ll all agree yet before we’ve finished. All we want is a little patience.’

‘And something to eat,’ said Mr. Timmins.

‘Then do you mean to say,’ exclaimed Mr. Longsett, as he commenced upon another sandwich, ‘that you’d send a young lad to gaol, and blast his good name for ever, just because you’re hungry?’

‘May I be permitted to make a remark?’ The inquiry came from Mr. Tyler. He was holding his handkerchief to his ear; his general expression was one of suffering. ‘Considering how little of the evidence I really heard, I don’t wish it to be supposed that I have any objection to a verdict of not guilty. And I may add that not only is my earache driving me nearly mad, but my health, as a whole, as some of you know, is bad, and I am easily exhausted. Had I supposed that any of this sort of thing would have taken place, I should have procured a medical certificate excusing me. I appeal to gentlemen to arrive as rapidly as possible at a decision, which will enable me to obtain measures of relief.’

‘Hear, hear!’ Mr. Longsett rapped with his knuckles on the table.

‘I’d never have come,’ declared old Parkes, ‘if I’d a known I was going to be kep’ all day without my dinner. When a man gets to my years he wants his victuals regular. I didn’t have hardly no breakfast, and I ain’t had nothing since.’

‘I tell you what it is,’ cried Slater; ‘I want my dinner, and I’ve got my business to attend to—this is the busiest day of the week for me. So far as I can see, it doesn’t make much difference how we bring it in. You say that if you bring him in guilty you’re going to get him off: then why shouldn’t you bring him in not guilty right away? If you bring him in guilty I can’t help thinking that he ought to be punished—he won’t care nothing for your bringing him in guilty if he isn’t; while, if you bring him in not guilty, he’ll thank his stars for the narrow squeak he’ll think he’s had, and it’ll be a lesson to him as long as he lives.’

‘There is,’ allowed Mr. Plummer, ‘a good deal in what Mr. Slater says.’

‘There is one thing against it,’ murmured Mr. Moss. His voice was rather squeaky, and, as if conscious of the fact, he generally produced it as softly as he could.

‘What’s that?’

‘The evidence. We are supposed to be influenced by the evidence, and by that only.’

‘It struck me that the evidence was all onesided.’

‘Precisely—on the side of the prosecution. Since the case was practically undefended, the presumption is that the prisoner had no defence to offer.’

‘But, as practical men,’ persisted Mr. Plummer, ‘does it not occur to you that there is a good deal in what Mr. Slater says? If we find the lad not guilty we shall teach him a lesson, and, at the same time, not be placing on his character an ineffaceable slur. We might, for instance, state in open court, through the mouth of our worthy foreman, that we are willing to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt.’

‘But there is no doubt. Let us do justice though the heavens fall. Have you yourself any doubt that James Bailey stole Samuel Nichols’s corn and hay?’

‘Ah, dear sir, there is only One who can say. He has no doubt. We are not omniscient.’

‘That sort of talk may be all very well in a pulpit, Mr. Plummer. It is out of place in a court of law when we are dealing with ascertained facts.’

Mr. Plummer raised his hands, and shook his head, as if he was sorry for Mr. Moss.

‘Let us show mercy, that we may be shown it,’ he all but whispered.

‘In other words,’ struck in Captain Rudd, ‘we are to do evil in order that good may come—even to the extent of prostituting truth.’

‘I am afraid, in our present situation, these things are not arguable. Some of us, thank heaven, see things through eyes of our own.’

‘Precisely; and it is because they don’t appear to be arguable that I once more suggest to the foreman that the court be informed that we are unable to agree.’

‘And I again take leave to differ. Why now, there’s’—Mr.

Longsett pointed with his finger—‘one—two—three—four—five of us as says not guilty. We’re agreeing more and more every minute. I dare bet any money we’ll all be like one family before we get outside this room. If the foreman ain’t got no particular objection, I’ll have a moistener. I never could eat dry.’ Taking a black bottle out of an inner pocket in his overcoat, he applied it to his lips. Such of the eleven as were not keenly observant ostentatiously turned their eyes another way. He took a long and hearty pull; then he smacked his lips. ‘Good stuff that; I always like a drop when I’ve been eating—helps digestion.’

‘This is more than human nature can stand,’ groaned Mr. Timmins. ‘Mr. Foreman, I move that the magistrates be informed that we are unable to agree, and I request that you put that motion without further delay.’

‘I second that motion,’ said Captain Rudd.

‘And I say no!’

Jacob flourished his bottle. Mr. Timmins’s visage, as he confronted Mr. Longsett, became slightly inflamed.

‘We don’t care what you say. Do you think we’re going to sit here, watching you guzzling, as long as ever you please? If you want to give a proper verdict you give one which is according to the evidence—we’re not going to let you play the fool with us, Jacob, my boy.’

Extending the open palm of his left hand, Mr. Longsett marked time on it with the bottle which he was holding in his right.

‘Excuse me, Mr. Foreman, but perhaps I know a bit of law as well as the rest of you, and I say that the law is this—that before a jury can tell the court anything it’s got to agree upon what it’s going to tell. And what I mean by that is this: that before any one of us—I don’t care if it’s the foreman, or who it is!—can tell the court that we disagree we’ve got to agree to disagree—and I don’t agree!’

Mr. Moss put a question to the foreman.

‘Is that really the case?’

The foreman smiled a wintry smile—and temporised.

‘I shouldn’t positively like to say.’

‘But I do say positively. You can ask the magistrates, if you like, and see if I’m not right. Why, if you go into court now and say that we disagree I shall say we don’t! I shall say that if we only have a little more time we shall agree yet; all we want’s a chance of talking it over.’



The foreman, pressing his fingers together, addressed Mr. Longsett with an air that was acid.

‘Then, according to you, if one member of a jury chooses to make himself objectionable his colleagues are at his mercy?’

Jacob rose from his seat in such a flame of passion that it almost seemed he was going to hurl his bottle at the foreman’s head.

‘Don’t you call me objectionable, Mr. Grice! I won’t have it! I’m no more objectionable than you are! I’ve got as much right to an opinion as you, and because my opinion don’t happen to be the same as yours you’ve no right to call me names. If we all start calling each other names, a nice state of things that’ll be! A pretty notion of a foreman’s duties you seem to have!’

Mr. Grice, who was not pugilistic, turned a trifle pale; he did not seem happy. Captain Rudd, tilting his chair backwards, and thrusting his hands into his trouser pockets, looked up at the ceiling.

‘This is the sort of thing which brings the jury system into contempt.’

‘What’s that, Captain Rudd?’ Mr. Longsett, who was still upon his feet, chose his words with much deliberation, emphasising them with shakings of his fist, ‘You mean you’re the sort, I suppose? You’re quite right, you are. You’ve been in the army, you see, and you think we’re soldiers, to come to heel whenever you tell us, and that’s where you’re mistaken, Captain Rudd. We’re free Englishmen, and we don’t choose to have you come the officer over us—and that’s how you make the thing contemptible by trying.’

There was silence. His colleagues seemed to be arriving at the conclusion that Jacob was a difficult man to differ with.

‘It strikes me,’ said Mr. Timmins, when the silence was becoming painful, ‘that if the law is really such that we’ve got to stop here till our good Jacob takes it into his generous head to let us go, you and I, Mr. Hisgard, might have that little game of crib I was speaking of; it may help us forget where we are, and that we’re not going to have any dinner till it’s past supper time.’

‘Just you wait a minute. Perhaps,’ replied Mr. Hisgard, ‘I may be allowed to say a word.’ No one appeared to have any objection. ‘What I wish to remark is this. With all deference, I think Mr. Slater spoke as a practical man. I don’t see that there’s much difference between saying guilty and at the same time asking the magistrate to award no punishment and, as Mr. Slater puts it, bringing it in not guilty right away.’

Mr. Timmins, who had been shuffling a pack of cards, replaced them on the table.

‘All right. Let’s have it that way, and make an end of it. Suppose we all say not guilty, and caution him not to do it again—what’s the odds?’

‘So far as I’m concerned,’ observed Tom Elliott, ‘I’m willing to bring him in not guilty. It’s my belief he’s been led into it all along, and I know perhaps as much about it as any one. There’s a good deal about the affair what’s been kept quiet by both sides. Perhaps I might have said a word for one.’

Mr. Moss interrogated the foreman with uplifted eyebrows.

‘Do you think it does make any difference?’

The foreman shrugged his shoulders. He was still. Captain Rudd spoke for him.

‘It makes the difference between right and wrong—that’s all.’

Mr. Plummer leaned his elbows on the table; his spectacled countenance wore its most benevolent smile.

‘Hearken to me, dear sir. We are all Christian men——’

‘Not necessarily at this moment; at this moment we are jurymen—only jurymen.’

Mr. Plummer sighed, as if in sorrow. He turned to the others, as if desiring their forgiveness for the Captain.

‘This gentleman—I trust he will pardon me for saying so—puts a curb upon his natural generosity. His is what we may, perhaps, term the military mind—precise, and, if we may say so, just a little—the merest atom—hard. For my part, I think, Mr. Foreman, we might, as Christian men, conscientiously return a negative finding, intimating, at the same time, that, owing to the prisoner’s tender years, we are not unwilling to give him the benefit of the doubt.’

The Captain dissented.

‘What sort of mind do you call yours, sir? Were we to return such a verdict, we should make of ourselves the laughing-stock of England.’

The foreman shook his head.

‘I hardly think England will interest itself in our proceedings to that extent. Similar verdicts in similar cases are, I imagine, more common than you may suppose. I am not advocating such a course, but I believe it would be logically possible for us to inform the magistrates that, while some of us entertain strong opinions on the subject of the prisoner’s guilt, being desirous to

arrive at a state of agreement, and also bearing in mind the youth of the accused, we are willing to acquiesce in a verdict of acquittal.'

'I agree to that,' cried Mr. Longsett. 'That's fair enough. Now, is it all settled?'

'I'm not.'

The speaker was the Captain. All eyes were turned on him. The foreman spoke.

'Don't you think, Captain, you—might swallow a gnat?'

'I don't wish to set myself up as a superior person, but, under the circumstances, I'm afraid I can't.'

'Quite so. Now we know where we are.' Mr. Longsett composed himself in his chair; planting his hands against his sides, he stuck out his elbows, he screwed up his mouth. 'It just shows you how one man can play skittles with eleven others.'

The Captain was silently contemptuous.

'I really doubt if it matters.' It was Mr. Moss who said it; he whispered an addition into the Captain's ear: 'If the young scamp isn't hung to-day he'll be hung to-morrow.'

The Captain ignored the whisper; his reply was uttered with sufficient clearness.

'Perhaps, sir, your sense of duty is not a high one.'

The eleven eyed each other, and the table, and vacancy; a spirit of depression seemed to be settling down upon them all. Old Parkes, with elongated visage, addressed a melancholy inquiry to no one in particular. 'What's us sitting here for?'

Jacob responded—'That's what I should like to know, George. Perhaps it's because a gentleman's made up his mind to ruin a poor young lad for life.'

The Captain took up the gauntlet.

'I presume it is useless for me to point out to you that your statement is as incorrect as it is unjustified. I have heard a good deal about the absurdities of the jury system. I may tell you, sir, that you have presented me with an object-lesson which will last me the rest of my life. It occurs to me as just possible that the sooner the system is reformed the better.'

'Ah! I dare say it would. Then gentlemen like you would be able to grind poor lads under your feet whenever it suited you. Oh, dear, no! You think yourself somebody, don't you, Captain?'

Captain Rudd looked as if he would if he could; in his eyes

there gleamed something very like a foreshadowing of assault and battery. The foreman made a little movement with his hands, which, possibly, was intended for a counsel of peace. Anyhow, the Captain allowed the last word to be Jacob's. Mr. Tyler, his handkerchief still pressed to his ear, appealed to the Captain in a tone of voice which was almost tearful.

'As man to man, sir, let me beseech you to take pity on the dreadful situation we are in.'

'To what situation do you allude, sir?'

'I am alluding, sir, to the dreadful pain which I am enduring in my left ear; you can have no conception of its severity. Besides which, I have a sadly weakly constitution generally—as is well known to more than one gentleman who is now present. I have suffered for the last twenty years from chronic lumbago, together with a functional derangement of the liver, which, directly any irregularity occurs in my hours or habits, invariably reduces me to a state of collapse. I assure you that if this enforced confinement and prolonged abstention from my natural food endures much longer, in my present state of health, the consequences may be highly serious.'

'I don't follow your reasoning, sir. Because you are physically unfitted to serve upon a jury, and culpably omitted to inform the court of the fact, you wish me not to do my duty, you having already failed to do yours?'

'I wish you,' sighed Mr. Tyler, 'to be humane.'

'This is the first jury ever I was on,' groaned Mr. Parkes, shaking his ancient head as if it had been hung on wires, 'and I'll take care that it's the last. Such things didn't ought to be—not when a man's got to my years, they didn't. Who's young Jim Bailey, I'd like to know, that we should go losing our dinners acause of him? Hit him over the head and ha' done with it—that's what I say.'

'You must excuse me, Captain Rudd,' said Mr. Timmins, 'but why can't you strain a point as well as the rest of us? Why shouldn't we, as a body of practical men, take a merciful view of the position, and give the boy another chance? He is only a boy after all.'

'We are not automata though we are jurymen, and surely we may, without shame, allow ourselves to be actuated by the dictates of our common humanity.'

Thus Mr. Plummer. Mr. Slater agreed with him in a fashion of his own.

‘Let the boy go and have done with it—I dare say we can trust Jacob to give him a good round towelling.’

‘He’s had that already.’

There was a grimness in Mr. Longsett’s tone which caused more than one of his hearers to smile.

‘I’ll be bound his mother’s crying her eyes out for him at home.’

This was Tom Elliott. Mr. Plummer joined his hands as if in supplication.

‘Poor woman!’ he murmured.

‘It comes hard upon the mothers,’ said Mr. Hisgard.

‘And Jim Bailey’s mother is as honest and hardworking a woman as ever lived—that I know as a fact. And she’s seen a lot of trouble!’

As he made this announcement Mr. Timmins shuffled his pack of cards, as if the action relieved his mind. For some moments every one was still. Suddenly Mr. Tyler, who had been looking a picture of misery, broke into audible lamentations.

‘Oh dear! oh dear! I’m very ill! Won’t any one take pity on a man in agony?’

So intense was his sympathy with his own affairs that the tears trickled down his cheeks. Mr. Timmins endeavoured to encourage him.

‘Come, Mr. Tyler, come! Bear up! It’ll soon be over now!’

‘If anything serious comes of the cruel suffering which is being inflicted on me, I shall look to you gentlemen for compensation. I’m a poor man; it’s always a hard struggle, with my poor health, to make two ends meet. I can’t afford to pay doctors’ bills which have been incurred by the actions of others!’

‘That’s pleasant hearing—what do you think, Mr. Hisgard?—if we’ve got to contribute to this gentleman’s doctors’ bills! Come, Mr. Tyler, don’t talk like that, or soon we shall all of us be ill. I know I shall!’

There was a further pause. Then Mr. Moss delivered himself.

‘I’m bound to admit that what Mr. Timmins has said of the prisoner’s mother I know to be correct of my own knowledge. Mrs. Bailey has been a widow for many years; she has brought up a large family with the labour of her own hands; she has had many difficulties to contend with, and is deserving of considerable

sympathy. There is that to be said. Come, Captain Rudd, for once in a way let us be illogical. If you will agree to a verdict of not guilty, I will.'

Captain Rudd, his head thrown back, continued for some moments to silently regard the ceiling. The others watched him, exhibiting, in various degrees, unmistakable anxiety. Finally, with his eyes still turned ceilingwards, he capitulated.

'All right. Let it be as you say. Rather than the gentleman in front of me should perish on his chair, and other gentlemen should suffer any longer from the absence of their "natural food," I am willing to free myself with the rest, and, with you, to place myself under the dominion of Mr. Jacob Longsett's thumb.'

'Hear, hear! Bravo!' There were observations expressive of satisfaction from different quarters; but Mr. Longsett, in particular, was enthusiastic in his approbation.

'Your words does you honour, Captain!'

'You think so?—I'm sorry we differ.'

The foreman rapped upon the table.

'Order, gentlemen, please. Then may I take it that, at present, we are finally agreed upon a verdict of not guilty?'

'Coupled,' corrected Mr. Moss, 'with an intimation to the effect that, considering the prisoner's age, we have been willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.'

'Precisely. Does any other gentleman wish to make an observation? Apparently not. Then may I also take it that we are ready to return into court?'

Acclamations in the affirmative rose from all sides. The foreman rang the hand-bell which was in front of him. The usher appeared.

. . . . .

So the prisoner was acquitted, no one in the court having the faintest notion why.

## THE AWAKENING OF LONDON.

OUT of the thousands who have daily seen the sun set all their lives, there are some who have seldom, or perhaps never, at least in midsummer, seen it rise. I am not, of course, thinking of those who toil with their hands for their daily bread, but of the comfortable people who do not get up till the day is 'well alight,' and find the winter fire burning brightly in the grate, the breakfast table duly set, and their morning letters laid upon its cloth. Had one of them perchance looked out into the street at five o'clock, he might have seen a postman hurrying along towards his district office, where the first correspondence of the day had been already sorted and tied up in bundles for distribution. If he cared for a new view of the town, he would find it in the 'awakening of London.'

One of the first things which would strike him in the empty streets would be their 'hilliness.' When full by day they look flat, but he would be surprised to see what ups and downs there are between (say) the Oxford Circus and Piccadilly, and perceive that cattle often have to pull against the collar in what appears to be a level piece of road.

The 'cleaning' of London and its belongings might next draw his attention. Dickens was an early walker, and one does not wonder at his recording the dusty wealth of Mr. Boffin when one sees, in the rich city, baskets or boxes, stuffed with the sweepings of every shop and office, set outside their doors waiting to be carted off. The pavement must be cleared of this (possibly precious) 'litter' betimes.

Our early riser, though, would meet many who had obviously not washed that morning, and were having their first breakfast off a 'clay.' Perhaps the question might cross his mind, 'Where had they slept?' and, if he should happen to be a philanthropist, some fresh thoughts about the lodgment of the million would occur to him. The morning *toilette* of many men and women is little realised by one who has his 'tub,' finds shaving water set ready in his dressing-room, clothes himself with deliberation, brushes his hair, sniffs the pleasant smell of coffee as he saunters downstairs, and seats himself at a well-ordered table,

while Mary Ann, who has laid it, makes his tumbled bed, empties his bath, and tidies his deserted room. Had he got up betimes, as I have suggested, he would have seen London at its early work, though at its first exploration, in summer, barring a few houseless wanderers or belated pleasure-seekers returning home, he might fancy that the population consisted of policemen and cats, which last creep stealthily about in pursuit of feline enjoyment. I saw a constable unsuccessfully trying to arrest one at rosy dawn this morning in my deserted street. As my wakeful riser continued his walk he might see, on passing a railway station, the first throes of that centrifugal action by which London flings abroad the tidings and thoughts which had reached it since he last went to bed. The newspaper trains start at five o'clock for their daily sowing of the land with type, handfuls of which are hurled out at stations far and near, to produce their repeated crops of talk for the reapers (counted by millions) of 'some new thing.' Besides this papery outflow, our early walker would meet wagons and carts laden with solid food for those who cannot think unless the mystic chemistry of nature changes milk, mutton, and bread into brains. The editor of a paper would find his occupation gone were it not for the butcher and baker who give him power to write and his buyers to read. So goods trains, vans, and fishing boats fill the exhausted skull with matter which takes the shape of foreign intelligence, police reports, Court circulars, cricket scores, advertisements, and leading articles—without which, in the estimation of many, life would not be worth living.

Perhaps among the manifold contributions to the commissariat of London that of 'milk' asserts itself most loudly. First there is the rumbling transfer at railway stations of those truncated tin cones containing it, which have arrived by night trains from the country, into milkmen's carts, whose jangling cans add to the rattle they make as Jehus drive furiously to the various 'walks,' where it is distributed by thick-soled white-aproned women, who, in filling the household jug, also leave a 'blob' of it on the doorstep—a libation resented by tidy mistresses. The noise of its arrival, before the London milkmaid fills her pail, might well lead one to wish that its transporting carts were fitted with pneumatic tyres. No other vehicle makes such a seemingly needless row in going about its business. But every Londoner must have his supply of milk betimes, and in this respect the poor townsman is better off than his mate in the country. There, a



peasant, daily working in the midst of cow-pastured fields, is often unable to get a jug of it for his family. It is sent away to the city, in whose meanest streets the housewife can always buy a penn'orth.

Talking of this, our early explorer sees a number of street breakfast-laid tables, where the workman stops to eat thick slices of bread and butter, washed down with coffee (not milkless) which spreads a fragrant smell in the fresh morning air. No signs of this standing meal are left behind at the corners where it is eaten. The catering 'coster' clears it away before the blinds of bedrooms begin to be drawn up, and the heels of housemaids kneeling on doorsteps, with scrubbing brush and pail, may be seen all down a street, leaving a fresh whitened step to be dirtied by the foot-marks of another day. To my mind, they manage this business better in America, where it is done with a long-handled implement which saves the servant from having to go down upon her knees, often in the wet. Our custom sometimes creates a special malady from which she suffers. The 'housemaid's knee' is a recognised infirmity. Common marble is cheap, and it would be well if more doorsteps were made with this, as it can be 'washed' clean in a minute and leaves a white surface better than that produced by hearthstone on a porous substance.

In a very early stroll few sights are more sadly impressive than that of those who have no roof but the sky, and, unless officiously disturbed, seek an uneasy bed on some roadside seat, or crouch in the corner of an entry, till they have to 'move on' and begin another wearisome day. Nothing is more piteously exclusive than the street-door of even the most tender-hearted householder before the 'awakening of London.' A clerical friend of mine once had unexpected proof of this when, after a long talk with a neighbour into the small hours, he let him out, and, standing for a few minutes to look at the stars, heard the door slammed to, leaving him hatless in the deserted street. He hammered and rang like Mrs. Dowler's chairmen, but those within slept sounder than even Mr. Winkle, and it was not till the 'milk' arrived that he was able to re-enter his house. Meanwhile, after fruitless battery with the knocker, he thought of those nightly wanderers who have only the 'key of the street,' and having at last found an empty bench laid himself upon it to realise the blanketless misery of such a couch. It did not occur to him to adopt the procedure of a Chinaman, who, when he feels himself hopelessly aggrieved by the

unfeeling inmate of a house, avenges himself by committing suicide on his doorstep.

If the feet of our early wanderer should lead him near a railway, he apprehends the ceaseless traffic which goes on before any 'passenger' awakes to use the newspaper train. I was once deposited at a station some ten miles away from that which I sought, and, walking home along the 'six-foot way' between the lines, realised how much commerce is carried on in the dark. I had to pause—I believe that, according to the rules of the service, I ought to have laid myself down—as I met or was overtaken by a seemingly endless number of goods trains, which did not stop to see whether a wandering stranger had been run over or not. But the near rush of a spark-scattering locomotive is a thing to be remembered, though the sensation did not tempt me to invite it again.

Talking of early work which finishes that of the night, our exploring walker, who has often seen the street lamps lit at dusk, perceives, what perhaps he had never thought of before, that they have to be put out at dawn by an official who pokes each one to death with a stick. Being a ratepayer, he is possibly gratified at this display of parochial economy; but another is not so pleasing to its near spectator, since the beating of door-mats on lamp-posts fills the neighbouring air with dust, which, as representing 'germs' whose insidious mischief he has read of, he swallows resentfully. In some places, however, he has to skip out of the way of 'water' pumped upon asphalt pavement with a hose—a cleanly procedure, though the soaking of wooden streets leaves them to exhale the nastiest of perfumes as they dry.

Without attempting to solve the disputed question about the worth of early rising for work within doors, or denying that the prey of the 'early bird' warns us against dangers which may spoil the credit of being among the first to get up, our morning walker has, at least for once in a way, a new view of London. And he might freshly realise the value of that early, often sordid, work which goes daily on to make the world more pleasant to him when he usually wakes. All who rise to find it ready for them, summer and winter, when the streets are shiny with wet, and the rain beats upon the dressing-room window, or its ledges are clogged with snow, might sometimes bear in mind the repeated hours of work spent by others, not only under his roof but outside his doors, before he sits down to his breakfast and opens his letters.

*CLEG KELLY, ARAB OF THE CITY:**HIS PROGRESS AND ADVENTURES.*<sup>1</sup>

BY S. R. CROCKETT,

AUTHOR OF 'THE STICKIT MINISTER,' 'THE RAIDERS,' ETC.

## ADVENTURE XLIV.

## CLEG RELAPSES INTO PAGANISM.

THE lists of Ashby were closed. The heralds and pursuivants did their devours, and the trumpets rang out a haughty peal. Or, at least, to that effect—as followeth :

'Come on!' said Cleg Kelly.

'Come on yoursel'!' said Kit Kennedy.

'Ye're feared,' cried the Knight of the City, making a hideous face.

'Wha's feared?' replied the Knight of the Country, his fists twirling like catherine-wheels. The boys slowly revolved round one another. It was like the solar system, only on a somewhat smaller scale. For first of all their fists revolved separately round each other, then each combatant revolved on his own responsible axis, and lastly, very slowly and in a dignified manner, they revolved round one another.

All this happened in the cool of the evening, at the back of the barn at the farmhouse of Loch Spellanderie. It was after the kye had all been milked and Vara Kavannagh was in the house clearing away the porridge dishes, while the mistress put the fretful children to bed to an accompanying chorus of scoldings, slappings, and wailings of the smitten.

As the lads stood stripped for fight Cleg showed a little taller than Kit Kennedy, and he had all the experience which comes of many previous combats. But then he was not, like Kit Kennedy, thrice armed, in the conscious justice of his quarrel.

'Come on,' cried Cleg again, steadily working up his temperature to flash point, 'ye gawky, ill-jointed, bullock-headed, slack-twisted clod-thumper, ye! See gin I canna knock the conceit oot o' ye in a hop, skip, and jump! I hae come frae Edinburgh to do it. I'll learn you to tak' up wi' my lass! Come on, ye pair Cripple-Dick!'

And at that precise moment Kit Kennedy, after many invitations, very suddenly did come on. Cleg, whose passion blinded

<sup>1</sup> Copyright 1895 in the United States of America by D. Appleton & Co.

him to his own hurt, happened to be leaning rather far forward. It is customary in the giving of 'dares' round about the Sooth Back, for the threatener to stick his head as far forward as he can and shake it rapidly up and down in a ferocious and menacing manner. This ought to continue, according to the rules, for fully ten minutes, after which the proceedings may commence or may not according to circumstances. But Kit Kennedy, farm assistant to Mistress McWalter of Loch Spellanderie, was an ignorant boy. He had had few advantages. He did not even know the rules appertaining to personal combats, nor when exactly was the correct time to accept such an invitation and 'come on.'

So that was the reason why Cleg Kelly's left eye came unexpectedly into violent contact with Kit's knuckles. These were as hard with rough labour as a bullock's hind leg.

The sudden sting of the pain had the effect of making Cleg still more vehemently angry. 'I'll learn you,' he shouted, 'ye sufferin', shairny blastie o' the byres, to strike afore a man's ready. You fecht! Ye can nae mair fecht than a Portobello bobbie! Wait till I hae dune wi' ye, my man. There'll no be as muckle left o' ye as wad make cat-meat to a week-auld kittlin'. What for can ye no fecht fair?'

Our hero's cause was so bad, and his lapse into heathenism became at this point so pronounced, that for the sake of all that has been, we decline to report the remainder of his speech.

But Kit Kennedy did not wait on any further preliminaries.

*Ding-dong!* went his fists, one on Cleg's other eye and the other squarely on his chest. Cleg was speaking at the time, and the latter blow (as he afterwards said) fairly took the words from him and made him 'roop' exactly like a hen trying to crow like a cock.

At this terrible breach of all laws made and promulgated for the proper conduct of pitched battles, what remained of Cleg's temper suddenly gave way. He rushed at Kit Kennedy, striking at him as hard as he could, without the slightest regard to science. But Kit Kennedy was staunch, and did not yield an inch. Never had the barn end of Loch Spellanderie witnessed such a combat. Cleg, on his part, interpolated constant remarks of a disparaging kind, such as 'Tak' that, ye seefer!' 'That'll do for ye!' But Kit Kennedy, on the other hand, fought silently. The most notable thing, however, about the combat was, that in the struggle neither of the knights took the slightest pains to ward off the other's blows. They were entirely engrossed in getting in their own.

The dust flew bravely from their jackets, until the noise

resembled the quick, irregular beating of carpets more than anything else. But, after all, not very much harm was done, and their clothes could hardly have been damaged by half a dozen Water-loos. It was like to prove a drawn battle, for neither combatant would give in. All Cleg's activity and waspishness was met and held by the country boy, with dogged persistency and massive rustic strength. Cleg was lissom as a willow wand, Kit tough and sturdy as an oak bough. And if Cleg avoided the most blows, he felt more severely those which did get home.

Thus, not unequally, the battle raged, till the noise of it passed all restraint. John McWalter of Loch Spellanderie was making his evening rounds. As he went into the barn he heard a tremendous disturbance at the back among his last year's corn-stacks. He listened eagerly, standing on one foot to do it. The unwonted riot was exceedingly mysterious. Very cautiously he opened the top half of the barn door and peered through. It might be an ill-set tinker come to steal corn. John McWalter had Tweed and Tyke with him, and they frisked their tails and gave each a little muffled bark, to intimate that they should very much like to join in the fray.

John McWalter was not used to facing difficult positions on his own responsibility, so quite as cautiously he slipped back again through the barn, and crossed the yard to the house.

His wife was actively engaged scolding Vara for wasting too much hot water in cleaning the supper bowls. This happened regularly every evening, and Vara did not greatly mind. It saved her from being faulted for something new.

'Ye lazy guid-for-naething!' Mrs. McWalter was saying, 'I wonder what for my daft sister at Netherby sent a useless, handless, upsetting monkey like you to a decent house—a besom that will neither work nor yet learn——'

At this moment John McWalter put his head within the door.

'There's twa ill-set loons killin' yin anither ahint the barn!' he said.

'What's that gotten to do wi' it, guidman?' replied his wife. 'Guid life! Ye cry in that sudden I thought it was twa o' the kye hornin' yin anither. But what care I for loons? Juist e'en let them kill yin anither. There's ower great plenty o' them about Loch Spellanderie at ony rate! Ill plants o' a graceless stock. Never was a McWalter yet worth his brose!'

'But,' said her husband, 'it's Kit Kennedy fechtin' wi' a

stranger loon that I never saw afore! And I dinna believe he has foddered the horse!’

Mistress McWalter snatched up the poker.

‘Him,’ she cried, ‘the idle, regairdless hound, what can the like o’ him be thinkin’ aboot? I’ll learn him. Gin he gets himsel’ killed fechtin’ wi’ tinklers for his ain pleesure, wha is to look the sheep and bring in the kye in the mornin’? And the morn kirnin’ day too!’

So in the interests of the coming hour at which the week’s cream was to be churned into butter, and from no regard whatever for her nephew’s life or limb, the mistress of Loch Spellanderie hastened out to interfere in the deadly struggle. But Vara Kavannah was before her. She flew out of the kitchen door, and ran round the house. The McWalters followed as best they could, Vara’s mistress calling vainly on her to go back and wash the dishes.

When Vara turned the corner, Cleg and Kit were still pelting at it without the least sign of abating interest. Cleg was now darting hither and thither, and getting in a blow wherever he could. Kit was standing doggedly firm, only wheeling on his legs as on a pivot, just far enough to meet the town boy’s rushes. It was a beautiful combat, and the equality of it had very nearly knocked all the ill-nature out of them. Respect for each other was growing up in their several bosoms, and if only they could have stopped simultaneously, they would have been glad enough to shake hands.

So when Vara came flying round the corner and ran between them, the boys were quite willing to be separated, indeed even thankful.

‘Run, quick!’ she cried to Cleg, ‘they are comin’. O haste ye fast!’

But Cleg did not know any respect for the powers that be. He knew that the ordinary bobby of commerce did not dwell in the country. And besides, even if he did, the lad who could race red-headed Finnigan, the champion runner of the Edinburgh force, and who had proved himself without disgrace against the fastest fire-engine in the city, was not likely to be caught—even in spite of the fact that he had run all the way from Netherby Junction that night already.

So Cleg turned a deaf ear to Vara’s entreaties, and, very simply and like a hero, wiped his face with the tail of his coat.

Kit Kennedy also kept his place, a fact which deserves recognition. For he, on his part, faced a peril long known and noted. The mystery of unknown and unproven danger did not fascinate him.

In a moment more Mistress McWalter, a tall, masculine woman, with untidy hair of frosty blue-black, came tearing round the corner, while at the same time out of the back barn door issued John McWalter, armed with a pitchfork, and followed by Tweed and Tyke, the clamorous shepherding dogs of Loch Spellanderie.

Cleg found his position completely turned, and he himself beset on all sides. For behind him the Loch lay black and deep. And in front the wall of the barn fairly shut him in between his enemies. Mistress McWalter dealt Kit Kennedy a blow with the poker upon his shoulder as she passed. But this was simply, as it were, a payment on account, for *his* final settlement could be deferred. Then, never pausing once in her stride, she rushed towards Cleg Kelly. But she did not know the manifold wiles of a trained athlete of the South Back. For this kind of irregular guerilla warfare was even more in Cleg's way than a plain, hammer-and-tongs, stand-up and knock-down fight.

As she came with the poker stiffly uplifted against the evening sky, Mistress McWalter looked exceeding martial. But, as Cleg afterwards expressed it, 'a woman shouldna try to fecht. She's far ower flappy about the legs wi' goons and petticoats.' Swift as a duck diving, Cleg fell flat before her, and Mistress McWalter suddenly spread all her length and breadth on the ground. Instantly Cleg was on his feet again. Had the enemy been a man, Cleg would have danced on him. But since (and it was a pity) it was a woman, Cleg only looked about for an avenue of escape.

Kit Kennedy pointed with his finger an open way round the milk-house. And Cleg knew that the information was a friendly enough lead. He had no doubts as to the good faith of so sturdy a fister as Kit Kennedy. He was obviously not the stuff traitors are made of.

But a sudden thought of inconceivable grandeur flushed Cleg's cheek. Once for all, he would show them what he could do. He would evade his pursuers, make his late adversary burst with envy, and wring the heart of Vara Kavannah, all by one incomparable act of daring. So he stood still till Mistress McWalter arose again to her feet, and charged upon him with a perfect scream of anger. At the same time John McWalter closed in upon the other side with his hay-fork and his dogs. Cleg allowed them to approach till they were almost within striking distance of him. Then, without giving himself a moment for reflection, he wheeled about on his heels, balanced a moment on the brink, bent his arms with the fingers touching into a beautiful bow, and sprang far out into the black water,

So suddenly was this done that the good man of Loch Spellanderie, approaching with his hay-fork from one direction, ran hastily into the arms of his spouse charging from the other. And from her he received a most unwifely ring on the side of the head with the poker, which loosened every tooth John McWalter still retained in his jawbones.

'Tak' that, ye donnert auld deevil, for lettin' him by!' cried the harridan.

'Ye let him by yoursel', guidwife,' cried her husband, who did not often resent anything which his wife might do, but who felt that he must draw the line at welcoming the poker on the side of his head. 'Dinna come that road again, my woman. I declare to peace, had it no been for the hay-time comin' on, and few hands to win it, I wad hae stuck the fork brave and firmly intil ye, ye randy besom!'

To what lengths the conjugal quarrel would have gone if it had been allowed to proceed, will never be known. For just at that moment the head of Cleg emerged far out upon the dark waters of Loch Spellanderie.

Cleg Kelly swam nearly as easily in his clothes as without them. For he had cast his coat at the beginning of the fray, and as to his trousers, they were loose and especially well ventilated. So that the water gushed in and out of the holes as he swam, much as though they had been the gills of a fish. Indeed, they rather helped his progress than otherwise.

Then from the dusky breadths of the lake arose the voice, mocking and bitter, of the Thersites of the Sooth Back, equally well equipped for compliment and deadly in debate.

'Loup in,' he cried, 'try a dook. It is fine and caller in here the nicht. But leave the poker ahint ye. It will tak' ye a' your time to keep your ain thick heid abune the water. Come on, you!' he cried pointedly to Mistress McWalter. 'That face o' yours hasna seen water for a month, I'll wager. A soom will do you a' the guid in the world! And you, ye guano-sack on stilts, come and try a spar oot here. I'll learn ye to stick hay-fows into decent folk!'

But neither John McWalter nor yet his wife had a word to say in answer.

Then began such an exhibition as Loch Spellanderie had never seen. Cleg trod water. He dived. He swam on his back, on his side, on his breast. His arms described dignified alternate circles—half in air and half in water. He pretended to be drowning



and let himself, after a terror-striking outcry, sink slowly down into deep water, from which presently he arose laughing.

And all the time his heart was hot and prideful within him.

'I'll learn her,' he said over and over to himself, 'I'll learn her to tak' up wi' a country Jock.'

And then he would execute another foolhardy prank, dismally rejoicing the while in Vara's manifest terror.

'Cleg, come oot! Ye'll be drowned!' Vara cried, wringing her hands in agony. Simple and innocent herself, she could not understand why her kind good Cleg should suddenly act so. She had no conception of the evil spirit of pride and vainglory, which upon occasion rent and tormented that small pagan bosom.

'I'll show her!' remained the refrain of all Cleg's meditations for many a day.

Finally, when this had gone on for a quarter of an hour, Cleg trod water long enough to kiss his hand, and cry 'Guid nicht!' to Mistress McWalter and her husband, who meanwhile stood dumb and astonished on the bank.

Then he turned and swam steadily away across the loch. He did not know in the least how he would get his clothes dried, nor yet where he would have to sleep. But his many adventures that day, and in especial the way he had 'taken the shine oot o' that loonie wi' the curls,' warmed and comforted him more than a brand-new suit of dry clothes. So long as he could see his enemies, he looked over his shoulder occasionally. And when he noted the four dark figures still standing on the bank, Cleg chuckled to himself and his proud heart rejoiced within him.

'I telled ye I wad show her,' he said to himself, 'and I hae shown her!'

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## ADVENTURE XLV.

### THE CABIN ON THE SUMMIT.

LIKE most Scottish lakes, Loch Spellanderie is not wide, and Cleg manfully ploughed his way across without fear of the result. For he had often swum much further at the piers of Leith and Trinity, as well as much longer in the many lochs which are girt like a girdle of jewels round about his native city. But presently his clothes began to tire him, and long ere the dark line of the trees on the further side approached, he was longing to be on shore again.

Sometimes also he seemed to hear the voices of men before

him, though, owing to the deep shadow of the trees, he could see no one. Cleg's arms began to ache terribly, and his feet to drag lower and lower. The power went out of his strokes. He called out lustily for the men to wait for him. He could hear something like a boat moving along the edge of the reeds, rustling through them with a sough as it went.

Suddenly Cleg saw something dark swimming slowly along the surface of the water. He struck towards it fearlessly. It was a curiously shaped piece of wood moved, as it seemed, by some mysterious power from the shore. Cleg called out again for the men whose voices he had heard to wait for him. But, instead of waiting, they promptly turned and fled. Cleg could hear them crashing like bullocks through the briars and hazels of the underbrush.

However, he was not far from the land now, and in a minute more he felt his feet rest upon the shelving gravel of the lake shore. Cleg brought the wedge-shaped piece of wood with him. He found, upon holding it close to his eyes in the dim light, that a double row of hooks was attached to it beneath, and that there were half a dozen good trout leaping and squirming upon different sides of it.

Cleg had no notion of the nature of the instrument he had captured. Nor indeed had he the least idea that he had disturbed certain very honest men in a wholly illegal operation.

He only shook himself like a water-dog and proceeded to run through the wood at an easy trot, for the purpose of getting some heat back into his chilled limbs.

As he ran his thoughts returned often to Loch Spellanderie, and each time he cracked his thumbs with glee.

'I showed her, I'm thinkin'!' he said aloud.

Suddenly Cleg found himself out of the wood. He came upon a slight fence of wire hung upon cloven undressed posts, beyond which ran the shallow trench of the railway to Port Andrew.

Cleg knew himself on sure ground again, so soon as he came to something so familiar as the four-foot way. He felt as if he had a friend in each telegraph post, and that the shining perspective of the parallel metals stretched on and on, into direct connection with Princes Street Station and the North Bridge tram lines, which in their turn ran almost to the Canongate Head. He was, as it were, at home.

The boy hesitated a little which way to turn. But ultimately he decided that he would take the left hand. So Cleg sped along

the permanent way towards Port Andrew at the rate of six miles an hour.

Had he known it, he was running as fast as he could out of all civilisation. For at this point the railway passes into a purely pastoral region of sheep and muircocks, where even farms and cot-houses are scarcer than in any other part of the lowlands of Scotland.

Nevertheless Cleg kept up the steady swinging trot, which had come to him by nature in direct descent from Tim Kelly, the Irish harvestman and burglar who in his day had trotted so disastrously into Isbel Beattie's life.

But Cleg was not to lie homeless and houseless that night, as Vara and the children had often done. The Arab of the City possessed all a cat's faculty for falling on his feet.

At a lonely place on the side of the line he came upon a little cluster of tanks and offices, which was yet not a station. There was, in fact, no platform at all. It consisted mainly of the little tank for watering the engine, and, set deep under an overhanging snout of heathery moorland, an old narrow-windowed railway carriage raised upon wooden uprights.

Cleg stood petrified with astonishment before this strange encampment. For there were lights in the windows, and the sound of voices came cheerfully from within. Yet here was the dark and lonely moor, with the birds calling weirdly all about him, and only the parallel bars of the four-foot way starting out east and west into the darkness, away from the broad stream of comfortable light which fell across them from the windows of the wheelless railway carriage.

Finally Cleg plucked up heart to knock. He had a feeling that nothing far amiss could happen to him, so near a railway which led at long and last to Prince's Street, where even at that moment so many of his friends were busily engaged selling the evening papers. Besides which, he was in still nearer connection with his friends Muckle Alick, the porter, and Duncan Urquhart, the goods enginedriver at Netherby Junction.

Cleg tapped gently, but there was at first no cessation in the noise. He knocked a second time a little harder; still it was without effect.

A voice within took up a rollicking tune, and the words came rantingly through the wooden partition. Cleg's hand slid down till it rested upon the stirrup-shaped brass handle of a railway carriage. It turned readily in his fingers, and Cleg peered curiously within.

He could now see the singer, who sat on a wooden chair with his stocking-soles cocked up on the little stove which filled all one end of the hut. There came from within a delightful smell of broiling bacon ham, which hungry Cleg sniffed up with gusto.

The singer was a rough-haired, black-bearded man with a wide chest and mighty shoulders, even though he could not be called a giant when compared with Muckle Alick down at Netherby. And this is what he sang.

Auld Granny Grey Pow,  
Fetch the bairnies in;  
Bring them frae the Scaur Heid,  
Whaur they mak' sic din.  
Chase them frae the washin' pool,  
Thrang at skippin' stanes—

*Auld Granny Grey Pow,  
Gather hame the weans.*

The singer's voice sang this verse of the Poet of the Iron Road<sup>1</sup> so gaily that Cleg felt that his quarters for the night were assured. He was about to step within when a new voice spoke.

'Deed and it might serve ye better a deal, Poet Jock, gin ye wad set doon your feet and lift your Bible to tak' a lesson to yoursel', instead o' rantin' there at a gilravage o' vain sangs—aye, even wastin' your precious time in makkin' them, when ye might be either readin' the Company's rules or thinkin' about the concerns o' your never-dying sowl!'

'You haud your tongue, Auld Chairlie,' cried the singer, pausing a moment, but not turning round; 'gin ye hadna missed thae troots the nicht, and lost your otter to the keepers in Loch Spellanderie, ye wadna hae been sitting there busy wi' Second Chronicles!'

And again the singer took up his ranting melody:

Bring in Rab to get him washed,  
Weel I ken the loon,  
Canna do unless he be  
Dirt frae fit to croon.  
Tam and Wull are juist the same  
For a' I tak' sic pains—

*Auld Granny Grey Pow,  
Gather hame the weans.*

So the singer sang, and ever as he came to the refrain he cuddled

<sup>1</sup> The brave 'Surfaceman,' Mr. Alexander Anderson of Edinburgh, for a volume of whose collected railway verse many besides Cleg are waiting with eager expectation.

an imaginary fiddle under his chin and played it brisk and tauntingly like a spring :

*Auld Granny Grey Pow,  
Gather hame the weans.*

Then, before another word could be spoken, Cleg stepped inside. 'Guidnicht to ye a'!' he said politely.

The man who had been called Poet Jock took down his feet from the top of the stove so quickly that the legs of the chair slipped from under him, and he came down upon the floor of the carriage with a resounding thump. Auld Chairlie, a white-haired old man who sat under a lamp with a large book on his knee, also stood up so suddenly that the volume slipped to the floor.

'O mercy! Lord, preserve me, what's this?' he cried, his teeth chattering in his head as he spoke.

'Wha may you be and what do ye want?' asked poet Sandy, without, however, getting up from the floor.

'I'm juist Cleg Kelly frae the Sooth Back,' said the apparition.

'And whaur got ye that otter and troots?' broke in Auld Chairlie, who could not take his eyes off them.

'I got them in the loch. Did ye think they grew in the field, man?' retorted Cleg, whose natural man was rising within him at the enforced catechism.

'Preserve us a'—I thocht ye had been either the deil or a gamekeeper!' said Auld Chairlie, with intense earnestness; 'weel, I'm awesome glad ye are no a game watcher, at ony rate. We nicht maybe hae managed to gie the deil a bit fley, by haudin' the muckle Bible to his e'e. But gamekeepers are a' juist regairdless heathen loons that care neither for Kirk nor minister—except maybe an orra while at election time.'

'Aye, man, an' ye are Cleg Kelly? Where did ye 'Cleg' frae?' asked the poet, who contented himself jovially with his position in the corner of the floor, till a few cinders fell from the stove and made him leap to his feet with an alacrity which was quite astounding in so big a man. Then the reason why he had been content to sit still became manifest. For his head struck the roof of the little carriage with a bang which made him cower. Whereupon he sat down again, rubbing it ruefully, muttering to himself, 'There maun be the maist part o' a volume o' poems stuck to that roof already, and there gangs anither epic!'

When the Poet and Auld Chairlie had re-composed themselves in the little hut, Cleg proceeded to tell them all his adventures,

and especially all those which concerned Mistress McWalter of Loch Spellanderie, and the great swim across the water.

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### ADVENTURE XLVI.

#### A CHILD OF THE DEVIL.

‘WE’LL e’en hae yon trouts to our suppers yet!’ said Poet Jock. ‘Chairlie, man, pit on the pan. It’s wonderfu’ the works o’ a gracious Providence!’

And so in a trice the noble loch trouts were frying with a pat of butter and some oatmeal in the pan, and sending up a smell which mingled deliciously enough with that of the fried ham which already smoked upon an aschet by the fireside.

The good-hearted surfacemen at the Summit Hut seemed to take it for granted that Cleg was to remain with them. At least neither of them asked him any further questions. This might be because in the course of his story he had mentioned familiarly the name of Duncan Urquhart the goods guard, and the still greater one of Muckle Alick, the head porter at Netherby. And these to a railway man on the Port Road were as good as half-a-dozen certificates of character.

What a night it was in that wild place! The poet chanted his lays between alternate mouthfuls of ham and fried scones of heavenly toothsome-ness. Auld Chairlie said quite a lengthy prayer by way of asking a blessing. And the supplication would have continued a longer time still, but for Poet Jock’s base trick of rattling a knife and fork on a plate, which caused Auld Chairlie to come to an abrupt stoppage lest any unsportsmanlike march should be stolen upon him.

Finally, however, all started fair.

‘I wadna’ wonder gin thae troots were poached!’ said the poet, winking slyly at Cleg; ‘ye wadna’ believe what a set o’ ill-contrivin’ fallows there are in this countryside!’

‘As for me,’ said Auld Chairlie, ‘I can see naething wrang in catchin’ the bit things. Ye see it’s no only allowed, it’s commanded. Did ye never read how the birds in the air and the fishes in the flood were committed to oor faither Aaidam to tell the names o’ them? Noo, unless he gruppit them, how could he possibly tell their names? The thing’s clean ridiculous!’

‘Mony a decent man has gotten sixty days for believin’ that!’ cried the poet, between the mouthfuls.

In the middle of the meal the poet leaped up suddenly, checking himself, however, in the middle of his spring with a quick remembrance of the roof above him. 'Preserve us, laddie, ye are a' wat!'

'So would you,' quoth Cleg, who in the congenial atmosphere of the cabin had recovered all his natural briskness, 'gin ye had soomed Loch Spellanderie as weel as me! Even a pairish minister wad be wat then!'

'Aye,' said Auld Chairlie, sententiously, 'that's juist like your poet. He hears ye tell a' aboot soomin' a loch. But he never thinks that ye wad hae to wat your claes when ye did it.'

'But ye didna' speak aboot it ony mair than me, Auld Chairlie!' retorted Poet Jock.

'An' what for should I do that? I thoct the laddie maybe prefer't to 'bide wat!' said Auld Chairlie, with emphasis.

'Ye are surely growin' doited, Chairles,' said the poet; 'ye took the Netherby clearin' hoose clerk for the General Manager o' the line the day afore yesterday!'

'An' so micht onybody,' replied Auld Chairlie, 'upsetting blastie that he is! Sic a wame as the craitur cairries, wag-waggin' afore him. I declare I thoct he wad be either General Manager o' the line or the Lord Provist o' Glescae!'

'Haud your tongue, man Chairlie, and see if ye can own up, for yince! If we are to judge folk by their wames, gussy pig gruntin' in the trough wad be king o' men. But stop your haverin' and see if ye hae ony dry claes that ye can lend this boy. He'll get his death o' cauld if he lets them dry on him.'

But Auld Chairlie had nothing whatever in the way of change, except a checked red-and-white Sunday handkerchief for the neck.

'And I hae nocht ava!'

exclaimed the poet. 'Ye maun juist gang to your bed, my man, and I'll feed ye over the edge wi' a fork!'

But Cleg saw in the corner the old flour sack in which the surfaceman had imported his last winter's flour. The bag had long been empty.

'Is this ony use?' said Cleg. 'I could put this on!'

'Use!' cried the poet; 'what use can an auld flour sack be when a man's claes are wat?'

'Aweel,' said Cleg, 'ye'll see, gin ye wait. Railway folk dinna ken everything, though they think they do!'

So with that he cut a couple of holes at the corners, and made a still larger hole in the middle of the sack bottom. Then he

disrobed himself with the utmost gravity, drew the empty sack over his head, and put his arms through the holes in the corner.

'It only needs a sma' alteration at the oxters to fit like your very skin,' he said. Then he took up Auld Chairlie's table-knife and made a couple of slits beneath the arms, 'and there ye hae a very comfortable suit o' claes.'

The poet burst into a great laugh and smote his thigh. 'I never saw the match o' the loon!' he cried, joyously.

'They are nocht gaudy,' Cleg went on, as he seated himself at the corner of the table, having first spread his wet garments carefully before the stove, 'but it is fine an' airy suit for summer wear. The surtowt comes below the knee, so it's in the fashion. Lang-skirted coats are a' the go on Princes Street the noo. A' the lawyers wear them.'

At this point Cleg rose and gave an imitation of the walk and conversation of a gentleman of the long robe, as seen from the standpoint of the Sooth Back.

Once he had looked into Parliament House itself, and managed to walk twice round before 'getting chucked,' as he remarked. So he knew all about it.

He took an oily piece of cotton waste with which Poet Jock cleaned his lamps. He secured it about his head, so that it hung down his back for a wig. He put a penny in his eye, instead of the orthodox legal eyeglass. Then he set his hands in the small of his back, and began to parade up and down the centre of the old railway carriage in a very dignified manner, with the old sack waving behind him after the fashion of a gown.

He pretended to look down with a lofty contempt upon Poet Jock and Auld Chairlie, as they watched him open-mouthed.

'Who the devil are those fellows?' he said; 'lot of asses about. Everybody is an ass. Who's sitting to-day? Ha! old Bully-boy—bally old ass he is! Who's speaking? Young Cover-case—another bleating ass! Say, old chappie, come and let's have a drink, and get out of the way of the asses.'

It is to be feared that Cleg would next have gone on to imitate the clergy of his native city. But he was hampered by the fact that his opportunities for observation had been limited to the street. He had never been within a church door in his life. And that not so much because he would have stood a good chance of being turned out as a mischief-maker, but simply from natural aversion to an hour's confinement.

Then Cleg wrapped his old sack about him very tightly, and



assumed a fixed smile of great suavity. He approached the poet, who was stretching his long limbs in the upper bunk which occupied one side of the hut.

'Ah,' said Cleg, slowly wagging his head from side to side, 'and how do we find ourselves to-day? Better? Let me feel your pulse—Ah, just as I expected. Tongue—furry? Have you taken the medicine? What you need is strengthening food, and the treatment as before. See that you get it—blue mange, grouse pie, and the best champagne! And continue the treatment! *Good morning!*'

Cleg wrapped his sack closer about him as he finished, to express the slim surtout of the healing faculty, and, setting an old tea 'cannie' of tin upon his head to represent a tall hat, he bowed himself out with his best Canongate imitation of a suitable and effective 'bedside manner.'

There was no end to Cleg's entertainment when he felt that he had an appreciative audience. And as the comedy consisted not so much in what he said as in the perfect solemnity of his countenance, the charm of his bare arms meandering irresponsibly through the holes in the corner of the sack, and the bare legs stalking compass-like through its open mouth, Poet Jock laughed till he had to lie down on the floor in the corner. Even Auld Chairlie was compelled perforce to smile, though he often declared his belief that it was all vanity, and that Cleg was certainly a child of the devil.

Chairlie was specially confirmed in this opinion by Cleg's next characterisation.

'Did ye ever see the Tract Woman?' said Cleg, dropping for a moment into his own manner. 'I canna' bide her ava. There's them that we like to see comin' into our hooses—folk like Miss Celie, that is veesitor in oor district, or Big Smith, the Pleasance Missionary, even though he whiles gies us a lick wi' his knobby stick for cloddin' cats. But the Track Woman I canna bide. This is her!'

And he gathered up his sack very high in front of him, to express the damage which it would receive by contact with the dirt of Poet Jock's abode. Then he threw back his head and stuck out his chin, to convey an impression of extreme condescension.

'Good day, poor people,' he said, 'I have called to leave you a little tract. I don't know how you can live in such a place. Why don't you move away? And the stair is so dirty and sticky! It is really not fit for a lady to come up. What's this? What's

this'—(smelling)—‘chops! Chops are far too expensive and wasteful for people in your position. A little liver, now, or beef-bone——What did you say? “Get out of this!” Surely I did not hear you right! Do you know that I came here to do you good, and to leave you a little tract? Now, I pray you, do not let your angry passions rise. I will, however, do my duty, and leave a little tract. Read it carefully; I hope it will do you good. It is fitted to teach you how to be grateful for the interest that is taken in you by your betters!’

As soon as Cleg had finished, he lifted the skirts of his old sack still higher, tilted his nose yet more in the air, and sailed out, sniffing meanwhile from right to left and back again with extreme disfavour.

But as soon as he had reached the door his manner suffered a sea-change. He bounded in with a somersault, leaped to his feet, and pretended to look out of the door after the departing ‘Track Woman.’

‘O ye besom!’ he cried, ‘comin’ here nosing and advising—as stuffed wi’ stinkin’ pride as a butcher’s shop wi’ bluebottles in the last week o’ July! Dook her in the dub! Fling dead cats at her, and clod her wi’ cabbages and glaur! Pour dish-washin’s on her. Ah, the pridefu’ besom!’

And with this dramatic conclusion Cleg sank apparently exhausted into a chair, with the skirts of the sack sticking out in an elegant frill in front of him, and fanned himself gracefully with an iron shovel taken from the stove top, exactly as he had seen the young lady performers at the penny theatres do when they waited in the wings for their ‘turn.’

Great was the applause from Poet Jock, who lay almost in a state of collapse on the floor.

‘Boys O!’ he exclaimed feebly, ‘but ye are a lad!’

Auld Chairlie only shook his head, and repeated ‘I misdoot that ye are a verra child o’ the deevil!’

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## ADVENTURE XLVII.

### THE SLEEP OF JAMES CANNON, SIGNALMAN.

ON the morrow Cleg was up betimes. But not so early as Poet Jock and Auld Chairlie. His own clothes were pretty dry, but Cleg had been so pleased with the freedom and airiness of his ‘sack

suit,' as he called it, that, as it was a warm morning and a lonely place, he decided to wear it all day.

Cleg went out, and, starting from the side of the line, he ran light-foot to the top of a little hill, from whence he could look over a vast moorish wilderness—league upon league of purple heather, through which the railway had been cut and levelled with infinite but unremunerative art.

From horizon to horizon not a living thing could Cleg see except the moorbirds and the sheep. But over the woods to the east he could catch one glimpse of Loch Spellanderie, basking blue in the sunlight. He could not, however, see the farmhouse. But he rubbed his hands with satisfaction as he thought of swimming away from them all into the darkness the night before.

'I showed her wha was the man, I'm thinkin'!' he said. And there upon the heather-blooms Cleg Kelly flapped his thin arms against his sack and crowed like a chanticleer. Then in a few moments there came back from over the moor and loch a phantom cock-crow reduced to the airiest diminuendo. It was the tyrant of the Loch Spellanderie dunghill which spoke back to him.

'I'm richt glad I'm no there,' said Cleg, heartily.

Nevertheless he went down the hill again a little sadly, as though he were not quite sure, when he came to think about it, whether he was glad or not.

But on the whole it was perhaps as well that he was where he was, at least in his present costume.

When Cleg got back to the hut, he looked about for something to do till his friends returned. His active frame did not stand idleness well. He grew distracted with the silence and the wide spaces of air and sunshine about him. He longed to hear the thunderous rattle of the coal-carts coming out of the station of St. Leonards. He missed the long wolf's howl of the seasoned South Side coalman. In the morning, indeed, the whaups had done something to cheer him, wailing and crying to the peewits. But as the forenoon advanced even they went off to the loch-side pools, or dropped into the tufts of heather and were mute.

Cleg grew more and more tired of the silence. It deafened him, so that several times he had to go outside and yell at the top of his voice—simply, as it were, to relieve nature.

It happened that on the second occasion, as soon as he had finished yelling—that is, exhausted an entire vocabulary of hideous sounds—a train to Port Andrew broke the monotony. It did not

actually stop, because it was a passenger train and had already 'watered up' at Netherby. But Cleg was as pleased as if it had brought him a box of apples. He climbed up and sat cross-legged on the top of the hut in his sack, for all the world like an Indian idol; and the engine-driver was so astonished that he forgot to put the brake on till he was thundering headlong halfway down the incline on the western side of the Summit cabin.

But the stoker, a young man incapable of enthusiasms (as many of the very young are), picked up a lump of coal from the tender and threw it at Cleg with excellent aim. However, as the train was going slowly uphill at the time, Cleg caught it and set the piece of coal between his teeth. His aspect on this occasion was such as would fully have warranted Auld Chairlie in setting him down not as a child of the devil, but as the father of all the children of the devil.

The train passed, and Cleg was again in want of something to do. He could not sit there in the sun, and be slowly roasted with a piece of coal between his teeth, all for the benefit of the whaups. He thought with regret how he should like to sit, just as he was, on some towering pinnacle of the Scott monument where the police could not get him, and make faces at all the envious keelies in Edinburgh. To do this through all eternity would have afforded him much more pleasure than any realisation of more conventional presentations of the joys of heaven.

He descended and looked about him.

At the end of the little cabin he found a pitcher of tar, but no brush. He searched further, however, till he found it thrown carelessly away among the heather. Whereupon Cleg forthwith appointed himself house-painter-in-ordinary to the Port Andrew Railway Company, and attacked the Summit cabin. He laid the tar on thick and good, so that when the sun beat upon his handiwork, it had the effect of raising a smell which made Cleg's heart beat with the joy of reminiscence. It reminded him of a thousand things—of the brickyard on blistering afternoons, and also (when the perfume came most undiluted to his nose) of that district of Fountainbridge which has the privilege of standing upon the banks of the Forth and Clyde canal, and of containing several highly respectable and well-connected glue factories. Cleg had once gone there to 'lag for a boy,' who had offended his dignity by 'trapping' him at school in the spelling of the word 'coffin.'

Cleg had spelled it, simply and severely, 'kofn.'

The boy from Fountainbridge, however, had spelled it correctly. Not only so, but he had been elated about the matter—very foolishly and rashly so, indeed.

‘For,’ said Cleg, ‘it’s easy for him. His father is a joiner, and makes coffins to his trade. Besides, he had a half-brither that died last week. He might easy be able to spell “coffin”!’

To prevent the pride which so surely comes before a fall, Cleg waited for the ‘coffin’ boy and administered the fall in person—indeed, several of them, and mostly in puddles.

He was therefore agreeably reminded of his visit to Fountainbridge whenever he stirred up the pitch from the bottom and the smell rose to his nostrils particularly solid and emulous. He shut his eyes and coughed. He dreamed that he was back and happily employed in ‘downing’ the orthographist of Fountainbridge upon the flowery banks of the Union Canal.

It was after ten o’clock in the evening before Poet Jock came in sight. He had been on a heavy job with a break-down gang on the Muckle Fleet incline. All day long he had been rhyming verses to the rasp of pick and the scrape of shovel. Sometimes so busy was he, that he had barely time to take his mate’s warning and leap to the side, before the engine came leaping round the curve scarcely thirty lengths of rail away. But Poet Jock was entirely happy. Probably he might have travelled far and never known greater exhilaration than now, when he heard the engine surge along the irons, while he tingled with the thought that it was his strong arms which kept the track by which man was joined to man and city linked to city.

A fine, free, broad-browed, open-eyed man was Poet Jock. And his hand was as heavy as his heart was tender—as, indeed, many a rascal had found to his cost. Those who know railwaymen best, are surest that there does not exist in the world so fine a set of workers as the men whose care is the rails and the road, the engines and the guard vans, the platforms, goods sheds, and offices of our common railways.

A railway never sleeps. A thousand watchful eyes are at this moment glancing through the bull’s-eyes of the driver’s cab. A thousand strong hands are on the driving lever. Aloft, in wind-beaten, rain-battered signal-boxes, stand solitary men who, with every faculty on the alert, keep ten thousand from instant destruction. How tense their muscles, how clear their brains must be, as they pull the signal and open the points! That

brown hand gripping lever number seventeen, instead of number eighteen within six inches of it, is all that preserves three hundred people from instant and terrible death. That pound or two of pressure on the signal chain which sent abroad the red flash of danger, stopped the express, in which sat our wives and children, and kept it from dashing at full speed into that over-shunted truck which a minute ago toppled over and lay squarely across the racer's path.

And the surfacemen, of whom are Auld Chairlie and Poet Jock. Have you thought of how, night and day, they patrol every rod of iron path—how with clink of hammer and swing of arm they test every length of rail—how they dash the rain out of their eyes that they may discern whether the sidelong pressure of the swift 'express,' or the lumbering thunder of the overladen 'goods,' have not bent outwards the steel rail, forced it from its 'chair,' or caused the end of the length to spring upward like a fixed bayonet after the weight has passed over it?

A few men standing by the line side as the train speeds by. What of them? Heroes? They look by no means like it. Lazy fellows, rather, leaning on their picks and shovels when they should be working. Or a solitary man far up among the hills, idly clinking the metals with his hammer as he saunters along through the stillness.

These are the surfacemen—and that is all most know of them. But wait. When the night is blackest, the storm grimmest, there is a bridge out yonder which has been weakened—a culvert strained where a stream from the hill side has undermined the track. The trains are passing every quarter of an hour from each direction. Nevertheless, a length of rail must be lifted and laid during that time. A watch must be kept. The destructiveness of nature must be fought in the face of wetness and weariness. And, in spite of all, the train may come too quick round the curve. Then there follows the usual paragraph in the corner of the local paper if the accident has happened in the country, a bare announcement of the coroner's inquest if it be in the town.

A porter is crushed between the platform and the moving carriages; a goods guard killed at the night shunt in the yard. Careless fellow! Serves him right for his recklessness. Did he not know the risk when he engaged? Of course he did—none better. But then he got twenty-two shillings a week to feed wife and bairns with for taking that risk. And if he did not take it,

are there not plenty who would be glad of the chance of his empty berth?

And what then? Why, just this: there is one added to the thousands killed upon the railways of our lands—one stroke, a little figure 1 made at the foot of the unfinished column, a grave, a family in black, a widow with six children moved out of the company's house on which grow the roses which he planted about the door that first year, when all the world was young and a pound a week spelled Paradise. The six children have gone into a single room, and she takes in washing, and is hoping by and by to get the cleaning of a board school, if she be very fortunate.

To blame? Who said that any one was to blame? Of course not. Are we not all shareholders in the railways, and do we not grumble vastly when our half-yearly dividend is low? So lengthen the hours of these over-paid, lazy fellows in corduroys—lengthen that column over which the Board of Trade's clerk lingers a moment ere he adds a unit. O well, what matter? They are only statistics filed for reference in a Government office.

But while Cleg waited for Poet Jock something else was happening at Netherby.

It was a bitter night there, with a westerly wind sweeping up torrents of slanting rain through the pitchy dark. Netherby Junction was asleep, but it was the sleep which draws near the resurrection. The station-master was enjoying his short after-supper nap in the armchair by the fire. For the down boat train from Port Andrew and Duncan Urquhart's goods train would pass each other at Netherby Junction at 10.5 P.M.

The signal-box up yonder in the breast of the storm was almost carried away. So tall it rose that the whole fabric bent and shivered in each fierce gust which came hurtling in from the Atlantic. James Cannon, the signalman of Netherby West, was not asleep. His mate was ill, but not ill enough to be quite off duty. James Cannon had applied for a substitute, but headquarters was overtaxed for spare men and had not responded. Netherby was considered a light station to work, and the duty would no doubt be done somehow.

James Cannon had been on duty since six in the morning—sixteen hours already at the levers. Then he had also been up nearly all the night before with a weakly and fretful child. But the company's regulations could not be expected to provide for that.

James Cannon, however, was not asleep. He had his eyes

fixed on the distant signal on the high bank, as he caught the gleam of it wavering through the storm. That was the way the boat express would have to come in a few minutes more. The electric needle quivered and clicked behind him. The signalman thought of the light upon the Little Ross, which he used to see from the green Borgue shore when he was a boy. He had always looked out at it every night before he went to sleep. The distant signal on the high bank seemed now to flash and turn like a lighthouse. Was that the Little Ross he was looking at? Surely he could hear the chafing of the Solway tides. Was that not his mother bidding him lie down and sleep? James Cannon saw the distant signal no more. The lights of other days beckoned him, and he attended to their signal.

Below in the left luggage office stood Muckle Alick. He also was taking his mate's place at that night's express. He had asked away in order to visit his sweetheart, Alick knew, though certainly his mate had not mentioned it in his application to the station master. Many a time had he done the same himself for the sake of Mirren Terreggles.

Muckle Alick was arranging the parcels—which were to be forwarded, and which were to be delivered on the morrow. He laid them neatly on long high benches at opposite sides of the room, with the larger ones below on the floor. There was no work of Muckle Alick's doing which was not perfectly done, and as featly and daintily as a girl twitches her crochet needles among the cotton.

So engrossed was Alick in this work that it was five minutes past ten before he looked up at the clock—a cheap one which he had bought from a Jew pedlar, and fixed upon the wall himself—'to see the time to go home by,' his mates said. The clock told him it was time to go home already.

He started up and rushed out. The London express was due coming from the Irish boat! It passed Netherby without stopping, running on to the other line for thirty miles, which from the Junction was a single one. Duncan Urquhart's heavily laden goods ought already to have passed. It was James Cannon's duty to keep back the express till he could turn the goods on to a siding, so that the rails might be kept clear for the passage of the express five minutes later.

Muckle Alick started up in instant affright. He had not heard Duncan Urquhart's heavy train go rumbling by.



## ADVENTURE XLVIII.

MUCKLE ALICK SEES THE DISTANT SIGNAL STAND AT CLEAR.

ALICK rushed out without waiting to put on his cap. He glanced up at the signal-box. It seemed dim and dusky. 'James Cannon has let his lamp go low!' muttered Alick to himself.

At that moment he heard first one warning whistle, and then two. He was not quite sure about the last, for the wind was shrieking its loudest, and it was not easy to be certain about anything.

He looked up and down the line, shading his eyes from the rain with his hand.

Great God of Heaven! The goods train was not yet off the single line. Both signals were standing at clear, and the points were not shifted. The boat express was thundering down the hill from Port Andrew at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and would be through the Junction in a minute. And there upon the single metals right ahead would be Duncan Urquhart with his heavy goods train.

Muckle Alick snatched up a huge bar of metal, which was used in forcing round the cranks when they reversed the engines on the turn-table by the engine house, the same which little Hugh had almost spent his life in trying to observe more nearly.

With this ponderous tool in his hand Muckle Alick rushed along to the facing points, whence Duncan Urquhart's goods train might possibly be guided upon the proper metals ere the express rushed past. As he ran he saw Duncan's headlights coming, and the thunder of the express was also in his ears. He shouted with all his power, but the wind whirled away Muckle Alick's cries as though they had been baby Gavin's.

On came the goods train, laden with heavy merchandise and coals, beating up slowly against the westerly wind. At that moment the rending screech of the express pierced to his heart. Another moment and it must dash into the train driven by Duncan Urquhart.

Muckle Alick found the points open. Throwing his great crowbar forward he inserted it beneath the length of rail, and with the strength of Samson he moved the whole section over to the other side. He could not, of course, lock the points, as the signalman could have done. But Alick held them tight with his lever, while the heavy goods train bumped along, passing over the im-

properly joined points with a terrible jolting which almost dislocated his arms. But still Muckle Alick held on. For he knew that the lives of a hundred men and women depended upon the sureness of his hand.

The goods train was a long one and it jolted slowly past. It was not till he saw the hind light of the guard's van passing him with a swing, that Muckle Alick's heart gave a joyful leap. But just as the last van went past, with a roar and a rush of fire-lighted smoke the express leaped by. A moment before the released points had flown back to their place. The way was clear. But something, it is thought the iron framework of the catcher on the postal car, caught Muckle Alick and jerked him thirty yards from where he had been standing. Without so much as a quiver, the express flew out again into the dark, her whistle screaming a death-knell and the black tempest hurtling behind her.

None had seen Muckle Alick. None knew of his deed of heroism, save only Duncan Urquhart, who, unconscious of danger, had cried cheerfully as he passed, 'What are ye hanging on to a post there for, Alick?'

It was fully a quarter of an hour later that Urquhart went to look for Muckle Alick. He thought he would walk the first part of his way home with him. It was always wholesome and always cheery to walk with Muckle Alick, even when he was going home from a long spell of overtime.

At that moment the station master woke up with a start. *It was twenty minutes past ten. The Express——!*

He rushed out. The signal-box was quite dark. Duncan Urquhart was coming up the platform alone with his coat over his arm. He called out to the station master:

'Is your signal-man deid, or only sleepin'?''

A few moments after James Cannon awoke from a pleasant dream of the Ross Lighthouse.

'Get up, man!' cried the station master, standing over him with a lantern; 'God kens how many lives ye hae lost through your ill deeds!'

Dazed and bewildered, James Cannon arose to the damning fact that the boat train was past, and he knew well that he had never altered the signals or set the points.

Five minutes later Duncan Urquhart found Muckle Alick. He was lying half on and half over the embankment of the cattle shipping bank, where the express had tossed him like a feather.

'Oh, what's wrang, what's wrang, Alick?' cried Duncan Urquhart in terror.

'It's a' richt, Duncan,' said Muckle Alick, slowly but very distinctly. 'I gripped the points and held them till ye won by!'

'Can ye bide a minute, Alick?' said Duncan tenderly.

'Ow aye,' said the wounded man, 'dinna fash yoursel'. There's nae hurry—Mirren wasna' expectin' me!'

Faster far than his own train had passed the points, Duncan Urquhart sped back to the station.

'Alick's lying killed doon on the cattle bank!' he cried. 'Help us wi' that board!'

And, rushing into the empty waiting-room, he laid hold of a newly erected partition which had recently been set up to keep the draughts from the passengers.

It resisted his strength, but with the station master to help him, and 'a One, Two, Three,' it yielded, and the men tore down the platform with it.

With the help of poor dazed James Cannon and another, they laid the giant tenderly upon it. But they had to wait for other two, hastily summoned from the nearest railway houses, before they dared try to lift Muckle Alick.

'Does it hurt, Alick?' asked Duncan of Inverness, gently, like a Highland man.

'It's no that sair,' said Alick, as quietly, 'but juist try no to be ower lang wi' me!'

They carried him to the left-luggage office, into which, a few weeks before, he had taken the children whom, at the peril of his life, he had saved from death. They were going to lay down the partition with its load upon the table on which he had been arranging the insured parcels half an hour before.

'Put me on the bench,' said Alick, calmly, 'dinna meddle the parcels. They are a' ready to gang oot wi' the first delivery the morn.'

So, even as he bade them, on the bench they laid Alick down. What like he was I know, but I am not going to tell. His wife, Mirren, might chance to read it.

There were tears running down Duncan Urquhart's face. The station master had already run for a doctor.

'Dinna greet, Duncan,' said Alick. 'The boat train won by a' richt, and I manned to haud the points for ye.'

But Duncan Urquhart could answer him no word. In the

corner sat James Cannon with his head on his hands, rocking himself to and fro in speechless agony of soul.

'Oh, I wuss it had been me,' he wailed. 'I wuss it had been me!'

'Hoot na, James,' said Alick. 'It's better as it is—ye hae a young family.'

Then, as if he had been thinking it over,

'Duncan,' he said, 'Duncan, promise me this—ye'll no let Mirren see me. Mind ye, Mirren is no to see me. I dinna want her to think o' me like this.'

'She was aye sae taen up aboot me, ye see,' he added apologetically, after a little pause.

The doctor came. He bent over Alick. He moved him tenderly, this way and that. Then he ordered all out of the left-luggage office, except Duncan Urquhart and the station master's wife, a quiet motherly woman.

Then, while the doctor did his duty, Alick sank into a kind of stupor. Presently he woke from it with a little start.

'Doctor, is this you?' he said; 'this is terrible kind o' ye. But it's a cauld nicht for you to be oot o' your bed so late—and you wi' a sair hoast!'

'Wheesht, Alick!' said the doctor. And said no more for a little. For, like every one else, he loved the soft-hearted giant.

Then Alick beckoned the station master to him from the door of the left-luggage office, where he stood nervously clasping and unclasping his hands. The station master came and bent his head.

'The boat train,' whispered Muckle Alick, 'ye'll hae to enter her in the schedule five meenites late. But ye can say that she passed Netherby wi' the signals standing at clear.'

He was silent a moment. Then he looked up again.

'Mind ye there's to be nocht said aboot it in the papers. You'll see to that, will ye no. It's my wish. An' if the company likes to do aught, it'll aye be a help to Mirren.'

There was a sound of sobbing at the door, and the station master suddenly shoved the youngest porter out on the platform with his foot.

'Has—ony—body gaen to tell Mirren?' asked Alick in a little.

The doctor nodded. He had, in fact, sent his own coachman to Sandyknowes with a gig.

'Puir Mirren,' said Alick again, 'I'm some dootsome that she'll tak' this hard. She was na looking for it, like.'

He looked about apologetically again.

'She was that sair set on me, ye see—maybe wi' us haein' nae bairns, ye ken.'

He was silent a little while, and then he said, more brightly, 'There's three comed noo, though. Maybe they'll be a blessin' to her. The Lord sent them to her, I'm thinkin'. He wad ken o' this aforehand, nae doot!'

Suddenly he held up his hand, and there was a light shining like a lamp in his eyes.

'Hearken! that's the whistle!' he cried. 'Are the signals clear?'

There was no train in the station nor near it.

Muckle Alick went on. He lifted his head and looked through the open door as one looks ahead under his hand when the sun is strong.

'I can see the distant signal. It is standing at clear!' he said, and sank back.

And thus the soul of Muckle Alick passed out of the station—with the distant signal standing at clear.

They brought the little wife in to him a quarter of an hour after. Already her face seemed to have shrunk to half its size and was paler than Alick's own. The doctor had him wrapt delicately and reverently in the station master's wife's fairest linen. The face was untouched and beautiful, and as composed as it was on Sacrament Sabbaths when he carried in the elements at the head of the session, as it is the custom for the elders to do in the Cameronian Kirk.

His wife went up to him quietly and laid her hand on his broad white brow. 'My man—my ain man!' she said. And she bent down and touched it, not with her lips but with her cheek.

She looked up at the station master's wife.

'He aye liked me to do that!' she said, smiling a little, as it were, bashfully.

And in all the room, where now stood ministers and doctors, men and women that loved him well, hers were the only dry eyes that dark midnight.

'I wad like to get him hame the night, if it's nae great trouble till ye,' she said; 'I think I wad be mair composed gin I had him hame to me the night!'

So they took her dead home to her at quiet Sandyknowes. They carried him through between the beds of dusky flowers and

laid him in his own chamber. Then they left her alone. For so she desired it. The wandering children, Hugo and Gavin, were asleep in the next room. So Mirren watched her man all that night, and never took her eyes off the broad noble brow, save once when little Gavin woke and cried. Then she rose calmly and prepared him a bottle of milk, mixing it with especial care. As she did so, she raised her eyes and looked out into the dark. And there on the brae face was the light of the distant signal shining like a star in the midst of the brightening sky of morn.

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### ADVENTURE XLIX.

#### CLEG COLLECTS TICKETS.

CLEG KELLY had long finished the tarring of the hut at the Summit. Poet Jock had not come home, though it was after ten at night. Auld Chairlie wandered to and fro in front of the house and out on the muir at the back, waiting upon him and complaining that the supper would be spoiled. Cleg busied himself with 'reddin' up' till it grew too dark to see. That is, he carried all the old mouldy boots to a moss-hole and sank them out of sight. Then he arranged the useful articles each upon its own shelf round the walls, and the bunks were never so well made before nor the stove so bright.

But not that night, nor yet for three nights, did Poet Jock return. It was seven o'clock on the evening of the third day when he arrived. He came walking up the Big Cutting with his head sunk on his breast, and he did not even look up when Cleg called to him. He came in slowly, and instead either of explaining, inquiring heartily for supper, or sniffing as usual at the fragrant steam of the frying pan, he threw himself down on the wooden shelf which constituted his bed.

'What has happened to ye, Poet Jock? Where hae ye been? Ye'll be reported, as sure as daith,' said Auld Chairlie, after silent contemplation of this marvel for full five minutes. 'Hae ye been fu' or has she gi'en you up?'

The last was a question prompted by the fleeting nature of Poet Jock's loves, and the ever recurring crisis through which his muse had to pass before he could settle upon a worthy successor to the latest faithless fair.

But Poet Jock lay still and made no answer.

'Are ye no for ony supper?' said Cleg, practically. He was now as familiar and free of the little cabin of the Summit as if he had been the poet's twin brother—a little more so, in fact, for Jock was not on speaking terms with his brother. To tell the truth, his brother and he had had a fight on Monday fortnight at the level crossing—the subject of contention being the minister's sermon the Sabbath before. The theology of Poet Jock prevailed. His logic was most convincing. He 'downed' his brother three times. But though his brother owned that he had had enough of theology, he had not since visited at the hut on the Summit. But for all that they continued to sit side by side on Sabbaths in the kirk, and to look on the family psalm-book, taking it as usual in turns to find the places and shutting the book unanimously when a paraphrase was given out.

It was now the fourth day of Cleg's sojourn at the hut. Every day he had gone up to the top of the craigs that looked towards Loch Spellanderie. And each day his resolve never to go near the place again because of the faithlessness of woman, sensibly weakened.

But he had something else to think about now. For since he came into the domains of the kindly surfacemen, Cleg had seen nothing so mysterious as the obstinate refusal of the Poet to take any supper.

Auld Chairlie tried again.

'Look you here,' he said, 'either you tell's what is the maitter wi' ye, or I'll send doon wi' the late passenger for the doctor to come up the first thing the morn's mornin'!'

Poet Jock groaned, but said nothing for some minutes.

'Chaps,' he said at last, 'I may as weel tell ye. Muckle Alick at Netherby was killed hauding the points to let by the boat train. And his wee bit wife's a widow the nicht! I hae been at Netherby lettin' a man off to fill his place.'

Auld Chairlie dropped the tin platter which was in his hand.

'O Lord,' he said, 'could ye no hae ta'en ony o' the lave o' us? It wadna hae made so verra muckle differ—. But Alick——'

He stood still contemplating the gap that there was in the world.

'That's what they hae been crying at me off the engine the last twa days, but I'm gettin' that deaf I couldna hear!'

But Cleg was prompt in action as ever.

'Guid nicht, lads,' he said, 'I'm gaun doon to Netherby to see gin I can be ony use.'

Poet Jock started up from his bunk, instinctively guarding his head from the roof even in the midst of his distress of mind.

'What hae ye to do wi' it?' he cried, his voice sounding angrily, though he was not angry.

'The twa bairns I telled ye aboot are in Muckle Alick's hoose. He saved their lives, and I'm gaun doon the noo to see what I can do for them.'

'Ye canna gang that gate, man. Ye hae nae claes fittin' for a funeral!' said Chairlie. 'Ye hae nocht but that auld sack!'

'I'm no carin',' stoutly asserted Cleg, 'I'm gaun doon to see if I can help. It's no the funeral I'm carin' for, it's what's to come after.'

Poet Jock got up and began cautiously to forage on all the shelves.

'A' my things are awesome big across,' he said, 'but maybe there will be eneuch amang us to fit ye oot.'

Cleg's wardrobe had dwindled to a shirt and a pair of trousers. He had lost his cap in Loch Spellanderie.

But Auld Chairlie, in spite of his previous want of success, found him a pair of socks and a pair of boots—which, though they were not 'marrows' or neighbours, were yet wearable enough. Cleg treated himself to a sleeved waistcoat, which, by merely shifting the buttons, became a highly useful garment. It had been exposed for some time to the weather, and when Cleg saw it, it was mounted upon two sticks, out in the little patch of cornland which Poet Jock had sown at the back of the cabin, upon a quarter acre of ground which the company had included within its wire fence with some idea of constructing a siding some day, when the traffic increased.

'Where gat ye that braw waistcoat?' queried Poet Jock when he came in, looking admiringly at the remarkable change in Cleg's appearance.

'O I just changed claes wi' the craw-bogle!' replied Cleg with a quiet complacency, which became him like his new garment.

'Dod,' said Auld Chairlie, 'it's a maist remarkable improvement, I declare.'

Poet Jock gave Cleg a grey woollen shirt with a collar attached which had washed too small for him, but which still reached nearly to Cleg's feet. He added a red-and-green tie of striking beauty (guaranteed to kill up to sixty yards), and an old railway cap, which had been a castaway of some former occupant of the cabin.



'There noo,' he said, when Cleg was finally arrayed. 'Ye are nane so ill put on! Ye micht e'en gang to the funeral. I hae seen mair unfaceable folk mony a time. I'll get ye doon on the late express, that is, if it is no Sulky Jamie that's in chairge o' her.'

Sulky Jamie was the name of a guard who withheld his hand from any work of mercy, if it involved the least irregularity. He was an incomparably faithful servant to the railway company of Port Andrew. But he could not be said to be popular among his fellow servants along the line.

So Poet Jock, seeing that Cleg was bent upon his quest, withstood him no more. But, instead, he walked all the long way down the incline with him to Dunnure station, and there waited to pick up a 'chance of a ride' on the night passenger. For no one in the cabin had a farthing of money. Poet Jock, indeed, never had any four days after pay day, and Auld Chairlie always sent his down to be banked, saving only what had to be paid monthly to Sanders Bee, the shopkeeper at the Dunnure huts, for their provisions.

'I canna trust mysel' when there's siller in the hoose!' said Auld Chairlie, who knew himself to be a brand plucked from the burning, and still glowing a little below the surface.

But it was with great good hope that Poet Jock walked with Cleg to Dunnure, in order to arrange a free passage for him down to Netherby.

The last 'stopping' passenger before the boat train was late, and they had a good while to wait in the ill-lighted station.

But it came at last, and lo! Sulky Jamie was in charge.

Poet Jock went boldly up to his van and tackled him. He stated the case with eloquence and lucidity. He argued with him, as Sulky Jamie moved to and fro, swinging his lantern and never looking at him.

But the guard was incorruptible, as indeed he ought to have been. No tramp should come on his train so long as he was the guard of it.

Whereupon Poet Jock, stung to the quick, told Sulky Jamie his opinion of him. He said that when it came his time to leave the line, there would be a hurrah which would run along the metals from Port Andrew to Netherby. He further informed him that there was one testimonial which would be subscribed with enthusiasm among his mates—a coffin for Sulky Jamie. But even that only on condition that he would promptly engage to occupy it. Poet Jock ended by offering to prepare him for burial on the

spot, and was in the act of declaring that he would put all these things into rhyme when the guard blew his whistle.

Cleg was nowhere to be seen, but Sulky Jamie had had his eyes wide open while he listened to the poet. He blew his whistle again, waved the lamp, and stopped the train as it was moving out of the station. He plunged into the forward van, which was sacred to the 'through' luggage. In a moment Cleg came out with a fling which sent him head first upon the platform. A white-haired military-looking man looking out of the next carriage laughed loudly, and clapped his hands with glee.

This act of Sulky Jamie's aroused Poet Jock to fury.

'Wait,' he cried, 'wait till the fast day an' I'll settle wi' ye, ye muckle swine, pitchin' oot the bit boy like that.'

But Sulky Jamie was unmoved.

'I'll be pleased to see ye on the fast day or ony ither day. But I'll hae nae tramps on my train!' said he, as he swung himself on board.

But, had he known it, he was carrying one at that moment. For it so happened that a Pullman carriage had been invalidated from the morning boat train owing to a heated axle and an injury to the grease box. Now the resources of the Port Andrew fitting shop, though adequate for all ordinary purposes, were not sufficient to deal with the constitution of such a delicate and high-bred work of art as a bogie Pullman.

So Cleg waited till he saw the guard at Dunnure station raise his hand to blow his whistle. Then he darted sideways, in and out among the carriages, and before the train was properly in motion he was lying at full length on the framework of the bogie part of the Pullman.

With a growl and a roar the train started. Cleg's heart beat quickly. He was jolted this way and that. The dust and small stones swept up by the draught under the train nearly blinded him. But Cleg hung on desperately. He had determined at all hazards to travel upon Sulky Jamie's train. So the boy clutched the bars tighter and twined his feet more firmly round the bogie, determined to win his passage to Netherby in spite of all the ill-natured guards in the world.

Indeed, the jarring laugh of the man with the white moustache when he was thrown out at Dunnure station, rankled much more in his small heathen heart than the hard blows of Sulky Jamie.

'What was his business wi' it?' Cleg demanded of himself

half a dozen times, during that interminable period before they came to the next station.

The train stopped at last, and Cleg dashed the wet locks off his brow and cuddled his beam closer. He could stand it out now, he thought. He was congratulating himself on being in Netherby in a few minutes, when he heard the military voice above him.

'Guard,' it said, 'the boy you threw out of the train at Dunnure got in below the empty Pullman. I think he is in there now.'

Then Sulky Jamie swore loudly and emphatically. Cleg could hear him swinging himself down from the platform upon the line.

The light of the lantern would show him the bars and wheels of the forward bogie.

But Cleg did not wait for the arrival of Sulky Jamie. He dropped down and sped out at the dark side of the station, with bitter anger in his heart against the interfering military man. As he looked down from the wire paling he saw the deserted platform of Newton Edward, and a vengeful thought struck him. He ran quickly round the stern light of the train and climbed upon the platform. A lantern was sitting on a barrow. The station master was talking to the engine driver far away at the end, for the late boat train was always long. The guard was routing out tramps beneath the Pullman.

With sudden determination Cleg pulled the stem of his cap over his eyes, and buttoned the sleeved waistcoat of railway velveteen closer about him. Then he took the lantern in hand. He was going to pay his debt to that evil-conditioned military man with the white moustache.

He could see him now, sitting at his ease, and trying to read his paper by the light of the miserable oil lamp, fed with scanty drains of dirty, half-melted oil, which to this day is all that is supplied as an illuminant by the Port Andrew Railway Company.

Cleg opened the door smartly.

'Ticket, sir!' he said briskly.

The military man put his hand in his side pocket, and handed out his ticket without looking up, with the ease and freedom of a well-seasoned traveller. He never took his eyes off his paper.

'Netherby—right, sir!' said Cleg Kelly, ticket collector.

Then Cleg went to the nearest compartment and promptly jumped in. It was half full of sleepy commercial travellers, who took little notice of the curiously attired boy.

Cleg could hear the tramp of his enemy as he came up from routing below the Pullman. It sounded sulkier than ever upon the platform.

'Did you not nab him?' cried the voice of the military man from his carriage window.

'None of your gammon!' replied the other voice. And the whistle sounded promptly.

The temper of Sulky Jamie was distinctly ruffled.

The train ran on down to Netherby. There the tickets were taken at the little platform to which Muckle Alick had so often run, late and early, with lamp in hand. It was a sleepy emergency man from the head offices who took the tickets in Cleg's compartment. He lumped them all together, and paid no attention whatever to the yellow first-class through ticket among its green brethren, which Cleg handed to him with such a natural air of loafish awkwardness.

Clang went the door. But the window was down for air, and Cleg could hear the angry accents of Sulky Jamie further down the train.

'Nonsense! Your ticket took at the last station! More o' your gammon, like enough. Find that ticket or pay for the journey from Port Andrew—seven-and-nine! And look something slippy, that's more! I can't keep my train waiting all day on the like of you, and the express due in twenty minutes.'

Cleg could not catch the answer of the military man. But the guard's reply was clear.

'I don't care if ye were the Prince of Wales. Pay up or I'll give ye in charge!'

The train started down to the main platform. And Cleg had the door open before the commercials in the corner were more than half awake. He slipped out, and ran back down the platform instead of up. At the corner stood James Cannon's signal box, by the side of a white bridge. Cleg swarmed up the pole at the corner, set a foot lightly on the white painted palings, and dropped like a cat upon the road.

He was a modest boy, and did not desire to give any trouble. But he thought of the military man with joy in his heart.

'Now I guess we're about quits!' he said.

*(To be continued.)*

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CLARISSA FURIOSA.<sup>1</sup>

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER V.

GUY BEHAVES VERY WELL.

FINE weather cannot last for ever anywhere, and if it lasts for three consecutive weeks in the depth of winter, in latitude 43° N. and within a short distance of a lofty range of mountains, those who have enjoyed it ought certainly not to grumble when it breaks. However, they always do grumble, and on a certain January afternoon the language used respecting the climate by the frequenters of the English Club at Pau was becoming too forcible for exact reproduction. A little knot of them had collected beside one of the tall windows of that rather handsome establishment, and they were gazing out indignantly at the driving rain, the muddy Place Royale, and the drenched, draggled passers-by.

‘About the biggest fraud in Europe, I call it!’ said one malcontent. ‘Why the deuce people who have comfortable homes of their own in England should come out here to be soaked to the bones and chilled to the marrow the doctors alone know! I’m bound to go wherever they choose to send my wife; but I shall tell them pretty straight what I think of *this* place when I get back.’

‘You won’t make ’em feel ashamed of themselves,’ observed his neighbour gloomily. ‘My belief is that they shunt the lot of us because they don’t want us to die upon their hands, and because they know that this sort of thing is enough to kill a horse.’

‘It *does* kill a horse,’ chimed in a third: ‘anyhow, it has

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pretty well killed mine, I know. What else can you expect where there are no decent stables to be had for love or money? Well, I shall know better than to hire an infernally expensive house for six months in such a vile hole again—that's one thing!

'Oh, come!' protested brisk, bald-headed little Colonel Curtis, who, in his character of a resident at Pau, felt these remarks to be more or less personally offensive; 'you can't expect to get a rainless winter nearer home than Nubia. Why don't you go to Nubia?—and be hanged to you! What I maintain is that Pau isn't to be beaten in Europe. Just you try the Riviera, and see how you like the *mistral*!'

'At least one may count upon meeting one's friends at Cannes, growled Mr. Samuels, a black-bearded, overdressed Hebrew who, having made an enormous fortune in the cotton trade, had espoused an earl's daughter and basked habitually in the smiles of highly placed personages; 'one doesn't feel like an outcast and an exile there.'

'Of course,' said Colonel Curtis, with deadly calmness, 'I can't tell how you would feel, or how you ought to feel, in decent society, Samuels, and I don't pretend to know who your friends may be; but I do know that our visitors' list this winter includes representatives of the best blood in England.'

He proceeded to enumerate these distinguished beings, recovering his good humour a little as he did so; for he loved both his adopted place of residence and the aristocracy of his native land, and it gladdened his heart to think that the former should be patronised in such respectable numbers by the latter. 'And then there are the Luttrells, whom we have with us every season,' he concluded. 'I suppose even Samuels would deign to shake hands with a cabinet minister—that is, if the cabinet minister had no objection.'

A good-natured bystander, perceiving that the atmosphere was highly charged with electricity and that there would be a row presently unless somebody intervened, was disinterested enough to start one of those subjects which are always sure to promote general harmony.

'The Luttrells are pretty nearly broke, I hear. Is it true, Colonel, that they have sent for Guy to marry him to that girl who is staying with them? And will she really have twenty thousand a year? Somebody told me, the other day, that she will come into any amount of money when her uncle dies.'

Colonel Curtis, charmed at being referred to as an authority upon matters of social importance, forgot his incipient quarrel with the purse-proud Jew and assumed an air of judicious reserve.

‘It is quite impossible to say,’ he replied, ‘what Miss Dent may or may not be worth eventually. Her father, as I dare say you know, was very well off; her uncle, whose wife is an invalid, may live for another twenty or thirty years—in fact, I believe he is a trifle my junior—so that there is the possibility of his marrying a second time and having children. I don’t care to chatter about the family affairs of an old friend like Lady Luttrell; but it stands to reason that she would not be very sorry if her eldest son were to take a fancy to a young lady whose prospects are, to say the least of them, hopeful.’

‘Especially as, by all accounts, her eldest son has not shown himself a particularly hopeful specimen so far,’ remarked one of the Colonel’s hearers. ‘Had to leave the Guards in rather a hurry, hadn’t he?’

‘He has given his parents some anxiety, no doubt,’ answered Colonel Curtis, who was barely acquainted with Guy and knew no more of the inmates of the Château de Grancy than everybody in Pau knew; ‘but there is nothing against his character—nothing at all. He has sown his wild oats, that’s all, like the rest of us—like the rest of us!’

The little man twirled up his moustache, sighed retrospectively, swayed from his toes to his heels, and endeavoured, not without success, to look as if he had been a sad dog once upon a time. As for Guy Luttrell, his claims to that distinction were tolerably notorious, and people who were in smart society, or who wished it to be believed that they were, had to prove their intimate acquaintance with his peccadilloes, real and suspected. For the next ten minutes, therefore, these unoccupied gentlemen forgot to curse the rain, and were as happy as if they had been an equal number of the opposite sex round a tea-table or a wash-tub.

Their pleasant talk was interrupted by the subject of it, who strolled into the room and asked whether anybody was going to play pool; whereupon it appeared that everybody was. It likewise appeared that everybody was overjoyed to see Captain Luttrell, who was addressed affectionately as “dear old chap,” and who (although he had chanced to overhear a word or two which had not been intended to reach his ears) smiled very good-humouredly

upon the company. It was his nature to be good-humoured, and uninvited familiarity seldom or never produced the effect upon him which it does upon more highly-strung nervous temperaments. If he had been asked for his candid opinion of the half-dozen men who presently adjourned with him to the billiard-room, he might perhaps have pronounced them to be 'rather cads,' but it is much more likely that he would have called them 'very good sort of fellows.' In any case, they contributed to his amusement for the next hour and a half, and, being by far the best player present, he won all their money.

Darkness had fallen upon the dismal scene outside when he got into his mackintosh, turned up his collar and his trousers, and splashed along the ill-lighted Rue du Lycée towards his mother's villa, where he had now been domiciled for several days. He meditated, as he went, upon many things—amongst others, upon the words above alluded to, of which he had been an unintentional hearer, and which had not caused him any surprise. Of course those fellows guessed, of course everybody must guess, what his people wanted him to do and why they had been so anxious that he should spend a part of his leave in their midst. The governor, to be sure, had seemed to dissociate himself from that excellent scheme, and had gone off home, with the air of washing his hands of all responsibility; but that, as Guy smilingly reflected, was apt to be the governor's little way, both in public and private life. Sir Robert loved to pose as the victim of circumstances—especially when the circumstances were not of a nature prejudicial to his own interests.

Sir Robert's son had inherited a fair share of the paternal characteristics, and he knew it. He also knew that it was almost his duty to marry money and would unquestionably be his pleasure, provided that the thing could be done compatibly with the ill-defined principles which ruled his life. Yet, by reason of those same ill-defined principles, he did not as yet see his way to making love to Clarissa Dent. It would be too easy and (to give, with suitable apologies, his own mental phrase) 'too damned unfair.' He must be pardoned for assuming that feminine affections are very easily won: we all generalise from personal experience, and Guy's personal experience had rendered it impossible for him to arrive at any other conclusion. And the memory of such numerous experiences, the feeling that, although still young, he was a hundred years older than this recently emancipated school-girl, made



him hesitate and scruple to lay siege to her innocence. There was not much in his past career of which he repented, save his foolish endeavours to live at the rate of three or four times his income; his impression was that he had been neither more nor less of a sinner than other men; but he had the instincts of a gentleman, which often crop up in the most unexpected quarters and at the most unexpected moments.

Thus, when he reached the Château de Grancy and found nobody but Clarissa in the drawing-room, he carefully abstained from behaving as habit and the situation would have prompted him to behave. He stood for a moment, with his back to the fire, facing the girl, who had rather reluctantly laid down her book on his entrance, and all he said was :

‘I suppose it’s about time to go and dress. There are some people coming to dinner, aren’t there?’

‘I believe so,’ she answered; ‘and then we are to go on to a ball. At least, Lady Luttrell and I are going; I don’t know whether we are to be honoured with your company or not.’

‘Nor do I,’ said Guy. ‘My mother tells me that I have been asked; but I’m not quite so keen about balls as I was in years gone by. I’m afraid you wouldn’t promise me a couple of dances by way of inducement, would you?’

That was a perfectly harmless speech to make, he thought—the sort of speech that one could hardly avoid making, under the circumstances—and of course he did not really care a straw what answer he received. Nevertheless, he was just a shade mortified on being told that Miss Dent was afraid she couldn’t. It was possible that she might have one square dance left; but, as far as she could remember, she was already engaged for the whole evening.

‘What!—eighteen or twenty dances booked in advance?’ he exclaimed, with raised brows. ‘Far be it from me to dispute your right to form arrangements of that kind; but—aren’t they rather unusual?’

‘I don’t know,’ answered Clarissa meekly; ‘you must be a far better judge of what is usual than I am. But it seems to be the custom here to take time by the forelock, and although I am not at all a good dancer, I generally find at a ball that my card is almost full for the next one before the evening is over.’

‘That,’ observed Captain Luttrell, ‘proves one of two things: either you are a much better dancer than your modesty will allow

you to admit, or else you must be extraordinarily popular on other grounds. One sees the other grounds,' he added politely; '*ça saute aux yeux*, as they say here. Still I should suspect you of being a first-rate partner into the bargain.'

The girl was really very pretty, he thought to himself, as he surveyed her with a semi-paternal smile and derived some inward amusement from noticing how her colour rose at his commonplace compliment—not strikingly so, perhaps, in the ordinary sense of the term; yet attractive and rather distinguished-looking, with her fluffy hair, her eager, short-sighted eyes, and her parted lips. As a matter of fact, Clarissa, for whom the climate as well as the amusements of Pau had worked wonders, was looking quite her best at that time. She had almost lost her troublesome cough, she was in high spirits, the world was going well with her, and she was full of goodwill towards the world at large. Of that goodwill, however, she had no superabundance to bestow upon Captain Luttrell, who, ever since his arrival, had thought fit to talk to her as though she had been a little girl of Madeline's age, and by whom she did not quite see why she should be patronised. So she somewhat ostentatiously stifled a yawn and re-opened her book, while he, taking the hint, presently strolled out of the room.

Lady Luttrell, as has been mentioned, did not give formal dinner-parties during those winter months when she was supposed to be, and supposed herself to be, practising economy; but this did not prevent her from continually asking a few friends to dinner, and that evening she had seven of them, French and English, most of whom were going on later to the entertainment for which Clarissa was so fully engaged.

Madame de Malglaise, a stern, rather forbidding-looking lady of pious life and strictly Legitimist principles, who had been young in the distant days when Lady Luttrell had been Antoinette de Grancy; her son Raoul, a slim, handsome, dark-complexioned youth, fresh from Saint-Cyr; the Vicomte de Larrouy, a brisk, goodhumoured, talkative Béarnais who carried his fifty odd years lightly, and who, after many seasons of cosmopolitan life at Pau, had learnt to speak a species of English, of which he was extremely proud; stout Lady Chiselhurst, the wife of one of Sir Robert's colleagues, with her marriageable daughter—these, together with a Secretary of Embassy, caught on his passage to Madrid, and a young American, reputed to be possessed of

enormous wealth, constituted one of those incongruous little assemblages which Lady Luttrell loved to collect round her oval table. She understood very well, too, how to entertain them and help them to entertain one another when they had little or nothing in common; for she was blessed with that talent as a hostess which is inborn, unteachable.

Clarissa, placed between Raoul de Malglaise and the Transatlantic millionaire, might have found some difficulty in talking to either of them, had not each been started on the right path by a dexterous, unobtrusive hint. As it was, Mr. Ingram, the American, was able to discourse, with satisfaction to himself and his neighbour, upon English country life, which it appeared that he had enjoyed exceptional facilities for studying, while young de Malglaise, who was at first disposed to be somewhat shy and silent, became quite loquacious as soon as he was given to understand that he might express himself in his own language and that Miss Dent was particularly eager to hear anything that he could tell her respecting a French military career under the Republic. He was a simple, modest sort of boy, conveying, with his great, serious brown eyes and his slightly sombre cast of countenance, the impression that there was more in him than appeared upon the surface. Inclined to be modern, for the rest, in ideas to which he did not dare to give explicit utterance within earshot of his mother, and more than once put to silence and confusion by a glance across the table from that redoubtable lady. Clarissa liked him better than the correct, self-satisfied Mr. Ingram, who, despite certain disparaging criticisms which he thought fit to bestow upon us as a nation, paid us the compliment of patronising our tailors and affecting a passable imitation of our colloquial methods. He spoke French fluently and bent forward several times to address a few words to M. de Malglaise, which showed how conversant he was with the lessons of the recent autumn manœuvres, but which were not very cordially responded to. Perhaps it takes several generations of easy circumstances to develop a human being capable of appreciating the beauty and necessity of minding his own business.

But the conversation was for the most part general, and turned, after a time, upon the ball whither everybody present was bound, with the exception of Madame de Malglaise, to whose rigidly exclusive visiting-list wealth was no passport.

‘I have not the honour of knowing her, this Meestress Breeks,’

she said, with a slight upward movement of her shoulders; 'she belongs to a world which I have never cared to frequent. For you, my dear Antoinette, it is quite different, no doubt; you are, so to speak, compelled to know everybody, and you have, besides, a charming young lady to amuse. It is, perhaps, also different for Raoul, of whom I do not desire to make a hermit. From all that I hear, you will be magnificently entertained.'

'So I am assured,' said Lady Luttrell. And then—possibly by way of exhibiting a discreet danger-signal to her friend—she made haste to add: 'Mrs. Briggs is a compatriot of yours, Mr. Ingram, so of course you know all about her. I met her once or twice in London last spring and thought her charming; but one sees so little of anybody in London.'

Mr. Ingram thought it probable that Lady Luttrell had seen as much of his fair compatriot as he had done. He, too, had been granted the privilege of an introduction to her in London, where she had mixed with the best society, having the requisite means for doing so. She was not, he continued, with a faint smile, in New York society; but he presumed that that was of no consequence.

'Not the smallest,' said the diplomatist, laughing. 'We don't know what New York society means, and we don't want to know. On the other hand, we do know what the best of good champagne is, and we flatter ourselves that we can estimate the value of a pretty and lively woman as well as anybody.'

M. de Larrouy told the company, with legitimate pride, that he could boast of being numbered amongst Mrs. Briggs's intimates. In fact, he was going to lead the cotillon for her that evening, and, although he was bound to secrecy respecting details, he might mention that it would surpass anything of the kind which had hitherto been witnessed in Pau.

'You will say that I am a little too old for a leader of cotillons; but what would you have? It is true that I have led hundreds in my day, and that I may claim to possess a little more experience than younger men. *Enfin!*—since Madame was pleased to insist!'

He was evidently enchanted with the honour which had been conferred upon him, and could not resist whispering a few confidences to Lady Chiselhurst, who pressed him for further information. 'Bracelets with real jewels for the ladies, scarf-pins in fine

pearls for the men—but I beseech you not to betray me ; I should never be forgiven !’

Lady Luttrell’s guests departed almost immediately after dinner, and when her own carriage was announced, Clarissa was helped into it by Guy, who had put on a hat and a fur-lined coat.

‘So you are coming, after all?’ she said.

‘Oh, yes,’ he answered ; ‘I couldn’t hold out against the prospect of being presented with what old De Larrouy calls a “fine pearl” pin. Besides, it will make me feel quite young again to see him leading a cotillon, as he used to do when I came out here from Eton for the Christmas holidays. I would ask you to dance it with me, only I feel sure that you must have promised it long ago to some more worthy partner.’

‘Not so very long ago,’ Clarissa replied. ‘If you had asked me before dinner, I would have given it you with pleasure ; but now I am pledged to young M. de Malglaise, who quite admits that he is not at all a worthy partner. It seems that he has only been to one ball before in his life, and then he had the misfortune to tumble down. So he has rather distrusted himself since.’

Lady Luttrell, from the corner of the carriage, in which she was by this time ensconced, exclaimed : ‘My dear child, you must not think of spoiling your enjoyment for the sake of a boy like Raoul ! Tell him to find somebody else—or to stand and look on.’

But Clarissa did not think it would be fair to hurt the poor fellow’s feelings in that way, and Guy displayed no overwhelming anxiety to cut him out.

‘I will stand and look on, as befits my years,’ said he. ‘Perhaps, if you are very generous and I am very lucky, one of the “fine pearl” pins may be bestowed upon me by you. Outsiders, you know, are allowed to take part in the cotillon when any lady is compassionate enough to select them.’

‘To hear you talk, one would think that you were a middle-aged man !’ exclaimed his mother, half-laughing, half-vexed. ‘That is a poor compliment that you pay me, to make me out so old.’

He was still young ; but without any affectation he felt almost old enough to be Miss Dent’s father, and dancing, of which he had been passionately fond in years gone by, had ceased to be a form of exercise that he cared very much about for itself. When he entered the fair-sized, brilliantly lighted and exquisitely decorated rooms in which the hospitable Mrs. Briggs was receiving her

friends, he was quite content to station himself in the background and watch the more or less graceful performances of other people. As a matter of fact, he had to dance, because his skill was notorious and sundry old acquaintances were present whom he could not ignore; but during the greater part of the evening he cheerfully accepted the position of an interested spectator.

He accepted it, that is to say, with such cheerfulness as might be attained to by one whom the scene inevitably reminded of irrevocable follies and neglected opportunities. Another opportunity—possibly a final one—was now, he strongly suspected, being offered to him; but really he could not take advantage of it. Yet, if he had been a little younger, and if she had been a little older, and if things had been rather different! . . . For indeed Clarissa, dressed in the pale shade of pink which became her best, was looking charming that evening, and he noticed also that she had allowed her modesty to get the better of her veracity in stating that she was not a good dancer. More than once he was greatly tempted to approach her *per obstantes juvenum catervas*; but not without a sense of conscious virtue, he abstained. It was safer to flirt with pretty, vivacious little Mrs. Briggs, who, whether she was in New York society or not, was quite at home in that of the European aristocracy, and who, like all her countrywomen, had plenty of amusing and original things to say. There was a Mr. Briggs somewhere or other, busily engaged, no doubt, in amassing the dollars which his wife expended so freely; but apparently he had no taste for foreign travel.

After partaking of a supper upon which he felt justified in warmly complimenting his hostess, Captain Luttrell could do no less than comply with her request, when she begged him to select a partner for the cotillon from amongst a bevy of disengaged and not very attractive damsels whom she pointed out to him. Nothing if not good-natured, Guy chose the least promising-looking of these, and it may be hoped that he made her happy. At all events, he made her dance, which was in itself no mean achievement, and he overcame her shyness by talking to her as if he had known her all his life. Meanwhile, he himself was very well amused in watching the evolutions directed by the evergreen M. de Larrouy, who had invented several entirely new and original figures for the occasion and who was skipping about with all the agility and enthusiasm that he had been wont to manifest in the good old days when there had been an Emperor at the Tuileries

and a Préfet belonging to the fashionable world in the Basses Pyrénées.

Clarissa, seated at the opposite extremity of the long room, raised her glasses more than once to see how Captain Luttrell was getting on with his rather clumsy partner, and was moved to genuine admiration of him by what she saw. Whatever he might be, he was kind-hearted and a gentleman, she thought; and she said as much to young De Malglaive, who responded, with becoming humility:

‘He resembles you, mademoiselle; he takes pity on the universally rejected.’

Perhaps it was because she felt it incumbent upon her to reward, as far as she could, so much unselfishness that Clarissa, when M. de Larrouy’s artistic figures had been concluded and Mrs. Briggs had come to the front, with her bracelets and her scarf-pins, tripped across the polished floor to bestow the latter form of decoration upon a gentleman who declared himself honoured beyond his most extravagant hopes. And then, for the first time in her life, she found out what waltzing can be made to mean.

‘That was perfect!—absolutely perfect!’ she exclaimed when, after a couple of turns round the room, Guy relinquished her to her partner. ‘You dance so beautifully that I almost believe I have been dancing beautifully myself!’

‘You may quite believe it,’ said Guy, laughing; ‘it happens to be the truth.’

‘Ah, no! I am a very poor performer at my best; only I am certain that with you I should never disgrace myself. I suppose it is very greedy of me,’ she added, after a moment’s hesitation, ‘but—do you think you could manage to give me just one more turn before we go?’

‘I should rather think I could, and would! Don’t you see those bouquets and bracelets which are just about to be distributed? I assure you that you are the only person here who will get the chance of refusing mine.’

Now, it is doubtless a small thing to be able to dance well, and no very great thing to be a good-natured sort of fellow; yet the judgments that we form of our fellow-creatures and the judgments that they form of us are largely dependent upon trifles. Lady Luttrell would not have been dissatisfied, at the end of the evening, if she had known how well disposed Clarissa was towards

her scapegrace of an eldest son, nor perhaps would she have thought it necessary to say, as she did on the way home,

‘Guy, you are too lazy for anything! I bring you here on purpose to amuse this poor child, and you never dance with her once until the cotillon is almost over! I am ashamed of you!’

‘Miss Dent will tell you,’ answered Guy, ‘that I took the very first opportunity I got and made a few more for myself afterwards; I am now the proud possessor of a pin which I shall cherish to the end of my days, in memory of the best partner I have ever encountered or am ever likely to encounter.’

Clarissa said nothing; but her fingers closed upon the bangle which encircled her wrist and which to her also had acquired a certain value as a memento. But it was not of the generous Mrs. Briggs that she expected that ornament to remind her in years to come.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE UNHEROIC HERO.

WELL disposed as Clarissa was towards Captain Luttrell, and pleasant though the recollection of Mrs. Briggs’s ball had been rendered for her by its concluding episodes, she was as far from any idea of falling in love with him as he was from realising her conception of a hero of romance. The beautiful, talented, and intrepid being who was destined to conquer her heart (always supposing that Providence should see fit to throw him in her way) was a figment of the imagination, constructed out of the old-fashioned novels which she had been allowed to peruse at school, and was extremely unlikely to be met with in real life. Indeed, it may be surmised that if such a person, or anybody at all like him, had come into existence, he would have been knocked on the head in early youth by some benevolent, but exasperated lover of our fallen race.

Nevertheless, Miss Dent liked Guy quite well enough to be a little annoyed by the obvious indifference with which he regarded her. He paid her compliments, it was true, made pretty speeches about her dancing and professed himself eager for the repetition of the great pleasure which she had been pleased to grant him; but he had the air of talking rather in joke than in earnest, and he did not take the trouble to attend any of the parties which



followed in quick succession upon the heels of that already described. In short, he conveyed to her the impression that in his eyes she was a mere school-girl, like Madeline; and such a view was, to say the least of it, unflattering.

‘I do think, Guy,’ said his mother, one evening at dinner, ‘that you are the most unsociable person to have staying in the house I ever knew or heard of! What with the hunting, which you always pretend to despise, and the Club, where I suppose you gamble and lose your money, one sees literally nothing of you from morning to night!’

Guy, who had been following the hounds all day in pouring rain and had come home pleasantly tired, laughed with his customary good humour.

‘I should have thought,’ he answered, ‘that you and Miss Dent would be grateful to me for taking myself off. What is to be done, when it rains, in a house where there is no billiard-table? While this weather lasts, the only way in which I can make myself of use is to exercise the governor’s horses for him; but as soon as the sun comes out again I shall be ready for picnicking or lawn-tennis or anything else you like. Not that I believe the sun ever will come out again.’

There really did not appear to be much prospect of it. Old residents were saying, as old residents in winter resorts always do say when the inevitable spell of cheerless wet and cold sets in, that they had never in all their experience seen anything like it before; poor Colonel Curtis had been having such a bad time of it at the Club that he was fain to shut himself up at home and sadly tap a falling barometer every half-hour; while Clarissa, amongst others, was beginning to feel a little bit ill-used.

‘But not by me, I trust,’ said Guy, after she had made a somewhat disconsolate remark to that effect. ‘If you think, as my mother seems to do, that I have been neglecting my duties, and if I can be of any service by staying at home to-morrow and holding a skein of wool for you to wind, you have only to speak the word.’

‘No, thank you,’ answered Clarissa, with just a touch of snap-pishness; ‘I have no use for wool, and I am afraid I should have no use for you either.’

‘But you will when it clears up and when he takes us both out hunting,’ said Madeline; ‘you will find him of the greatest use then. Guy has taught me almost all that I know.’

But Captain Luttrell did not respond to this leading observation, nor could he be persuaded to accompany the ladies to the house of a neighbour, where there were to be *tableaux vivants* that evening, followed probably by an informal dance. He was so awfully done, he pleaded, and thought he had caught a bit of a chill too. If he might be excused for that once, he really would go with them next time. Evidently the prospect of another dance with Miss Dent was not alluring enough to compete with a comfortable arm-chair and a cigar beside the fire.

Now if all this was, as has been said, a little annoying to Clarissa, it was not of supreme importance, Captain Luttrell being, after all, no more than a pleasant acquaintance, of whom she would willingly have made a friend, had he been disposed to meet her half way. But some days later a very disagreeable incident occurred, and one which she had difficulty in forgiving, although he was in no way to blame for it. Climatic conditions had by that time altered considerably for the better, and the only reason why Clarissa was not out riding, on such a beautiful, sunny afternoon, with Guy and Madeline was that the former had in a somewhat marked manner refrained from urging her to accompany them. He was going, he had said, to put his young sister through a course of schooling which, he was afraid, would bore Miss Dent, and he expressed no sort of anxiety to undertake the education of a second pupil. Miss Dent, therefore, having decided to remain at home, had established herself with a book in a sheltered corner of the garden, where it was quite warm enough to sit out of doors and read, supposing that she had wanted to read—which she didn't.

She had been gazing abstractedly for some little time at the distant mountains, all glittering and glistening with freshly-fallen snow, when the sound of approaching footsteps and high-pitched French voices roused her from her day-dream. It was Lady Luttrell and Madame de Malglaise, who were engaged in conversation, and she held her breath, knowing that she was hidden from them by an intervening belt of evergreens and having no particular wish to be dragged from her retreat. Thus it came to pass that, without the slightest intention of playing the eaves-dropper, she distinctly heard Lady Luttrell say:

‘My dear, you do not understand our English customs. With us marriages are not arranged; we only try sometimes to bring them about, and in this case we are not trying at all. Sir Robert

has scruples, which you will think absurd and which I myself think rather absurd. Still I am compelled to respect them.'

'It is a great fortune,' said Madame de Malglaise gravely; 'you will be inexcusable if you allow it to escape you. The more so as it seems to me that the girl——'

'Ah, yes!' interrupted Lady Luttrell; 'that is the provoking part of it! I, too, have noticed that she has a decided *penchant* for Guy; but I am not permitted to lend a helping hand to events, and even if I were, it would be useless, I fear. You know—or perhaps you do not know—what Guy is! No consideration of wisdom or prudence will ever induce him to do what he does not want to do, and it is only too evident to me that he has taken this poor child *en grippe*. Yet she is neither plain nor stupid: he might do a thousand times worse, and no doubt he will. *Enfin!*—*une affaire manquée*, that is all that one can say about it.'

Madame de Malglaise, apparently, had something more to say about it; but, as the two ladies had now turned their backs and were walking away, her remarks did not reach the ear of the indignant listener. Indignant Clarissa could not help being, nor was she at all mollified by having been made aware of Sir Robert's honourable scruples. This match, it seemed, had not, according to Lady Luttrell, been 'arranged,' but it had certainly been desired; and now that it had to be regarded as '*une affaire manquée*,' the kindness and hospitality of which she had been the recipient ought not to be further trespassed upon. Her first impulse was to go back to the house, despatch a telegram to her uncle and announce on the morrow that, since she was perfectly well, there was no longer any necessity for her to remain abroad. But, fortunately, she had just enough of common sense to restrain her from making herself so ridiculous. She saw that she would not be able to change all the plans that had been made for her without an explanation, and to give the true explanation [of her departure would be a little too humiliating! Moreover, Lady Luttrell, who had a perfect right to wish that her son should make a good marriage, had, after all, been guilty of no sin. With a slight effort, pardon might be granted to that anxious mother; but at Clarissa's age one is not quite sufficiently heroic or philosophic to pardon a man for behaving as Captain Luttrell had deemed it indispensable to his safety to behave. That he should have 'taken her *en grippe*' was a matter for regret, no doubt; still he was very welcome to his likes and dislikes. 'But really,' said

Clarissa to herself, 'I think he might have waited to find out whether he was in the smallest danger from me before giving himself so much trouble to keep out of my way.'

Consequently, from that day forth Guy was made to understand very clearly that Miss Dent found him a bore. She did not always answer when he spoke to her; she often seemed to be unconscious of his presence, and would yawn wearily on being reminded of it; she curtly declined to join him and his sister in their rides, and once, when she had hesitatingly consented to give him a dance, she unblushingly threw him over in favour of Mr. Ingram. That this method of treatment should have imbued Captain Luttrell with a strong desire to kick Mr. Ingram, as well as with an increased appreciation of charms which other men besides Mr. Ingram appeared to find potent, was scarcely surprising. But it did not spur him on to place himself in open rivalry with those more favoured persons. From the first he had determined to adopt a magnanimous course so far as this wealthy and altogether inexperienced young woman was concerned; since she was pleased to spare him all effort by metaphorically trampling upon him, so much the better! He therefore effaced himself, with a smile upon his lips and not much more of wounded vanity in his heart than was to be expected of one who had hitherto had every reason to believe that he was irresistible.

'Clarissa,' said Madeline suddenly, one afternoon, 'why do you hate Guy? Oh, you needn't deny that you hate him; I have seen it for ever so long, and I can't make it out! What can he possibly have done to offend you?'

Madeline, by Clarissa's request, had ceased to address her as 'Miss Dent.' An intimacy had sprung up between them which, notwithstanding the slight disparity in their years, had become very close and was destined to prove enduring. Already they had, or pretended to have, no secrets from one another; so that now, while they were strolling down one of the shady paths of the Park on their way to the Plaine de Bilhères, where they were to witness a golf competition in which Guy was taking part, it was almost a question whether honesty and the claims of friendship did not demand a simple statement of the truth. Clarissa, however, after a brief inward debate, contented herself with replying:

'What rubbish! I don't hate your brother a bit; I don't think enough about him to hate, or even dislike, him. Very likely if he were *my* brother, I should admire him as much as

you do. As it is, he seems to me to be a very—what shall I say?—ordinary sort of person.'

'He is *not* ordinary,' cried Madeline, firing up, 'and I don't for one moment believe that you think he is! Why, there is nothing that Guy can't do better than other people!—riding, shooting, fishing——'

'Oh yes, and dancing too,' interrupted Clarissa, with a laugh. 'I dare say we shall have to congratulate him upon having won this golf-medal, or whatever it is, into the bargain. Only all that doesn't strike me as making him such a very extraordinary being. A golf-medal isn't quite the same thing as the Victoria Cross, you see.'

'How can he help it if he has never been given a chance of fighting?' asked Madeline pertinently. 'I am quite sure that he will never hesitate to risk his life, whether he gets the Victoria Cross for it or not. You are not going to call him a coward, I hope?'

Clarissa disclaimed any idea of bringing so offensive an accusation against Captain Luttrell. No doubt he would fight as well as another in case of necessity; but she confessed that he did not give her the impression of a man who was likely to do anything foolhardy. He was rather too sensible and too self-indulgent for that, she thought.

Madeline, who was a somewhat hot-tempered young person, looked for a moment as though she resembled her brother in respect of entire readiness to show fight; but, instead of doing that, she burst out laughing and made one of those shrewd observations whereby children not unfrequently astonish their elders.

'If you had not assured me that you had never been in love in your life, Clarissa,' said she, 'I should suspect you of being a little bit in love with Guy.'

Such a silly speech merited no rejoinder and received none. Clarissa contemptuously raised her chin a couple of inches, changed the subject, and took care to talk so fast that her juvenile companion had no chance of reverting to it until they had descended to the long, level expanse of waste land, known as the Plaine de Bilhères, which has been utilised for purposes of recreation by cricketers, lawn-tennis players, and golfers ever since Pau became an English colony.

Immediately on their arrival they were accosted by Mr. Ingram, who was a golfer of some proficiency, and who, it appeared, was on this occasion playing with and scoring for Guy.

‘You are just in time to see us start on our second round,’ he said; ‘perhaps you may care to walk with us for a few holes. Oh, no; you won’t put us off. My nerves are warranted to stand anything; and if they weren’t it would make no difference, for our steps have been dogged all along by a crowd of people who have never witnessed anything like Luttrell’s driving before. Just look at them!’

Clarissa looked at them, and could scarcely restrain herself from joining in their low, awestruck murmur of admiration when Guy carelessly stepped up to his ball, and with a swift, full swing of the supple club, sent it soaring away into space. Mr. Ingram’s performance was of a more modest, but perhaps equally useful kind.

‘I am the tortoise and Luttrell is the hare, you know,’ he explained to Clarissa, who was walking forward beside him, while Madeline had joined her brother. ‘I can generally catch him up when it comes to short play, and we were all even at the end of the first round, you know.’

Mr. Ingram seldom failed to end his sentences with ‘you know,’ being under the impression that it is customary to do so in the best English society. His attentions to Miss Dent, which had latterly been conspicuous, were due, it may be conjectured, to a clear comprehension of what is customary all the world over. He was not in the least smitten with the reputed heiress, and was fully persuaded in his heart (not, it must be owned, without reason) that the standard of beauty, elegance, and attractiveness was far higher amongst his own countrywomen than elsewhere; but he was all the more willing to bestow a temporary patronage upon Clarissa because he suspected that that overbearing, free-and-easy fellow Luttrell did not like it.

Clarissa, in common with the rest of the throng of spectators, followed, for the next half-hour or so, the vicissitudes of a game which is, perhaps, of all games the least interesting to look on at; but then, to be sure, she was not looking at it very much. Her eyes wandered continually to the distant, sun-smitten mountains, from the snowy Pic du Midi de Bigorre in the far east to the Pic du Midi d’Ossau, a sort of miniature Matterhorn, which rises almost directly south of Pau. Her thoughts, too, wandered a long way from the level, calm discourse of Mr. Ingram, who was playing very nicely and who seemed to be getting a little the better of his more showy antagonist. But if the progress of this

contest failed to excite her, an incident presently occurred which, while it lasted, was too exciting to be pleasant.

‘Thunder!’ exclaimed Mr. Ingram, lapsing suddenly into an idiomatic form of speech which it was his usual effort to avoid, ‘that boy is going to be drowned!’

Clarissa followed the direction of his outstretched finger, and saw for a moment a round, black head and a pair of small arms flung up above the waters of the neighbouring Gave. That stream, swollen by the recent rains and still more by the subsequent melting of the snows, had acquired the dimensions of a broad and turbid river. It was evident that the urchin, stooping to fish out a golf-ball, driven thither by some erratic player, had lost his footing and was now in imminent danger of losing his life into the bargain. Cries of consternation arose on all sides; half-a-dozen men, including Mr. Ingram, ran hastily towards the bank, and stood there in attitudes expressive of the indecision that they probably felt. But Guy Luttrell, who had his coat off in a twinkling, was evidently not afflicted with a malady which is only too apt to debar the majority of us from proving how brave we really are. Clarissa, holding her breath, saw him plunge into the water and saw him immediately swept down stream by the rushing current. Then he disappeared behind a jutting promontory, overgrown with osiers, and she, together with the rest of the spectators, started off as fast as her legs would carry her to witness the sequel.

They were not quite in time to witness what, as Guy afterwards admitted, had been a very near approach to a catastrophe. When his friends caught sight of him, some two or three hundred yards beyond them, he was already ashore, with his half-drowned burden, and had sat down to recover the breath of which he found himself somewhat short. It was, in truth, rather luck than skill that had saved him; for he had been carried out into mid-stream and would probably have been whirled on until his strength gave out, but for the topmost branches of a fallen tree, which he had just succeeded in clutching. But he did not at the time think it necessary to mention these details.

‘Oh, *I’m* all right!’ he said, laughing, in answer to the sympathetic inquiries which were presently showered upon him. ‘I’m not so sure about this little beggar, who must have swallowed a gallon of dirty water, I expect. Does anybody know where he lives?’

The boy, whose business in life it was to carry clubs, was well known to several of the bystanders, and he was at once removed to a neighbouring cottage, where restoratives were employed with satisfactory results. But this occupied some little time, and Guy was repeatedly implored not to stand about any longer in his dripping clothes.

'Very well,' he said at last; 'I'll be off, then. No; I don't want a lift, thanks. The best thing to do, when you are wet through, is to trot home on your own feet.'

So he departed at a trot, after declining Mr. Ingram's offer of an overcoat, and remarking that he was afraid his late antagonist must be allowed to walk over for their match.

'Not that I acknowledge myself beaten,' he added. 'We'll fight it out some other day.'

Assuredly he had not been beaten. On the contrary, he had gained a victory which he had been free from any intention of winning, and of which the vanquished person was as yet hardly conscious. Only, when Madeline asked triumphantly, 'How about Victoria Crosses *now*?' Clarissa was fain to eat humble pie.

'I apologise,' she answered. 'I didn't think he had it in him; but I was wrong. It just shows the necessity of putting one's neighbours to the test if one wants to find out what they are.'

And then, with a cruelty which nothing but extreme youth could excuse, she turned to Mr. Ingram, who was escorting the ladies home, and remarked: 'I suppose the rest of you were not ambitious of being decorated with Victoria Crosses or even with Humane Society's medals.'

'I am not an ambitious man,' replied Mr. Ingram composedly; 'my little part in life has to be played without accompaniment of drum and trumpet. But there is this to be said for me, that I am not jealous, and my congratulations to your friend Luttrell are soured by no *arrière pensée*.'

Perhaps Mr. Ingram had slightly the best of it in that small passage of arms; but Clarissa, not entirely taking his meaning, enjoyed the satisfaction of believing that she had administered a rebuke in a quarter where it seemed to be deserved.



## CHAPTER VII.

## WHY NOT?

NONE but the brave deserve the fair, and while youth lasts we are all of us, whether fair or unfair, prone to fall down and worship courage. In this our instincts do not lead us very far astray; for in truth the first and foremost thing required of a man here below is that he should prove himself a man. As time goes on, to be sure, we learn (among many other distressing and disheartening things) that physical valour may co-exist with various reprehensible and even despicable qualities; but if Clarissa Dent had believed that, she would not have been the generous and impulsive being that, happily for herself, she still was. Generosity forbade her to withhold the tribute of her unstinted admiration from a man who had risked his life to save that of a fellow-creature, and if Captain Luttrell had given her some cause for personal dissatisfaction with him, none the less was he a hero of the loftiest order.

However, he had no notion of so regarding himself, and he made very light of the afternoon's adventure when Clarissa met him again at the dinner table.

'One isn't drowned so easily as all that,' he said, in reply to his mother's reiterated ejaculations of thankfulness and dismay; 'if I hadn't been reserved for some other fate, the Hacombe Bay lobsters would have made a meal of me long ago. Don't you remember when old Abraham and I got capsized, and were three hours hanging on to the bottom of the boat before they could pick us up? That was a very different thing from being ducked for a few minutes in a muddy stream. Of course I knew it would be all right, or I shouldn't have jumped in.'

He could not possibly have known that it would be all right, and Madeline felt it due to him to point out that he could not. Clarissa held her peace, perceiving that he did not wish his exploit to be magnified; but, naturally enough, her esteem for him was enhanced by this becoming display of modesty.

It may have been imagination, but she could not help thinking that he was even less desirous than usual of talking to her that evening. At any rate he addressed his conversation almost exclusively to his mother and sister, and immediately after dinner he went off to the club. Could it be that he was under the im-

pression—the false and ridiculous impression—that she was disposed to become enamoured of him and that that dramatic incident had completed the conquest of her young affections? Clarissa's cheeks burned, as this extremely odious and unwelcome surmise forced its way into her mind.

Now, if Guy had been under the above impression, and if he had wished to cure Miss Dent of a misplaced attachment (but, as a matter of fact this was not so), he could hardly have adopted a more foolish course than that which he was actually pursuing. It is not by ostentatious neglect that wounds of the heart are healed over or interest diminished, and, whether Clarissa liked or disliked him, it was inevitable that she should think a good deal about him that night—particularly as she could not get to sleep. Thus it came to pass that Clarissa's thoughts, in which repentance, mortification, and wonder were about equally blended, took the final form of self-examination. Possibly it was not then, possibly it was not until some days later, that she admitted to herself in so many words what a humiliating misfortune had fallen upon her; yet there must, no doubt, have been some unacknowledged reason for the fact that her pillow was moistened with her tears.

This was her first experience of what, in after years, impressed her more powerfully than anything else in life—the inequality of the sexes and the systematic injustice with which the so-called weaker sex is treated by the stronger. For a man to fall in love, without hope or prospect of return, is unlucky for him, but has never been held to be in any way disgraceful; whereas a woman, who is just as much a human being as he, becomes an object of universal ridicule and contempt for doing the very same thing, although she cannot help it. It is commonly asserted, to be sure, that she ought to be able to help it; but that is only one amongst the very numerous absurd assertions to which upholders of conventionality are wont to commit themselves. Clarissa, as soon as she knew for certain that she loved Guy Luttrell, tried to believe that she was not the least ashamed of doing so, and, notwithstanding her ill success in this gallant endeavour, she contrived to hold her head quite as high as usual when he was present.

But although there might be nothing disgraceful in loving a man who disliked her, and who had the additional bad taste to show that he was a little in fear of her advances, disgrace of the deepest kind would, of course, be involved in giving him any

ground for supposing that such was the case. Clarissa, therefore, began to treat Captain Luttrell with a disdainful coldness which, as she was rather glad to notice, was neither lost upon him nor enjoyed by him. She declined, with quite uncalled-for asperity, to profit by the lessons in equitation which he kindly offered to give her; when, on several successive occasions, he asked her for a dance, she had an excuse, which was obviously a mere trumped-up excuse, ready for him; she displayed a marked preference for other people's company as often as he made his appearance, and more than once she was downright rude to him.

'In all my experience,' remarked Mr. Ingram, who was an intermittent and amused spectator of these tactics, 'I have never seen a young lady give herself away so absolutely as Miss Dent is doing. It's pathetic, you know, and Captain Luttrell ought to be ashamed any way. Because he either has ordinary intelligence or he hasn't. If he has, it's too bad of him to hold back any longer, and if he hasn't—— But I can't believe that you Englishmen are really as dense as you sometimes look.'

'Guy Luttrell is not generally considered to be a fool,' returned Colonel Curtis, somewhat nettled by this attack upon his fellow-countrymen. 'He is a gentleman, if you understand what that means, and he may feel bound to "hold back," as you call it, from an heiress who is under his mother's care just now.'

Mr. Ingram confessed that such an explanation of Captain Luttrell's apparent insensibility did not strike him as particularly plausible; yet the Colonel was not very far off the mark, and Guy, whose experience had been rather longer and more varied than that of the young American, would have known very well what interpretation to place upon poor Clarissa's behaviour, had he been in a position to judge her dispassionately.

By degrees, however, he had arrived at the discovery that he was no longer able to survey Miss Dent from a wholly dispassionate standpoint. Ill-conceived as her efforts to show him that he was by no means a *persona grata* to her had been, they had nevertheless proved successful, and he was now compelled to acknowledge to himself—not for the first time—that his susceptible heart had passed out of his own guardianship. No better reason, of course, could have been afforded him for beginning to lay siege to the heiress, nor any better excuse supplied for the abandonment of his self-denying ordinance; but, as he was really and truly in love, he was precluded from detecting the obvious, and he quite believed

that he was, from some cause or other, repugnant to Clarissa. Under all the circumstances, therefore, he could but congratulate himself that his leave of absence and his sojourn at Pau were alike drawing towards a close.

‘Aldershot is about the most detestable spot in England,’ he told his mother one day; ‘but to Aldershot I must go, preparatory to embarking for some still worse spot out of England. Time’s pretty nearly up, too.’

Lady Luttrell broke out into lamentations which Clarissa could not help thinking were partly addressed to herself. ‘Don’t speak of it! I can’t bear think of your being packed off to India in a horrid troopship and banished from us for no one knows how many years! What a wretched thing it is to be short of money! And what a stupid arrangement it seems that the people who have the money are almost always those who don’t know how to make a sensible use of it!’

Well, if this was meant for a reproach, it was scarcely merited, and if Lady Luttrell’s manner had become a trifle less affectionate of late, that was only because she so entirely misapprehended the situation. Clarissa, unluckily for herself, was blessed with no saving sense of humour; otherwise she might have taken some comfort to her sad heart from a contemplation of the perversity and incongruity of things. As it was, she only felt sore and incensed against Lady Luttrell, who ought to have known, if anybody did, why the miserable money which her *protégée* did not want could not be expended upon the desired object of sparing a reluctant soldier his turn of foreign service. She was likewise exceedingly sorry for herself, seeing before her a prospect of perpetual spinsterhood and perpetual yearning for what could never by any possibility be hers. She was, in short, if anybody likes to call her so, a sufficiently silly and sensitive young woman just then; only, as the majority of us have been quite equally silly at one period or another of our lives, we may perhaps allow her the benefit of extenuating circumstances. After all, youth and the follies of youth are in most cases of very brief duration, while in some they are altogether harmless. Clarissa was destined to commit far more foolish actions before the close of her earthly career than the shedding of frequent secret tears over a volume of lovelorn and pessimistic poetry.

Little, indeed, did she know or guess about the follies of Guy Luttrell’s youth, of which it cannot be said with truth that they

had been harmless either to himself or to others. In her eyes he was a modern Bayard—the embodiment of that non-existent personage whom she had sometimes pictured to herself as her possible future husband—and nothing but the fear of betraying so portentous a secret gave her strength to continue being as uncivil to him as she was.

Winter was a thing of the past—or, at all events, appeared to be a thing of the past—when the date fixed for his departure drew so near as to be but four-and-twenty hours distant. The beech trees in the Park had donned a thin spring livery of tender green; the snows were shrinking higher and higher up the flanks of the purple mountains; Lady Luttrell was beginning to groan over the necessity of feeding hungry Conservatives in London soon after Easter, and the return of Mademoiselle Girault had long ago restored the unwilling Madeline to her studies. Clarissa, thus left a good deal to herself (for the Lenten season was observed somewhat strictly at the Château de Grancy and afternoon engagements had ceased to be either numerous or pressing), had wandered out, towards the hour of sunset, along the Promenade du Midi, past the statue of Gaston de Foix and so down to the Basse Plante, where she had paused to drop her elbows upon a low wall and gaze, with wistful, short-sighted eyes, at a prospect of which the beauty and the soft, varied colouring never palls upon appreciative beholders.

‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help’—the words came suddenly into her mind and passed her lips in a whisper, although she had no idea of what their dead-and-gone writer had meant, nor any distinct consciousness of how they could be made to apply to her own case. Yet, when we are unhappy, the calm steadfastness of the everlasting, unchanging mountains has a soothing influence upon us—perhaps because it reminds us of our personal insignificance and of the pettiness of the little evanescent troubles which wrinkle our foreheads and turn our hair grey. Everything, of course, is relative, and Clarissa’s troubles were doubtless as important or as unimportant, so far as she was concerned, as the rise and fall of empires: such as they were, she felt at least better able to bear them in the free air and encircled by that solemn, silent pageant of Nature than within four narrow walls. The sun had not yet sunk low enough to redden the distant peaks; but the Gave beneath her, the rounded, wooded hills and the windows of the Jurançon houses

opposite were flooded and glowing in crimson light, and as she looked down upon that ruddy stream, shrunken now and intersected by broad stretches of gravel, her thoughts naturally reverted to a certain afternoon when it had been a wide, rushing river, and when a very brave man had not hesitated to cast himself into it. Well, somebody else had taken an equally reckless plunge at that self-same moment, and was likely to be punished for her imprudence with infinitely greater severity than he; but what then?

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
 I feel it when I sorrow most;  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost  
 Than never to have loved at all,

murmurs poor Clarissa; and really there is not the slightest reason to laugh either at her or at her quotation. But Captain Luttrell, stepping briskly homewards and catching sight of that solitary, pensive figure, must needs break in upon her musings with a piece of singularly ill-timed jocularly:

'Hullo, Miss Dent! Composing a sonnet to the dying day? Rather a dangerous thing to do in these latitudes. You'll get such a chill presently, if you don't mind, that you'll be apt to follow the day to its grave before the sonnet gets into print.'

Clarissa started and flushed. 'How I hate people who make one jump!' she exclaimed irritably.

'I apologise. But I am no worse off than I was before; for it is some little time already since you began to honour me with your hatred, isn't it?'

'I am sorry that you should think so,' answered Clarissa, recovering her dignity and her composure. 'You are quite mistaken, as it happens. I am glad to say that I do not hate anybody in the world, and I can't imagine why you should suppose that I have any feeling so strong as that about you.'

'We'll substitute antipathy, then; though I'm not sure that I shouldn't prefer hatred, of the two. Anyhow, you are about to be relieved of my unwelcome society, so I dare say it doesn't matter much. All the same, since we are upon the point of parting, and since it is not very probable that we shall ever meet again, I wish you wouldn't mind telling me what it is that you find so obnoxious in me.'

The odd thing was that this question was put in perfect good faith, and it was perhaps even more odd that Guy had not put it earlier. The reader, however, has already been made acquainted with some of his reasons for preserving an abnormal reticence,

and if he now felt justified in giving expression to his natural curiosity, that was only because he was genuinely convinced that Clarissa Dent was an abnormal woman. The normal woman, as he could not but be aware, not only liked but adored him.

‘I find nothing obnoxious in you,’ was the gratifying reply that he received. ‘It would be rather more to the purpose if I were to ask you—but really I don’t care to know. As you say, we are not very likely to meet again ; so it doesn’t signify.’

A colloquy initiated after that fashion could hardly terminate without some further clearing of the ground. Guy and Clarissa paced slowly, side by side, down one of the shady by-paths of the Park (although that was not their way to the Château de Grancy) and, after a vast deal of circumlocution which it is needless to report, each offered the other a sufficiently pretty apology. There had been some misunderstanding, it appeared : Captain Luttrell did not in the least dislike Miss Dent, and nothing had been further from Miss Dent’s intention than to snub Captain Luttrell.

‘Well, I’m glad we are going to part friends, anyhow,’ the latter concluded, with an air of cheerful acquiescence, ‘and I’m glad we have had this little explanation. By Jove ! how cold it gets the moment the sun has gone down ! Won’t you let me help you on with your cloak ?’

She handed him the wrap which she had been carrying over her arm, and he placed it round her shoulders. He was so experienced in the performance of such small services that he ought to have been less clumsy about it ; but somehow or other, a hitch occurred in the operation. With an impatient murmur, she turned her face towards him, as he stood behind her ; he saw that her eyes were misty with tears ; she saw that his brows were drawn together and that his lips were quivering—and then, all of a sudden, there was no more necessity for explanations. Verbal explanations are, at best, but sorry expedients, something unspoken almost always lurking behind them ; but the language of the eyes does not deceive ; nor, to be sure, is it very often intended to do so when the eyes in question happen to belong to two lovers.

‘And, after all, why not ?’ Clarissa was saying joyfully, about a quarter of an hour later. ‘Why should we not do what everybody wants us to do ?’

‘Upon my word, I don’t know,’ answered Guy, laughing. ‘Except, of course, that I am not, and never shall be, half good enough for you.’

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE OPPOSING FORCES.

THERE were perhaps several considerations, in addition to that modestly instanced by Guy Luttrell, which rendered his betrothal to Clarissa Dent a proceeding of doubtful wisdom; but Lady Luttrell only realised one of these, and could not be so ungracious as to allude to it in the fullness of her joy at the tidings imparted to her. For the rest, her conscience accorded her plenary absolution. She had done nothing at all to promote or encourage this match; she had quite made up her mind that it would never take place, and neither Sir Robert nor Mr. Dent could justly reproach her if two young people who were admirably suited to one another in every respect had seen fit to astonish her beyond all measure by calmly announcing that they had exchanged vows of eternal fidelity.

‘My dear child,’ she exclaimed, enfolding Clarissa in a tender, maternal embrace, ‘I can’t tell you how happy you have made me! There is nobody—I can truly say *nobody*—whom I would rather welcome as a daughter-in-law, and, fastidious as dear Guy is, I am quite sure that he could not have made a better choice.’

Considering that the bride-elect was, or was going to be, a rich woman, while the expectant bridegroom could hardly be quoted at a high figure in the matrimonial market, there was a hint of patronage about this speech which might have amused some people. But it did not amuse Clarissa, who was disposed to accept her new-found happiness in a spirit of becoming humility and who thought Lady Luttrell very kind.

For the matter of that, everybody was very kind. Madeline, of course, was overjoyed; but it was scarcely to be anticipated that Madame de Malglaise, Mr. Ingram, and others would hear the news so early as the very next morning and would hasten, without a moment’s loss of time, to offer their heartfelt felicitations. As Guy had not informed any of them, it must be assumed that somebody else had done so, and probably somebody else had deemed it expedient to do so; but Clarissa did not object. She was only too happy that all the world should know how happy she was.

One sad but altogether inevitable drawback to her happiness



was that Guy was compelled to leave her by the night mail for England. His leave was up; there would have been no time to communicate, even if there had been any use in communicating, with the authorities, and all that could be said was that their separation would not be a very prolonged one. Moreover, Aldershot is within easy reach of London.

‘I shall write to you every day until we meet again,’ Guy promised, ‘and you must write to me, too. And then—well, there’s no reason for a long engagement, is there? I suppose it wouldn’t do for us to defy popular superstition by being married in May, but what do you think about June?’

He really did not imagine that there was anything to be urged against a speedy marriage or that any obstacles were likely to be placed in the way of it. His father, he naturally presumed, would share his mother’s satisfaction; he foresaw no opposition on the part of Mr. Dent, whose ambition ought to be pretty well gratified by an alliance with the Luttrells, and as for the honourable hesitation which he had felt at the outset, that troubled him no more. Why, indeed, should it? He was going to marry Clarissa because he loved her, not for the sake of her fortune, the amount of which he had not even had the curiosity to inquire; he would not insult her by referring to the subject; nor, he was very sure, did she require to be told that he was an honest man. There were plenty of other things which she did require to be told, and plenty which he required her to tell him; so that the entire afternoon was occupied in an interchange of questions and answers which were delightful to the persons concerned, but which may safely be left to the imagination of readers who have been, or are destined to be, somewhat similarly circumstanced.

‘Isn’t it terrible,’ exclaimed Clarissa, as they sauntered slowly up the garden in the fading light of evening, ‘to think that we were within a hair’s breadth of never understanding one another at all!’

Guy agreed that it was; but was of opinion that the fault had not lain with him. How could he possibly have divined the truth when she had lost no opportunity of showing that she positively detested the sight of him?

‘I was sitting just over there,’ continued Clarissa, pointing tragically towards the fatal spot, ‘when I overheard your mother telling Madame de Malglaive that you had “taken me *en grippe*.” I don’t like to think about it even now!’

‘Then we won’t think about it,’ returned Guy, who had already been informed of the dismal episode alluded to. ‘We’ll think about the present and the future and forget the past. I have always found that that is the best plan.’

It was, at all events, a plan which he had always adopted and which has its obvious advantages. He was not dishonest; he had confessed on being interrogated that Clarissa was not, strictly speaking, his first love; but he had added, with a firm conviction of his own veracity, that he had never really and seriously loved any other woman before. And that assurance had sufficed for her. Does not everybody in the world make one or two false starts? Had not she herself, when at school, cherished a fugitive fancy for an emaciated and eloquent young curate?

Lady Luttrell, Madeline, and Clarissa drove down to the railway station with Guy to see him off, and, as the occasion was not one that called for tears or fears, the whole four of them were in the best of good spirits. They were to meet again soon—in a few weeks indeed; for Lady Luttrell said it was high time to be thinking about a move northwards, now that the cold weather was quite over and done with.

‘I have written to Robert,’ she told Clarissa, after the train had steamed away, ‘and I suppose you also have sent a letter to your dear, good uncle. It is just possible,’ she added presently, ‘that they may not be quite as delighted with our news as they ought to be; parents and guardians are apt to be so cautious and fussy! But you must not mind that; I will undertake to say that everything shall be arranged and agreed to as soon as I reach London.’

‘I don’t see what difficulty there can be about it,’ answered Clarissa, with a slight touch of incipient combativeness in her tone.

She did not, in truth, see what difficulty could arise. Guy had made his choice, she had made hers, and nobody had either the right or the power to stand between them; it was as simple as that. Lady Luttrell, however, saw plainly enough that there were breakers ahead; and she was scarcely surprised, though she was a little annoyed, when the post brought her, in due course, a very sharp epistolary rebuke from her absent lord.

Sir Robert begged to say distinctly that he must wash his hands of the whole business. At the same time, he must express his regret that, in defiance of his clearly-worded wishes and instruc-

tions, his wife should have thought fit to lend herself to what had all the appearance of being 'a put-up job.' He had seen Guy and he had seen Dent. 'The former, to whom I ventured to give my opinion of the part which he has played in this rather discreditable affair, made out, I am bound to admit, a fairly good case for himself; the latter, I am glad to tell you, acquits me of any complicity in it, but of course refuses his sanction to anything of the kind. He is writing, I believe, to his niece, and will, no doubt, explain to her, as he has already explained to me, that, so far from being an heiress and a free agent, she will for some years to come be entirely dependent upon him. I gather, indeed, that there is no certainty about her ever coming into more than a very moderate fortune. One would have thought that a woman of the world would have taken the trouble to ascertain these details before placing herself and others in so ambiguous a position; but I am afraid, my dear Antoinette, that you will continue to despise prudence and discretion till the end of the chapter.'

This was not a very pleasant letter to receive; but Lady Luttrell, little as she deserved to be scolded, had fully anticipated a scolding. What disquieted her a good deal more than Sir Robert's censure was his surprising assertion that Clarissa was neither an heiress *in esse* nor *in posse*; and thus it was that her ladyship passed through half an hour of painful suspense, which she had some ado to restrain herself from cutting short by going upstairs and knocking at Miss Dent's door. But at the expiration of that interval the girl entered the room, holding several sheets of closely-written note-paper in her hand and looking, upon the whole, less perturbed than might have been expected.

'I have had letters from Guy and from Uncle Tom,' she began. 'I am sorry to say that they are rather unsatisfactory—at least, Uncle Tom's is. He writes in a way which I am sure is meant to be kind; but he says he cannot approve of the engagement and must forbid it. It seems that, by my father's will, I shall only have such money as he may choose to allow me until I come of age, and he says Guy has not enough to marry upon. Then he goes on—oh, here it is! "I need hardly add that I should not feel justified in providing you with the means of making a marriage which, for various reasons, seems to me most unlikely to insure your future happiness." But of course he can be no judge of that.'

Lady Luttrell wrinkled up her brows in distress. 'Certainly he

has no right to say anything so rude and so false,' she declared. 'Still, if he really has the power that he claims—and I suppose a man of business, like Mr. Dent, must know what he is talking about——'

'Oh, he has the power to stop my allowance for a few years to come,' said Clarissa composedly; 'but I should hardly think that he will exercise it when he finds that I am quite determined. I am not in the least afraid of poverty, you see; so that the prospect of being poor for a time doesn't affect me, one way or the other.'

There was a look of quiet obstinacy about the set of the girl's lips which Lady Luttrell had not noticed there before, and which would have been reassuring if it had been possible to count upon the obstinacy of another important person concerned.

'My dear,' she said affectionately, 'I do so thoroughly sympathise with and admire you! You are quite right to disregard threats which I don't think that your uncle ought to address to you without condescending to give reasons, and which I agree with you that he can scarcely be so foolish and so ill-natured as to carry out. After all, his control over you and your money must soon cease. And—and what does Guy say about it?'

Guy, it appeared, had said just what a gentleman and a disinterested lover might have been expected to say. Interviews with his father and with Mr. Dent had failed to convince him that he had anything to repent of or regret; although he admitted that, from their point of view, they were entitled to make some of the accusations that they had brought against him. His own point of view was that when two people loved one another, they were bound to say so, and his experience was that they invariably did. Temporary lack of means, temporary banishment to garrison life in India, temporary worries and discomforts—all these were, no doubt, drawbacks which neither he nor Clarissa had foreseen and which he could not ask her to face without due consideration. Personally, he might be disposed to make rather too light of them. For the rest, he placed himself unreservedly in her hands, assuring her that he would bow to her decision, whatever it might be, and that the only thing which no decision could alter or diminish was his entire devotion to her.

Lady Luttrell breathed more freely after listening to these very noble sentiments. She was strongly of opinion that the drawbacks alluded to would not have to be faced, and that the difference between legal authority and practical ability to exercise

it could be brought home to Mr. Dent. Can a guardian absolutely prohibit the marriage of his ward? Lady Luttrell was not sure; but she had very little doubt as to the feasibility of coercing guardians. And what nonsense, it was to pretend that Clarissa's fortune would be a modest one! Must she not, in any case, succeed eventually to the wealth of her childless uncle, who was known to be a very rich man? These thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of a lady who was not in reality as mercenary as she may appear to be, and who fully meant what she said when she exclaimed:

'Dearest Clarissa, I cannot regret that some obstacles have been placed in your path; because they have been the means of proving to you, as nothing else could have done, how indifferent dear Guy is to questions of money. We old folks, of course, have to consider them, and I frankly own that I should have been alarmed if he had proposed to marry a pauper. But it so happens that he is not going to do that, and I am confident that I shall soon be able to make your uncle see reason. Only perhaps, as this fuss has been raised, we had better lose no more time about returning home. It is always easier to arrange matters by word of mouth than by letter.'

Nature or Providence, as has already been mentioned, had not seen fit to endow Clarissa with any comforting appreciation of the humorous side of things; so that she did not find this innocent speech half as amusing as it really was. She replied quite gravely:

'Guy does not mind marrying a pauper, and it seems to me that that ought to be sufficient. I should think that when Uncle Tom is convinced that we have made up our minds, he will allow me enough to dress upon—which is all that I shall ask him for. But even if he refuses, it will make no difference.'

'Oh, we must not be too peremptory,' said Lady Luttrell, laughing; 'we must not have family quarrels, when there is so little necessity for them. Write to that troublesome old uncle of yours; tell him that we are coming home, and that I insist upon keeping you with us in Grosvenor Place for the first few days. In that way I may contrive to have a talk with him before you meet and to smooth his feathers down, instead of ruffling them up, as I am afraid you would be inclined to do. Leave him to me, and everything will soon come right, you will see.'

Within a week Lady Luttrell, whose energy and resolution

were generally equal to any emergency that might arise, had broken up the Pau establishment, had despatched the heavy luggage and some of the servants by sea from Bordeaux and was herself *en route* for London, accompanied by her daughter, her young friend and such attendant domestics as she considered indispensable. Of her husband's opposition in the task which she had taken in hand she had no great fear, while what she knew of Mr. Dent encouraged her to believe that, like the majority of his sex, he would sacrifice a good deal for the sake of a quiet life. She had at first entertained some secret apprehensions respecting Guy; but since Guy seemed disposed to stand to his guns, victory was to all intents and purposes assured.

(*To be continued.*)

*IMPRESSIONS OF A FIRST NIGHT.*

*Seven o'clock.*—I go and get a bit of dinner at Gatti's. Gatti's is very full, and with difficulty I find a table to myself. Gatti's is very hot, too, on this close, autumnal evening, and I feel that food will be only tolerable administered in liquid form—chicken broth iced, followed by some of Disraeli's three-guinea champagne jelly. In my agitation I find myself talking with tender, almost tearful politeness to the waiter; I can't bear the idea of treating him as a mere automaton; I desire to make a friend of him, a real, lifelong friend, so that (if the play should unhappily be a failure) I may have one crumpled shirt-front at least to turn to for pity and consolation.

But the waiter rather resents my advances, and waves me off with his napkin; he feels, no doubt, that such attentions are unnatural; he suspects them as the prelude to a very small tip. When he gives my order in at the kitchen I see him watching me with disfavour from under his bushy Milanese eyebrows. He even complains of me to a cadaverous colleague, who shakes his stiff, black head and laughs. It is clear they both think me tipsy.

While I wait I try to read the evening paper, but it all seems blurred. General Duchesne, away in Madagascar, has somehow managed to stab a woman in Poplar; butchered Armenians write from Devonshire that they've raised another crop of new peas; the Pope is dying by thousands of fever and want of the simplest medical remedies. At last, I find myself reading the table-cloth attentively.

And then two gentlemen come and sit at my table. They are very polite, and explain that they wouldn't dream of intruding on me, only the place is so full and they are in a hurry. One of them I recognise as the critic of a minor paper; the other recognises me, and says, with a grin, he supposes I am going to-night? Why, you surely might as well ask a gentleman who is going to be hanged whether he proposes to be present. The minor critic eyes me with dull disapproval; he has seen so many first nights, so many failures, that I suppose he only sees another in embryo in me. I feel inclined piteously to ask him to permit me to pay for his dinner, or at least to beg him to be good enough to eat

mine, which somehow tastes exactly like cotton-wool. He raps the table angrily, and is savage with the waiter; he is treated, in consequence, with the greatest deference and celerity. Heine says somewhere that the reason we English are so well attended to abroad is because we treat the waiting class like beasts of burden. I tell the critic this hysterically, and he eyes me with duller disapproval than ever. I have begun the evening badly; my visit to Gatti's is not at all a success. *Absit, o absit omen!*

So I arise and go unto the theatre. In my effort to bow myself away courteously from the minor critic and his friend, I nearly fall down; I make my way to the door by a course so devious that everybody stares. It's a lovely night, close and still and starry—far too fine to produce so poor a thing as my play on.

*Eight o'clock.*—At the theatre the scene of the first act is set; the stage is full of men in shirt-sleeves rushing about with chairs and properties. I make my way down to the curtain, and through a ragged hole I see a morose man in a black tie sitting in the front row of the stalls. What an expression! What hostility to my work clearly expressed in that heavy lurking eye and cruel jaw! I can hear the hum and murmur of the pit and gallery and the tuning of a fiddle. Somebody in the gallery cries *brayvo!* ironically, and there is a laugh. Really, I wish people would make up their minds to be serious when they come to the first night of my play.

Somehow, wherever I go, no one seems to see me, and I get in everybody's way. I never felt so thoroughly out of place—so neglected—in my life. At last I fall up against one of the company—a gentleman who plays a small part with no particular skill, and who has been dressed for hours. I must talk to some one, so I take him gravely aside and make him a long, incoherent speech, trying to express to him my gratitude for all his care and attention. I say that it won't be his fault if the play fails—true enough, heaven knows!—and that I shall never, never forget all I owe him. He appears rather incredulous and puzzled; and, after shaking hands solemnly, we glide apart.

On my way upstairs the call-boy nearly knocks me down, shouting, '*Overture and beginners, please!*' If the piece is a success, and I become a power in the theatre, that boy will get his notice on Saturday morning. Upstairs my leading man is putting the final touches to his countenance in his dressing-room; I stand looking at him in dreary silence. He asks me where I am



going to see the piece from ; I open my mouth and try to say 'the wings.' No sound comes, for my tongue feels like a piece of dry velvet, and refuses its office ; so I simply point downstairs and crook my forefinger to indicate that I shall be standing in a corner. He laughs, and asks me how I feel ? His dresser brings me half a bottle of soda-water. I drink it, and reply, 'Awful !'

*Half-past eight.*—The curtain rises on the first act ; the house settles itself, and I hear a loud 'ssh !' In ten minutes the act is in full, satisfactory swing, and we get our first laughs, our first applause. It is very strange, but before we are half way through the act there seems to come something over the footlights from the audience—some fluid, some essence, something quite impalpable, and yet something I can distinctly feel, that clearly expresses their interest and amusement. It comes surging over the footlights in waves and gusts ; it wraps me up, as Sancho Panza says of sleep, 'like a blanket ;' it moistens my tongue, it cools my forehead, it steadies the shaking hand that grasps the wing. The master-carpenter, who is standing at my elbow listening, murmurs in my grateful ear, 'We've gripped 'em !' Nor is the grip loosened by a few truculent cries from the gallery to the leading lady to 'speak up !' It seems, indeed, to increase in tightness and intensity, and the curtain falls and is raised again and again to applause that is of the healthy nature of enthusiasm.

'That's all right, sir,' cries the master-carpenter, 'as right as rain !' Whereupon I execute a short but spirited dance.

I run up to the leading man's dressing-room and finish my dance there. I drink more soda-water, and listen ecstatically to a note sent round from the front in which the master-carpenter's expression is repeated, with the added lofty epithet—*magnificent !* Well, not quite that, I think (they are fond of superlatives in the theatre) ; but on the whole as well-received a first act as even the most sanguine author could desire.

Budding success seems to bring life and excitement on to the stage—into the passages and the dressing-rooms. Nobody walks ; everybody runs, talking and laughing. Again the call-boy nearly knocks me down with his 'Second act, beginners, please !' I smile at him, and think how natural such excitement is. He's a nice boy ; he shall never leave us, but grow old and grey-headed as a call-man.

*Nine-fifteen.*—While I stand at the wing, listening delightedly to the laughter that greets the opening scenes of the second

act, the applause that punctuates the leading man's tirade, my thoughts cannot help wandering to those dreary winter days, nearly three years ago, when, in a back room off the Strand, a pipe between my teeth, the rain lashing the dingy windows, I doggedly wrote the play. I little thought then I should ever really stand listening to the speeches I sat and mumbled as I wrote; and yet I cannot deny but that I hoped, even against hope, as it seemed. *Fac et spera!* should be, no doubt is, the motto of every literary man, more particularly of every aspiring dramatic author. So I did it and I hoped, and the play was hawked about to every manager in London. 'Can't see anything in it,' wrote the eminent A.; 'first act all right, and then it goes all to pieces,' said the remarkable B.; 'wants altogether reconstructing; no good whatever in its present shape,' declared that acute judge C. And so on, only more so, from D. and E. and F.

At last it falls, rather wearily, into G.'s hands, who sends for me. A little alteration here, some cutting there, and here we are half way through the second act, and so far there seems no diminution of our success.

*Fac et spera!* therefore, thou great unacted; and be sure of this, that one day, soon or late, that play of thine will (if only it have the true stuff in it) find its home and its audience to laugh at it and applaud. As Sancho Panza says again, 'The stone that is fit for the wall is not left to lie in the road.'

But, in the meantime, what weariness, what discouragement, what tortures for the sensitive! Perhaps the worst of all (once you have got the troubles of reception over) is the utter inability of the average actor to realise his author's conception—to get anywhere near the character the author has drawn, even to speak the lines with the proper emphasis. In that common case all you can do (after showing him where he is wrong, which he will probably resent) is to let him go his own road; don't insist on his coming yours, for then you will get no result whatever—no approximation even to anything human. You will not be able to force him into your characterisation, and you will have destroyed such individuality as he may possess of his own. Many a play has been ruined by an author insisting on the certain, definite reading of a part, which the actor couldn't give, because it didn't fit his personality, and he was too little of an artist to change or adapt it. Let him, after doing all in your power to show him what you want, go his own way, and be thankful if, in the result, you get any approach to

the character you originally drew, or, above all, anything acceptable to an audience.

I was standing at the wing, thinking of these things and listening to the act drawing to a close, when suddenly it seemed to me there was a diminution in that fluid sympathy and interest which hitherto had floated so comfortably and abundantly over the footlights. The links between the stage and the audience seemed less tense, the scene seemed less warm, the actors no longer appeared moving in that imperceptible but palpable atmosphere that hitherto had given them confidence in themselves and assurance of their public. Was the remarkable B. right after all when he declared that, after the first act, it went all to pieces? Was it the leading lady who was failing to hit the right note, or was the right note not there for her to hit? Was the interest of the house too tense to float, or had it altogether evaporated? My old anxiety returned; my tongue grew stiff once more. I looked for comfort to my friend the master-carpenter, but he altogether evaded my eye. When at last the curtain fell, it fell indisputably to less applause than to the first act; plenty of it, to be sure, but clearly not to the same enthusiastic note.

I turned to the master-carpenter for an explanation, but he had rushed to see after his men for the change of scene. I went rather apprehensively upstairs to find the leading man fuming in his dressing-room. He declares it all my fault, because I insisted on an anti-climax. He says that if the third act doesn't put us right, it will be all up. I drink some more soda-water, and conclude that during the third act it will be best for me to go for a walk outside.

*Ten o'clock.*—There is a passage outside our stage door, and there I go for a walk. It is perhaps fifty yards long, and up and down it I trudge like a convict taking exercise in a prison yard. The gallery door opens on to it, and higher up there is a slit for passing scenery through that looks down on to the stage. Some of the scene-shifters stand there looking in; hot gusts of air and the voices of the actors rise up through it. But from the front of the house absolute silence; neither laughter, nor applause, nor any sign of existence whatever. For any sound that rises, so far as I can judge at present, the third act might as well be played to empty benches.

Up and down the passage I dolefully trudge, supported by one of the company who feels for my misery and apprehension.

We talk gravely of everything but the piece; he tells me of his early career and struggles, and I listen sympathetically. I feel inclined to tell him something of mine, but conclude that after all he is seeing something of them for himself. Another joins us and observes solemnly, 'I need scarcely tell you that your play depends entirely on its last act.' I am much indebted to his penetration, I'm sure; I reply mournfully that I know that very well. Most plays do.

As the act draws to its close one or two people slink out of the gallery door. It's all over, I feel; let me go home and go to bed—let me try and forget I ever was mad enough to think the wretched thing was going to be a success.

But my good friend takes me kindly by the arm and says that the act is ending, and we had better go down on to the stage. Exactly like the chief and most inconsolable mourner at a funeral, I go down the stone stairs and shuffle along the sloping side of the stage among people who make way for me, and at whom I dare not look. I feel a hundred years old, a broken man, that I shall never get over it. I go to my old place at the wing, and find there the master-carpenter, who is smiling. Very strange, but even as I go to my place I am at once conscious of the presence of the old grateful fluid sympathy and interest I felt so strongly during the first act. There it is back again, making the footlights burn the brighter, vivifying as with a gas the whole scene. I know instinctively by its presence that the last act is all right—that it has more than pulled us through, though at present the applause has not begun. As the curtain falls and is raised again and again, the master-carpenter bends forward and listens. 'That's all right, sir,' he says confidently. 'I've seen so many first nights, and always know when the applause is genuine. That's all right, sir; you take my word for it.'

And so it seems, for the company are all called, and I am called. I have a vision as I bow of a house that seems all in white standing up and clapping. It looks to me, somehow, like Martin's picture of 'The Plains of Heaven,' with all the long rows of angels. The applause continues when the curtain is finally lowered, and some one from the gallery calls 'Spee-eech!' No one responds to the invitation, and we are free to go home to bed, with the happy consciousness of having all of us scored a success—author and actors and even the master-carpenter.

As I go home across Trafalgar Square in the clear, still night,

I cannot help thinking of the many pens scribbling away at that moment in the newspaper offices, nor can I keep myself from speculating, with a certain sickening apprehensiveness, as to what they are all going to say.

That is one of the many trials and terrors of the theatre—that your first nights are never over. There is the terror of the play itself—whether it is going to succeed or not with the audience ; then comes the fear of the morning papers, and then the evening, and then the weeklies, each bringing its own particular load of apprehension. And heaviest of all, perhaps, the fear that, when the critics have done their best and their worst, the public may still hold aloof and fail to appreciate your work as the masterpiece it may or may not have been proclaimed. To say nothing of fog, or war, or the death of a royal prince, or some great counteracting success at another theatre, any one of which may come and cut the booking to ribbons at the very high-water mark of your success.

Truly, as Labiche once said to Dumas *filis*, ‘ You won’t work long for the theatre before you find it almost entirely destroys your digestion ! ’

*THE DANE AT HOME.*

THE Dane is a good fellow. One comes, I think, inevitably to this conclusion after a somewhat intimate acquaintance with him. His country also is not the tame, uninteresting tooth of land one is prone to fancy from the summary of it given by the geography books.

To get in touch with the Danes and Denmark proper, it is desirable not to sojourn too long in the towns. They are called towns, these little red-roofed, stork-inhabited, stone-paved settlements of from two to thirty thousand souls. But really they are nothing better than tolerably developed villages. The tone of existence in them is distinctly parochial and bucolic. Flocks and herds make noises in the streets, the people have mirrors affixed to their windows to give them sly yet exhilarating glimpses of the passers-by, and the stranger within their bounds is marked down in a moment, and becomes a most welcome topic of conjecture and an object for all eyes to fasten upon. They are so very rural, in fact, that the white mist, which in the gay summer season rises about bedtime from the rich grass lands in the neighbourhood, has no difficulty towards midnight in covering them with its film and keeping them (storks and all) as cool as it keeps the grass blades in the meadows. The one or two high chimneys in their midst must not be taken for indications of ironworks or factories. Thither night and day clatter the milk carts with milk from the farms for miles round; and in them butter is made on behalf of an entire district for shipment to England. If there is another building of some size in the place, you may safely assume that it is a slaughter-house. The slaughter-house, like the dairy, is closely connected with England. Waggon-loads of carcasses go from its gates periodically towards the nearest railway station, whence they journey at a dismal rate to Esbjerg, the chief port of shipment to Great Britain.

The people are divisible roughly into but two classes—farmers and their dependants (including the tradesmen who live on both), and professional men. In Jutland, at any rate, one sees very few estates like those of our hereditary aristocrats, and one hears nothing at all about noblemen. The land is studded, from the

German frontier to the Skaw, with countless little sturdy farmsteads separated from each other by nothing but the level fields and meadows of their freeholds. Trees in West Jutland are rare; hedges do not exist. The streams are trivial and meander deep set in the country, hid by the luxuriant flowery meads that clasp them closely. You may get an horizon of low moorland hills, beaded with little swellings—the graves of the old Danes; or you are free to guess where the land ends and the sky begins. If you are near a house, you will also be near the various plaintive kine, sheep and lambs and horses that are tethered in the grass contiguous to the road. These quadrupeds know no freedom in Denmark. They are always a prey to nerves and the curiosity that is the outcome of their restricted mode of life. They scent the stranger afar off, and proclaim their anxiety both with their throats and their terrified leaps and bounds. The sluggish Danish trains move them to frenzy as they saunter past them. Yet they are Denmark's chief aids to a livelihood—they and the vast fields of rye, thickly sown and so greatly beautified with blue cornflowers. The perfume of clover is over all the land, travelling on the genial breath of the west wind. It seems to intoxicate the larks with rapture; they are singing above it as fervently at half-past nine at night as at five o'clock in the morning. And as much as anything else, it reconciles the tourist to the lack of the sensational in Denmark's landscapes.

They live full lives here in the dog days. I know not why, considering how little north of us Jutland is, its days should be, as they are, so emphatically longer than ours in midsummer. I have, on the Limfiord (latitude  $57^{\circ}$ ) read the newspaper in my bedroom at half-past ten P.M. without the aid of a candle. While I read, the villagers played skittles in the alley under my window; and beyond the hoary chestnut trees of the garden (with clots of starlings on their bare top boughs) the sky was still crimson and gold in the west, with the long woolly lines of vapour only just beginning to swathe the land like a blanket. On the other side of the inn the traffic was as vigorous then as at noonday. Carriers' carts creaked up to the door and dray-loads of squeaking pigs made other music than the lark's. Double chaises, with cushions of red or green velvet, and half a dozen happy villagers to each (the men all with great china-bowled pipes in their mouths) swung lazily by, raising a dust. And the lowing of troubled cows and calves came as much from the road as from the illimitable meadow

beyond, attached to the historic old manor-house (now a mere dairy farm), whose buildings were quite concealed by the tall trees that girdle them. The inn damsels, sewing-girls, kitchenmaids, the daughters of the house, and a friend or two had now set aside all the cares of the day, and were rolling each other about on the dewy grass under the chestnut trees like so many lambkins. Little they cared for Prim Propriety, with the pursed lip and the demure eye. And the landlady with the immeasurable waist, who by day held all the maids leashed to their respective tasks with inflexible yet not unkind severity, stood in the doorway, with her fat beringed fingers in her yielding sides, and disturbed the starlings periodically with her stentorian peals of laughter at the antics of her dependants. Yet at five o'clock the next morning, with her own Rhadamanthine hand, she will pull the bell rope that shall awaken each lass; and by six the establishment will be again in a normal state of activity. As for the worthy landlord, he is haymaking until eleven P.M., and it will be odd if he is not up before his dame wakes every soul in the house with her call bell.

This, be it understood, was ten miles from a railway station. Not that the train makes so much difference in Denmark. It does not, as with us, carry with it, wherever it appears, sentence of death to the old picturesque order of things. No, indeed. I have frequently spent four hours in it in the effort to cover forty miles. The railway here is a State concern, and it is just for all the world as if the State said to itself: 'I love my few children so dearly, and they are so indispensable as taxpayers, that I will never, never risk their precious lives in my trains. Besides, coal is so terribly expensive in Denmark, and after all it does not matter much to the majority of my people whether they travel at ten miles an hour or thirty.' I met an agreeable young butter merchant from England in one of the towns, who told me he did all his journeying in Denmark on a cycle. It saved his time, to say nothing of his temper. The Danes who heard this avowal were not humiliated. They merely smiled in the courteous Danish way and pleaded guilty; nor did they anathematise the State. And yet they were town Danes, living within sound of the bells of a cathedral nearly a thousand years old, and with two daily papers of their very own to stimulate their activities. Theirs was a town with all the ordinary appliances and institutions of a high state of civilisation, including telephones and electric bells to its bettermost houses, and with a charming pleasure-wood in which was a *café chantant*



where, in 1895, that sublime song 'Ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay,' sung to accompaniments from divers lands, created a riot of enthusiasm. Yet it had not inspired them with a yearning to move fast through life.

I like all the Danes, from the professionalists, as they are called, to the stolid little country children who 'cap' so assiduously to the stranger man. But with this proviso: that they have not adulterated their native character with too much of the tincture of cosmopolitanism. The American Dane is often a highly unpleasing specimen of a man. He has assimilated perforce much of the vulgarity and dollar-worship so common across the Atlantic, and he openly despises his untravelled compatriots for their simplicity and contentment in that state of life in which circumstances and their own want of enterprise have fixed them. The genuine Dane would, I believe, die rather than cheat his fellow-man, and especially a stranger. But your emigrant Dane, home for a holiday from Iowa or Minnesota, or, worse still, returned as incapable, is quite another pair of shoes. Withal, if English traders in Danish butter and meat and English importers of cycles to this excellent cycling country may be believed, in all honest dealing the Danish trader is as keen for his own interests as he ought to be for the sake of his self-respect.

'We are not rich here in Denmark,' said to me a stalwart farmer who had been coaxed into my room at a wayside inn merely because he had a little English; 'but we do not spend much.' He and his household (a large one) ate margarine. All his butter went to England. His pleasures at the inn of an evening were not of the costly kind: a penny cup of coffee or a three-halfpenny bottle of lager beer, with perhaps a cigar at five for twopence. He disabused my mind of the idea that his country is lightly taxed, and that it knows next to nothing of trials like ours under the Poor Laws. I was sorry to hear, moreover, that there are wicked old men in Denmark who assign their property to their children and play the pauper, throwing themselves upon their native parish, which is then bound to maintain them. They cannot be numerous, however. And the same may be said of the privileged estates of certain notorious individuals, which pay nothing towards the burdens of the State. The Dane loves fair treatment, and he would feel more affection for good (if despotic) King Christian the Ninth if he would remedy these undeniable grievances.

As may be supposed, they are not bigotedly religious in Den-

mark. In my ramblings in Jutland I came across many parish priests who from their talk and dress were no way recognisable as such. At Rold, near one of the most beautiful Norwegian pine woods imaginable, I hobnobbed with one in the village inn. He drank brandy and soda, and so did I. He cycled and so did I. It was my cycle that attracted him towards me, he said, and I was fain to let him try it before a small group of his parishioners. Afterwards I mentioned the church and my desire to see it. Then it was that he proclaimed his calling with a smile, and said there was nothing in it except pews and a spittoon or two. The parish priest in Denmark is not highly paid. But no man need have less work on his hands.

At Thorsager, where there is the best-preserved round church in the land, one Sunday afternoon I chanced to reach the churchyard, on visitation bent, when the priest, in his picturesque white ruff, was dismissing his flock at the porch. Evidently there was the utmost good feeling between him and his people. One and all they turned towards me with astonished eyes; the place is so remote and the foreigner such a rarity. But in a moment the minister regained his presence of mind. With the civility that is seldom wanting in the Dane, he suggested briefly to his open-mouthed rustics that they would do well to go home, and then offered me his services. He showed me the remarkable interior of his little church (some thirty-three paces by twenty), with its central dome supported on four red brick columns, and reminded me of its age and the pagan worship that here preceded it, and then regretted that he could do no more. But Thorsager's hospitality did not end here. From the church I was constrained to enter a neighbouring house, consume coffee and cakes, and hold a sort of formal reception that was, I imagine, hurriedly arranged. The number of hands I shook in that half-hour was surprising. This sort of thing irks an Englishman, but I could not avoid it. Subsequently, much against my wishes, I was given, for guidance and companionship, a heavy young farmer who happened to be going to the village, four miles away, that was my next stage in the day's pleasure. The poor fellow was as nervous as I was dissatisfied. We were both, I am sure, glad when those four miles were covered.

The Dane is often as proud as he is hospitable. You must not slight his well-meant courtesies, or deny him the pleasure of a little self-sacrifice. Many times, in my jaunts, I called at houses

for a drink of—anything; and in no single case was I permitted to pay aught in requital. One little girl, between Mariager and Randers, who brought to the door a large two-handled mug of herb ale, was extraordinarily huffed when I offered her a coin as well as my best thanks and smiles. Twice she cried ‘Ingenting!’ and then (I really believe with the beginning of tears in her eyes) she shut the door upon me. This reminds me also of a bright little boy of twelve or so, whose pipe I filled from my pouch during a railway journey from Aarhus. I did it surreptitiously: he had set the thing aside to exchange hilarious salutations with some gaily dressed girls in the next car. It took him a minute or two to solve the riddle, but the tell-tale face of an old woman in the carriage eventually enlightened him. At the time he said nothing. He puffed the tobacco (they smoke almost from the cradle in Denmark), and seemed to like it. Later he drew forth a neat little gilt case, holding one cigar, and when he left the carriage he lifted his cap in the prettiest way and offered me the cigar, with an imperative ‘Vær saa god’ (‘Be so good’). I had no alternative but to take it. Yet when I smoked it (in his honour) I found it scarcely worthy of so well-mannered and high-spirited a lad.

I had the good fortune to be in Denmark on that great festival, St. Hans’ Day. It fell on a Sunday, which rather helped than hindered it. I am sorry to say I know nothing about St. Hans. There is, however, no doubt about the esteem in which his memory is held by the modern Danes. I was at an excellent hotel right in the north at the time, with the Cattedag sands close to the door and the Cattedag breezes whistling lustily through my bedroom windows. ‘You are happy to have come here on St. Hans’ Day,’ said one of the lady guests to me at the dinner table. ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘Do not go early to bed to-night, and you will see,’ she replied. This, of course, was enough to excite curiosity, and so I amused myself, with some impatience, until the evening. The festivities were not to begin before the night had set in; and as it was midsummer that seemed to argue a very late function. Luckily, with the evening came clouds and a somewhat premature darkness. The streets of the little town grew populous, the inhabitants dividing into two main groups, one of which made for the wind-blown wood half a mile away, and the other drifting towards the heavy sands of the seashore. I threw in my lot with the former section at first, and duly reached a little platform erected among the trees, with green boughs and roses woven with

the woodwork, and a couple of musicians, fiddlers both, on a daïs. They were to dance here in the sylvan gloom; and dance they did to an extremely poor accompaniment for which I, at all events, got compensation in the romance of my surroundings. They danced in their walking clothes: the girls in such quaint mocks of the fashionable attire of Paris as had wandered so far north of France; and the youths in thick boots, and some with long pipes in their mouths. The gallantry was not overwhelming. Though a score or two of eager damsels sat or stood unpartnered, several male couples were to be seen moving heavily in the throng. The girls were not without self-consciousness, and the lads seemed none too exuberantly gay. But the fiddlers fiddled on, and the waning light shone through the trees on these celebrants of St. Hans' Day; and the vendors of lemonade and lager beer and gingerbread in the two little booths adjacent did a fair business. I wondered for how many centuries the forefathers of these honest Jutlanders had celebrated such revels as these. Probably a thousand years ago somewhat similar caperings might have been seen in this same wood, or its progenitor, in honour of Odin, Freya, and Thor. The Danes of the Viking age, however, poured other libations than these. One may judge of that from the enormous horn drinking-vessels of their time which decorate the Copenhagen museum.

This dancing in the wood was too stiff and spiritless an entertainment to be long endured. I left the revellers to themselves, and in a drizzle of rain made my way to the coast. A string of small bonfires was here burning, with little boys and girls going round and round them. Now and again the children would break order, and either crawl smartly through the flames or leap them one after the other. The oldsters of the village stood at a little distance on the coast sand-heaps, watching this resuscitation of their own childish enthusiasms. I went from fire to fire, crushing under foot, by the way, a deal of nasty fish refuse, cast out from the red-roofed cottages on the seaboard, and cast up by the perturbed Cattedgat. Anon I came to a towering arrangement of tar barrels, about the base of which several gentlemen were besmearing shavings and other combustible matter, talking volubly the while. Near at hand was a new shed adorned with flags. Inside it a table was laid with plates and spoons; a huge bowl of strawberries was in the middle of the table, also a beaker of such thick cream as, I think, one does not see out of Denmark.

There were further several bottles labelled 'Sherry Wine'; and bouquets of field flowers and five lighted (and guttering) candles gave brightness to the scene. An officious young gentleman played sentinel to this desirable chamber and kept aloof the humble, small villagers. These were allowed to do no more than peep in, exclaim 'Oh!' in admiration, and make room for others. When the tar barrels had been coaxed to burn, and their flames had lighted up the faces of the entire community assembled in the neighbourhood, I accepted an invitation to the strawberries. A score of ladies and gentlemen thus feasted. We drank each other's health in the sherry wine, agreed that the barrels had burned well, and towards half-past eleven went home cheerfully to our beds. Thus ended St. Hans' Day, the mystery whereof is still a mystery to me. I leave it to others to say exactly what part of its ceremonies are pagan, and what part a modern graft upon inherited tradition.

I am afraid the Dane does not respect his parish church over much. His conduct in it on a week-day would often shock an English vicar very greatly. I have caught a bevy of damsels frolicking in the village place of worship as if it were a certificated home for hide-and-seek. The workman engaged in restoration takes neither the hat from his head nor the pipe from his mouth when he carries material from the churchyard into the church aisle. And in the matter of cleanliness I would far sooner trust a Danish attic than the ordinary Danish church.

The church here seems by no means to have a very intimate hold upon the affections of the people. I say 'seems' because it were arrogant indeed for a stranger to build strong conclusions on such a subject on his mere impressions. Be that as it may. At any rate, they do not anywhere in Jutland turn their churches into laundries and hotels as they quite lately did in Iceland. On the contrary, it is not easy to get inside them on a week-day unless you hit upon the weather-beaten dame with the black kerchief about her head, whose office it is to tend the graves and clean up every Saturday. Twice I invaded the sacred buildings in an unpardonable way. Once with results that might have hurt my nervous system had this been weaker than it is. On this occasion I got in by a dismal charnel-house that connected feebly with the churchyard. I found myself among a cumber of immense wooden coffins with tarnished plates to them, and a garniture of mouldered wooden angels and cherubs on their lids.

There were bones too, of course. But the worst thing of all happened in my gropings towards the door which, I surmised, led into the church. I accidentally knocked off the lid of a small coffin, and therein, by match-light, I beheld the stark little form of a child five or six years old, with its withered little fingers folded pathetically upon its breast. Its skin was like leather, and, save for its eyes, it was as well preserved as a catholic saint embalmed for periodical exhibition. Judging from its neighbour dead, this little one may have been immured a century or more ago. This church was near the west coast; perhaps the North Sea air has preservative qualities. Elsewhere I struck upon other of these sepulchral crypts much less tolerable.

We in England have, speaking generally, two kinds of churches: the spired and the towered. In the country parts of Denmark they seem to have but one: the saddleback-towered. The genius whitewash rules all the churches. They gaze at the traveller from the roadside, or from their windy perches on the low hill-tops, with an effect that is almost eerie in the twilight. Architectural charm they have very little indeed. If they have a Norman window or porch (and many of them have), this is nearly sure to have been maltreated by a modern mason; the whitewash over all finishes the mason's brutality. For the most part they are half granite and half brick; the nave and aisles (where these exist) of granite, the tower of brick. But granite or brick, the whitewasher has, in nine cases out of ten, coloured them all white. Their appearance is, however, slightly improved by the red tiles to the tower's saddle, sometimes to the entire roof. And they are often quite saved from obloquy by the beauty and order of the little churchyards (rose-gardens, these might be called) which encompass them.

Inside, the churches are now as prim as the Lutheran heart can desire. But there are relics enough to be found of the times previous to Luther. Fine wooden altar-pieces are common; so are grotesque sixteenth-century carved pulpits; and in one church (that of Saltum in the Hjörning division) you may see, set on shelves by the wall, a collection of stone and wooden effigies which tell very forcibly of the change this church has undergone. There are few, indeed, of such stately monuments as inspired a stanza or two of Gray's 'Elegy,' and are a glory of our village churches. Putting Roeskilde, Odense, and Sorö out of count (as royal burial-places), the one impressive example of this kind in

my experience is the church of Öland, in the Limfjord. Here the great house of Levetzau, which provided royal counsellors and generals for the kings of Norway and Denmark, is memorialised in plenty of white marble. But the manor of Öland has now passed from the Levetzau family, and for about a hundred years none of its members have been buried here. This church, however, like many in Jutland, has kept many morsels of its Catholic past. One may reverence or jibe at them according to one's turn of mind. As a whole, the country churches of the land are disappointing. They are pleasant little studies in white and scarlet, and they break the fearful uniformity of some of the moorland ridges, and that is the best that can be said of them.

One picturesque feature of Jutland life must not be forgotten. In this country, where the railway system is but imperfectly developed, they are dependent in the rural districts upon the travelling bagman much as they were long ago. He is, however, called a *handelsmand*, or merchant, which seems to give him considerable dignity. In summer he may be met on all the roads in a stout cart drawn by two horses, and with a number of colossal wicker-cases behind him containing his goods. He is, as may be imagined, an interesting personage when he can be persuaded to unbend from the subject of samples; and knows the people he visits probably better even than the different parish priests.

These gentlemen in summer appear to lead an unresting life. Twice in village inns I was awakened in the very smallest hours by the noise of their wheels outside and their heavy tread upstairs to bed. And once, at midday, I returned to my room in another inn, to find a hale young *handelsmand* in his clothes, buried beneath one of the awful thick down beds that as a rule do duty here in winter only. They did not apologise for the liberty they had taken when I asked for information about the intruder. The Danish country inn is a very free and easy institution. You must take what accommodation is given you and be thankful; confident only on one point, that you will never be robbed or overcharged. This young bagman had been travelling all through the night and he craved a little noontide rest. The thermometer in my room was about 73°. One would have thought he wished to be reduced to a state of liquefaction. But in due time he came downstairs, infinitely refreshed, was as polite in his regrets to me as if he had been bred at a court, and the ostler was forthwith bidden to put his horses once more into the shafts.

The ordinary frequenters of these inns are not of so genteel a class. Some of them have very red noses, as well as uncomely leather-like ears standing as straight from their heads as a long course of pressure from their caps or hats has ensured. They keep to the common-room, however. Not for them is the inner chamber, with its mirrors and a couch. Still less are they entitled to invade the innermost apartment of all, a room often quite startling in the magnificence of its velvet and gilding, with photograph albums and worked footstools, and on the walls the very best German prints to be obtained from the itinerant merchants. This last is the family state-room, for use on Sundays and festivals. It does not bear what one may term a homely look, and for all its splendour it is likely to be the least clean room in the house. The village tipplers and gossips are confined to the large room provided with a bar. Here they exchange remarks with the inn-keeper and his assistants, drink cognac at two glasses for three-halfpence, read the paper, and fill up all their unoccupied moments by throwing dice. Throughout the land you will invariably find several leather cups in these inn common-rooms and the *cafés*. Even as in the large hotels the guests help digestion after a *table d'hôte* dinner with the little numbered cubes of bone, so in the humble *kro*, or public-house, you may expect to hear the animated cry of the man who has twice in succession thrown sixes against his opponent. Not that the Dane is a gambler. He plays, more often by far than not, for love or diversion pure and simple. And while he plays, like as not, he will hum the tune of either 'After the Ball,' 'Daisy Bell,' or the other latest melody imported from England. Our popular songs seem to suit him to a marvel, just as his butter finds a convenient home with us.

In physique the average Dane satisfies the eye, even if this be a trifle critical. He is a broad-shouldered fellow, and gives the impression of being stronger than he knows. Compulsory military service does him good. He may grumble at it (as who would not?), but he admits that there is something to be said in its favour. Besides, however improbable it may seem to the rest of us, he thinks there is always the possibility of the time coming when the Schleswig-Holstein 'snatching' will have to be reconsidered. Germany is not loved in Denmark. The Dane thinks it impudent of the writers of the geography manuals to call the North Sea the German Ocean. It is too gross an inference. Of itself, this might be taken as an incentive to the land-grabbing south-



erners to plot for the annexation, sooner or later, of the whole of Jutland, to the very sandbank at the head of the Skaw. For these and other reasons the Dane submits fairly to his military training. Somehow though, for all his stalwart build and ruddy complexion, I cannot think these cousins of ours are long-lived. The graves in the churchyard support me in my belief. Octogenarians appear to be much less common than with us, even allowing for our larger population. I know not what to blame for this, unless it be the awkward winters, which are more severe than ours and less dry than those of Sweden. The cold sloppy weather of a Danish January, after three or four feet of snow have fallen, is inimitably unpleasant. Hot houses do not reconcile to it. These, in fact, are aids to constitutional mischief; and, though it may excite laughter to say so, for my part I believe the Dane would live longer if he had longer beds, broad enough moreover to roll about in. The ordinary Dane is condemned to spend all his nights on an area of feathers or wool no greater than he would get in a ship's cabin. Perhaps, too, he smokes a little in excess, tempted to do so by the cheapness of the bad cigars which may be bought wherever there is the semblance of a shop.

The finest Danes are to be seen at the railway stations. They are nothing in the world but officials, though State officials. The majority of them, however, I am told, are retired military men. They show this in their deportment. As they bustle about, rather pompously, with papers in their hands concerned only with the transport of twopenny-halfpenny goods, or with the arrival of one train and the despatch of another, you would think they had grave national cares on their shoulders. Buckle swords to their hips and give them cocked hats and you would turn them at once into so many good-looking field-m Marshals. And the most imposing of them all is the gentleman with the red band to his cap, whose duties appear mainly to consist in giving five pulls to the resonant bell-clapper which informs the engine-driver that he can put spurs to his tardy steed, and stroll away to the next halting-place. He is the station-master, a personage to be revered. His exterior is second only in grandeur to that of the common postmen who meet the trains for the mails, and wear scarlet.

In conclusion, the Danish ladies demand a paragraph or two. They are, of course, as heterogeneous, seducing, disappointing, and adorable as the ladies elsewhere. I scarcely know if they form a national type of very clear individuality. The most winsome of

them are English in their ways up to a certain point, though they have not the elasticity of movement that an athletic training gives to our girls. Their features appeal to an Englishman; he seems to see in their clear complexions, light hair, and grey or blue eyes, something more than the glimmering of a personal relationship. They are, moreover, or certainly seem, delightfully spontaneous and fresh. The curse of *mauvaise honte* knows them not. This, too, although at heart they are excessively sentimental, and by culture in very many cases devotees of Ibsen. One would expect such an alliance to produce in them much psychological distress. But I fancy their hearts are still sounder than their heads; they would forgive (though, perhaps, with a pang) where Ibsen's iron-conscienced heroine would exclaim to her husband of about two years' standing: 'I have been deceived in you. You are not nearly perfect, and therefore we must part. Farewell!' The time may come when they will, as a class, be educated up to the sublime pitch of selfishness (miscalled self-respect) apotheosised in certain modern plays and novels; but it will not come easily.

I do not so much care for the official and agricultural women of Denmark. One finds the former in business houses, railway stations and post offices. They seem so dreadfully in earnest, as if the machinery of civilisation were ten times as important as it is. This gives them at least a veneer of hardness, both in speech and face. Probably the same may be said of our own professional girls, but I think with less truth. As for the tens of thousands of farmers' wives and daughters, they seem remarkable for their plumpness (I would not hurt their feelings by going further) and limited range of ideas. Denmark *is* a slow country. This is shown in no way more emphatically than in the unvarying routine of life with the majority of its people. As children, the country Danes, boys or girls, seem content to sit for hours watching a sheep and a lamb (tethered so that unnatural strife is the frequent result) eat grass, or a cow crop clover heads. Grown up, they are consecrated body, and almost soul, to the raising of produce. In summer, when they might enlarge their minds by holiday trips to towns, they are at work for the most part from very early morn to dewy eve. Winter, with its deep snows, fogs and thaws, as well as frosts, tends to keep them isolated. The few ideas they have to exchange beget feeble aspirations. Only the most vigorous of the country youths revolt against these inevitable conditions of

life, and stimulate themselves with the word 'America!' One can understand something of the half-pitying contempt with which the expatriated Dane returns to his kinsfolk and acquaintance for a spell, from that great land to which years ago he carried all the reserve of energy and ambition left untouched (and unquicken) by the dull, hard round of Jutland existence. The homeland still has its silken cords about his heart. He even looks forward to it as a retreat in his old age. But he would not for anything condemn his children to begin their careers in it.

It is just this soothing slowness of life in Denmark, however, that makes it so piquant and restful a land of temporary sojourn for the metropolitan pilgrim.

*THE CONSUL'S WIFE.*

## I.

CONSUL GREEN was a little man, fat, bald, and otherwise physically unprepossessing. But there was no denying the goodness of his disposition. During his furlough at Chesnerton he had proved himself a worthy fellow in many ways, what with treats to the school-children and unostentatious charity towards the poor. And he quite won Mrs. Broderick's heart.

It was the winning Mrs. Broderick's heart that helped him mainly to win Isabel Broderick's hand.

Mr. Broderick was the Vicar of Chesnerton, a poor living; and he had five children, of whom Isabel was the eldest.

Isabel was just twenty-one when Consul Green arrived in the village from China. She was reckoned a beauty. She was dark of eyes and complexion, and of a magnificent presence for so young a woman. It seemed absurd that she should be mated with a little tub of a man like the Consul, who was, moreover, forty-three. If any one had suggested such a possibility to the girl during the Consul's first month in the village, Isabel would either have been very indignant or greatly amused. She was a young woman of moods. You could never be sure of her. At times she was very sweet in her manner; and at times she was, at least, strange.

The Vicar of Chesnerton fancied he understood his daughter, and Mrs. Broderick flattered herself that she also knew her. The two good people agreed that Isabel would be best married as soon as possible. She was the kind of girl who wanted early breaking-in to life with the harness of experience. Besides, was there not that young impecunious sailor? He was a lieutenant, to be sure; but he had no means beyond his pay. It was an open secret that he loved Isabel; but the Vicar hoped he had, by his manner, informed the young gentleman that as a suitor for his daughter's hand he was quite out of the question. Anyhow, he was temporarily away with his ship, the *Viper*, on a foreign cruise. So far no letter had come from him to Isabel in the proper way (the Vicar took good care of that); and if only the girl could be satisfactorily married while the *Viper* remained at sea there would be an end of the little affair.

Then came Consul Green, brimming over with naïve delight in his return to Chesnerton for a holiday. His old mother still lived in the red-brick house facing the Vicarage, with the chocolate-coloured spire of the church rising to the left of it, and, of course, he was bound to see a good deal of the Brodericks. He remembered Isabel as a coy little lass in very short frocks. She was not now at all coy, nor did she wear short frocks.

The poor little man was made to be victimised. He had not for ten years enjoyed the intimate society of cultured European ladies. The F. O. had seemed to take positive pleasure in banishing him to the most forlorn stations in the service.

Mrs. Broderick saw at once how he was struck by her eldest daughter. The impression made upon him was not unlike that of an Academy *chef-d'œuvre*. He would not have dreamed of trying to secure the *chef-d'œuvre* just because it 'knocked him all of a heap.' Neither did he imagine it possible, at first, that this beautiful young woman could be aught more to him than a most bewitching picture of a young English maiden.

But he was a man with over a thousand a year; and when his old mother died his income would be increased. Moreover, he was a bachelor, and, all things considered, eligible enough.

Gradually Isabel's mother made him cognisant of these personal merits of his. She also brought him and her daughter as much together as possible, excusing to the Consul Isabel's coldness, and to Isabel exaggerating the little man's amiability and wealth and fine official position.

The girl saw through it all after a time. First she mocked at the idea, then she fumed at it, and finally, after a terrible outburst of tears and passion, she appeared to be resigned. Dick, the young lieutenant on the *Viper*, had not written, as he had promised. Six months had passed. No doubt he had forgotten her, notwithstanding his ardent oaths that he could never, never commit such a crime.

Isabel could stand much in the way of domestic discomfort, but she could not endure the siege of her will conducted by her father and mother and Mr. Green all at the same time.

To do the little Consul justice, it must be said that he never ventured to make it seem that he thought himself a very desirable catch for so majestic a young woman. When she accepted him he seemed astonished. Then the tears came into his eyes.

'Before God, my dearest Isabel,' he exclaimed tremulously,

'I swear to devote my life to making you happy, as you have made me!'

She made no pretence of being in love with him.

'I will try and be a good wife to you,' she said; and that was all.

Domestic influence had done its work splendidly. Mr. and Mrs. Broderick congratulated each other, Consul Green, Consul Green's old mother (who did not seem so sure about it), Isabel, and all their relations and friends, on so admirable an alliance.

As for Isabel, she was tolerably wretched; but she did her best to drive Dick Cannon out of her heart and enthrone Benjamin Green therein instead, and she hoped, as her mother told her, that she would soon find her reward.

Meanwhile Consul Green was most extravagant. He bought diamonds as if his income were 10,000*l.* instead of about 1,200*l.*, and he fairly grovelled at the feet of the beautiful young woman who had stooped to him. That was how, in his humility, he put it. Isabel could not altogether be blamed if little by little she grew to believe that she *had* condescended inordinately in consenting to marry such an image of a man.

## II.

The Consul plumed himself vastly upon his wife on the P. and O. steamer which duly bore them both to Shanghai. The other passengers were amused. But they did not seem to think the little man was far out in making such a fuss about his possessions. At least the men did not. On the other hand, the women whispered together a good deal. Isabel was less sociable than most girls. That mattered little, however, on board ship, for she soon learnt that she could attract males by merely lifting an eyelash; and that whereas certain other of the ladies failed to make themselves interesting to the gentlemen, though they talked like the wind, 'yes' and 'no' from her lips served her turn in this matter.

Her husband was kindness itself to her; but then so was every other man on board ship.

She had scarcely been married a month. Isabel supposed that in so short a time her heart could not be expected to yearn towards Benjamin as she imagined a wife's heart ought to yearn towards her husband. But it was strange and perplexing that she should feel less grateful to him for his civilities than she felt

towards the other men for theirs. She half-feared she might show it in her tones. That was one reason why she was so dreadfully reserved and laconic with the young officers and civilians who seemed so anxious to anticipate her every wish.

At Bombay Isabel had a mild shock. There were some gunboats in port, and one the name of which she made out to end in *er*.

'Tell me, please,' she said to one of her young admirers—and she actually laid her hand upon his sleeve—'is that the—the *Viper*?'

'Bless you, no, Mrs. Green! The *Viper's* thousands of miles away. I happen to know. That's the *Pursuer*—Sir Thomas Brandon's her captain.'

'Oh, thank you,' replied the girl; and she breathed freely again.

That evening she half-thought of telling her fond, forgiving husband (she believed he would have forgiven her anything) about the heart-beats occasioned in her by the fancy that she had come where Dick Cannon might be. She had a notion that Benjamin would be interested to know about it, and he would assuredly advise her if her position was one in which advice seemed requisite. Consuls are necessarily judicial-minded gentlemen. Doubtless Consul Green often had cases of conscience even more awkward to settle.

But Isabel did not confide her little secret to her husband, after all. Her mother had not told the Consul about poor Dick; why should she tell him?

The rest of the voyage was uneventful, indeed monotonous. It was odd that, in spite of their attentions, only one of the young-men passengers recommended himself very intimately to the girl. She took a sort of fancy to him because he had a certain trick of manner that reminded her of Dick. But she did not, of course, tell him that. He said 'Good-bye' quite touchingly at Hong Kong, and she never gave him another thought.

At Shanghai, however, Isabel suddenly came face to face with her doom.

They were in their hotel one day (Benjamin was awaiting instructions from Pekin) when she flushed the colour of a red rose.

'There are some gunboats in, I see,' the Consul remarked, looking up from his paper—'the *Snap*, the *Torpid*, and the *Viper*. Gad! they'll make things lively here to-night; you see if they don't, my darling.'

Isabel had never felt less like Consul Green's 'darling' than in that moment.

'And, by-the-way,' added the Consul, looking up;—'oh, is anything the matter, dearest?' he inquired tenderly, noting the strangeness of his wife's expression.

'Nothing at all, thank you. What were you going to say?'

'Oh, nothing. Only that I hear some of them downstairs at this moment.'

It was Dick Cannon's voice that had just set Isabel flushing. Her husband's information was therefore stale news.

Of course, they met.

It was simply agonising for both of them. Dick had written, but his letters had gone wrong. He had implored her to be true to him.

'My heart will break, Dick,' the poor girl said, as she let her head rest upon his shoulder. She had called him into the room as he was passing, her husband being away.

Dick was an honourable young fellow, and took the blow as irremediable. He looked very dismal, however, while Isabel described the man she had married. There was serious venom in her words and accents, and her eyes and attitude were like the eyes and attitude of a tragedy queen.

'Well, my dear Isabel,' he said, as he gently drew away (it would never do to be caught nursing the head of the Consul's wife), 'it's a bad job, but let us make the best of it.'

'The best! Then you do not love me any more, and——'

Her passion was startling. It excited Dick Cannon out of himself.

'Give me the chance of proving that I do—and you will see,' he said, in a tremulous whisper. 'Ah, my dear, if you were free, I would marry you now, in spite of everyone and everything.'

'You would?'

'God knows I would. But this,' he added hastily, remembering things, 'will never do! I must go. At least I shall like to think we are near you for a bit. The *Viper* is on the China station until further notice. Good-bye for the present, Isabel.'

She would have given him her lips to kiss, but he tendered her no invitation. They shook hands and parted. Then Isabel went to her bedroom and lay on the bed, with her face in the pillow, for many minutes.



## III.

'It isn't anything more than I expected,' moaned Consul Green when he heard whither he was to be sent. It was a place with a long name ending in 'chew,' and, of all districts, in the Hunan province.

'There will be no European society fit to touch the hem of your dress, dearest,' he continued. 'Of course, I can bear it well enough, for I shall have you with me, and you are all the world. But I call it a beastly shame none the less. And if there are rows—well, we all know the kind of cattle they are in Hunan.'

'Rows! What do you mean?' inquired Isabel. She had begun to loathe this good little husband of hers. Neither the diamonds he had bought her nor the reverential caresses he bestowed upon her could do aught but increase her loathing. She had tried for one brief hour to thrust Dick into the background of her mind, and she had failed. She had from that hour forward consented to drift she knew not whither. And she seemed likely to drift the faster to spiritual ruin for the lack of Dick's face, which Dick himself took honest care to keep as far out of her orbit as he could.

'Riots, my love,' replied the Consul. 'They're a bad lot in Hunan. If I were a common missionary, mindful, as some of them are, of my comforts, I'd rather go up to Corea than to Hunan. You don't know Corea, though.'

'Then we may be in danger?' asked Isabel.

'Why, yes, my love; but don't look like that about it. I'll take the best of good care no harm comes to you. Poor Mackenzie died somewhere there of bludgeons and stones. They made the Government pay his widow 10,000*l.* for him though, and that was something. Which would you rather have, Isabel—your ugly little Ben, or 10,000*l.* in hard cash?'

He put the question flippantly. Her reception of his words astonished him.

'Never, never again,' she exclaimed, 'talk to me like that! You do not know what you are doing.'

Her colour came and went while she spoke, and her fingers twitched. There was that, moreover, in her eyes which almost frightened the little Consul.

'My dearest,' he purred, 'I was only joking. The more rows the better. They help *yang ming*—which means in my case promotion. And, of course, you understand that a Consul's person is sacred, or nearly so.'

On the eve of their departure for the place with a name ending in 'chew' they were both present at a dinner given in honour of the fleet.

Isabel did not even ask herself if she ought not to feign a headache and escape this harrowing ordeal. Rather, she leaped at the chance of seeing Dick once more.

And she did see him.

They were at the same table and on opposite sides, separated only by some ten yards of space. Thrice the young lieutenant dared to look in her direction, and each time her eyes were upon him.

There was a reception afterwards, and Isabel made sure of coming face to face with Dick. But she was disappointed. The sailor feared, with reason, that there might be a scene. He loved the girl too well to put her in that jeopardy. Isabel raged against the unfortunate Consul in her heart. And on the following day they twain went off to Hunan—into exile, as she, perhaps not unexcusably, regarded it.

These last few days had disturbed the little Consul not inconsiderably. He took side-glances at his wife when he thought she would not observe him, and now and again grave anxiety sat on his brow.

Once at his destination, however, official duties occupied him. He was fain to hope that he had made more of his young wife's eccentricities than they deserved. There was a meagre sort of club-house in the place. Here the eight or nine European men consorted somewhat dimly and played whist. They included three earnest missionaries of different persuasions. Consul Green was prepared for trouble sooner or later when he saw with what zeal these gentlemen went about seeking proselytes.

But the trouble only brewed gradually. Three months passed, and the dreary life dragged on as at first. Isabel had become almost apathetic. She was disappointing in many respects. The Consul would, however, gladly have forgiven her everything if only she had made the merest pretence of loving him. This she did not do. She was civil to him at all times, but her eyes and tones were invariably cold. Her husband feared that a con-

tinuance of this kind of domestic life would lead to an estrangement even of the love he still bore her.

The trouble began with mild demonstrations of the natives against the missionaries. These were charged with the usual offences—with teaching improper doctrines ‘not conformable to the classics’ and subversive of morality, and also with plotting against the integrity of the empire and the majesty of the Emperor. The schedule of their crimes was formed by divers spectacled fanatics called scholars, and they were indicated in placards and in a memorial sent to the Princes and Excellencies of the Tsung-li Yamên.

‘If I were you,’ said the Consul to the three missionaries, ‘I would hold my hands for a bit.’

Two of the gentlemen declined to profit by this advice; the third, more politic, discontinued his work.

The other Europeans shrugged their shoulders, never went out without revolvers and servants whom they believed they could trust, and affected to carry themselves as if Asiatics were not worth a snap of finger and thumb.

One day the Consul saw a fresh placard on the walls, and a crowd of excited ‘pig-tails’ commenting on it. It was but a stone’s throw from the Consulate; yet not until quite late in the afternoon could he find the opportunity of reading it in solitude. Its rant was conventional. It teemed with foulness and absurdity. But it was serious.

‘If we do not eat their flesh,’ it ran, ‘how can our rage be appeased? And our hatred will not be satisfied. If we do not eat them, they will eat us a myriad times a myriad. We will not live with them. They or we must die.’

He at once despatched information about the state of affairs to Canton and Peking.

‘Isabel,’ he said to his wife that evening, ‘I wish I had not brought you with me to this disgusting country.’

‘Why?’ she asked, somewhat sharply.

‘There can only be one reason,’ he replied, in a tone of gentle reproach.

His words irritated her supremely.

‘If there is danger,’ she rejoined, ‘I do not care. It will relieve the dulness.’

‘You may be killed—I may be killed,’ he continued, as an experiment.

‘Well!’ and she shrugged her pretty shoulders, ‘that would be very sad, of course; but——’

She stopped.

‘But what, Isabel?’ he suggested.

‘But I quite decline to be interrogated as if I were a malefactor in the consular court,’ was her hot reply.

There was no mistaking her face at that moment. The little Consul for the first time learnt that his wife had come to hate him.

#### IV.

The Europeans met at the Club House to take proceedings for their self-defence in case of need. It was arranged that when the crisis became acute they should all mass in the Consulate, well armed. With a dozen revolvers and rifles they reckoned themselves a match for any ordinary horde of ‘pigtailed.’ The one missionary admitted that he would pull a trigger like the rest. But his two rivals said they would do no such thing. If they were to die, they would die without the stain of bloodshed upon their souls.

Consul Green made protest after protest to the mandarins in local authority. But his notes were of no avail. The mandarins themselves abetted the ill-feeling against the ‘foreign devils.’ Only one of them, who had a certain personal regard for the Consul, sent him any answer. And that was in the form of a warning like the message of the Gunpowder Plotters to Lord Monteaule in 1605.

The actual assault was preceded by a variety of insults and stone-throwing. It was also foreshadowed by the desertion of all the Consulate coolies, save one. This sole survivor professed to hold the people of Hunan in contempt, but he shivered and looked miserable, and went outside the bungalow precincts as little as possible.

The Consul made arrangements for the secret removal of his wife, with the three other ladies of the European colony, to a place of comparative safety, whence they were to journey south with as much expedition as possible.

‘Once you are in Hong Kong, Isabel,’ he said, ‘I shall not mind things.’

‘In Hong Kong, by myself,’ she murmured, ‘where the fleet has gone! Is it there still?’

'I hope so, I'm sure. Indeed I feel sure of it.'

'The *Viper* and all?'

'Yes, the *Viper* and the others.'

The young wife thought for a while, then said: 'No, I will stay where I am.'

Nothing her husband said could make her change her mind.

'If it is for my sake, Isabel,' he exclaimed, as a last argument, 'I would rather you were anywhere else.'

'I shall stay,' she persisted. The little Consul saw that it was not for his sake. He did not know what to make of her. He knew only that he had made a mistake in marrying her.

The other ladies were got off somehow, and arrived safely in Canton. Their husbands practised revolver-shooting. The missionaries prayed.

On the third day after the departure of the ladies, towards twelve o'clock, while Isabel was reading a novel in a long chair in the upper verandah, she heard agitated voices on the other side of the house. Then there was a cry. The cry came from the faithful coolie. A stone had struck him hard on the forehead as he was peeping over the wall to see what the noises meant.

'At last!' said the girl. She put a marker in the book and went indoors. She looked at herself in the glass and smiled.

Then she stole to the other side of the house and peered in the direction of the assailants. They were only about ten in number, armed with carrying-poles and knives. Their pigtailed were dancing to and fro in the energy of their gesticulations and whispers.

She understood that they were lying in wait for the Consul. They had gathered just at the extremity of the wall on the hinder side of the house, and first one head and then another looked round and down the slight hill up which the Consul would come on his way home.

Should she send up the rocket of warning or not?

She did not fire it.

Nearly three-quarters of an hour passed, and then from the window Isabel saw the unsuspecting little man plodding up the hill. The sun gleamed on his metal buttons.

The girl sped downstairs and out into the yard. The door by which her husband would try to enter the Consulate was, of course, locked; but he had the key. She looked through its chinks, awaiting the moment when he should appear; and while she

looked she heard the mutterings of the men hidden only a few paces from her.

The next thing that happened was the sudden outrush of these marauders, hissing, 'Sha! sha!' (kill! kill!) She heard her husband shout 'Hallo!' and then something in Chinese which she did not understand. Blows followed. She watched through the door. One brute broke a rod across the little man's mouth. The 'sha! sha!' grew fiercer and fiercer. She saw blood streaming down his face, and through it all a yearning glance towards the door.

This glance changed everything. Hitherto Isabel's heart had scarcely throbbed faster than usual. Now it was as if it leaped in her bosom.

'Rush to the door, Benjamin,' she shouted.

He heard her, dulled though his senses were by pain and loss of blood. He staggered in her direction, hitting out weakly as he moved. The door opened. He was pulled inside and collapsed in a faint.

## V.

But the rioters had good exchange for the victim they lost. For, having got her husband into the yard, Isabel herself slipped outside the house and snapped the door after her.

For a moment the men held their sticks aloft and kept their tongues silent while they looked at her.

'You can kill me if you like,' she said, with complete calmness and that strange smile on her face which the mirror had seen.

And kill her they did.

They had scarcely succeeded in this when the crack of revolver-shots sounded in their rear. Four of them bit the dust ere they could escape from the five Europeans who had come in a body to the rescue.

Consul Green recovered eventually, but poor Isabel found a grave in the Celestial Land, which is often nevertheless so infernal a place of pilgrimage for the European allotted to it. With her died the many thoughts, both noble and ignoble, which had struggled for the mastery during that last hour of her life.

### OUR OLD TOWN WALLS.

It requires some effort in the way of concentration of thought to think of our pleasant land as dotted over with towns ringed round with high stone walls. It is easy to think of remote cities thus walled in, such as Rome, with its thirteen miles of brick-walling, patched here and there with stone, and crested with towers at intervals; or Jerusalem; or that other city in the Holy Land whereof the walls fell down at the sound of the silver trumpets; but to picture to ourselves towns in our own familiar land—our island with its green base of meadows, downs, and commons, its cliffs, tors, and hills, its vales and coombes, its waterings with streams of many kinds and lakes—towns, with busy populations, in our own familiar land, enringed with huge, high, broad stone walls, with here and there a gateway of entrance through them, is a more difficult matter. Yet we know, for certain, there was a time when a traveller journeying through England found every town that he came to, that was of any considerable consequence, surrounded by a high, wide, strong stone wall, in which were placed a few fortified gateways, through one of which he had to find admittance. He might meet with many small groups of dwellings not protected in this way in the course of a day's travel, but when he came to any important cluster of houses he found them encircled by an impregnable barrier, with gateways flanked by towers, facing the roads of approach to them. Thus Ralph Thoresby, the woollen-draper of Leeds, journeying into Northumberland so late as 1681, wrote: 'Over the moors from Morpeth to Alnwick, an ancient town fortified with a curious castle and an old wall.'

We find these walls—these 'noble works of wall-stones'—not only in the districts bordering Scotland and Wales, or facing France, but in the very heart of England and in the centre of Welsh Wales. London Wall will come to mind unbidden. It need scarcely be said that we have many important towns that have arisen since the days when such works were required, and which, consequently, have not been furnished with them; or that some of our ancient towns were considered sufficiently protected by the castle of the lord of the district; but in most of our Plantagenet towns, and still more ancient cities, those that take

the trouble to look will find, if not lengths of the barriers intact that were built by the old inhabitants, fragments of them in quiet nooks, perhaps incorporated with the walls of a dwelling, or of a stable, or of a garden, or in some other way still utilised. In some of those instances where the walls have been taken down and the materials removed, the gateways have been left standing, and on the sides of them we may see indications of the height and width of the walls that departed from them. Sometimes a corner tower may be noticed that has been made use of for some modern purpose, though the rest of the walling has been removed; and sometimes a still smaller fragment may be picked out in by-ways and unexpected places, that has been passed over in the general demolition.

In a few instances—a very few—we have the walls still complete, surrounding the cities or towns to which they belong in the same manner as at first. We may scrutinise the old tooling, the old manner of the masonry, and note the tones that centuries have given them, and the general effect as of majesty. Funds may have been forthcoming to keep them in repair; or there may have been no pressure for their demolition, or some special reason for their maintenance.

Chester is one of the cities which has maintained its mediæval fortification. The walls round it are more than a mile and three-quarters in extent, and differ in height from about twelve feet to much more, according to the rise and fall of the ground. At intervals between the houses that are built close up to them within, there are stone steps whereby it is easy to ascend to their summits. They are paved on the top and used as a public walk, and from them there are beautiful views of the rich Cheshire pastures—the broad lands accredited as the ‘seed-plot of gentry,’ and ‘the nurse and mother of English gentility’—and of the distant Welsh hills. There are four great gateways, one of which forms the termination of the great Roman road which crosses England from Dover to Chester. From the leads on the Phoenix Tower Charles the First watched the fortunes of his forces under Sir Marmaduke Langdale, whose defeat, by the way, in the battle on Rowton Heath, did not prevent the city from holding out against the Parliamentary besiegers for twenty long weeks afterwards. Two people can walk abreast on the walls, and in some other particulars the old Roman rules for such fortifications are carried out. Relics of the old Romans who, after first pitching



their camp here made it a continuing city, are still occasionally found, as in a recent disclosure of an inscribed stone in the course of repairs to one of the mediæval towers known as Pemberton's Parlour; and a remembrance of their immediate successors is kept green in a current impression that it was the daughter of King Alfred who added to their circumscribed circumvallation so as to include the site of the castle. It must be allowed that, curious as are the Rows, and picturesque the old half-timbered houses, the castle, and the Dee—even bearing in mind the pageants on the latter, as when King Edgar was rowed up it by eight tributary kings—Chester owes much of its attraction to its well-preserved walls, with their centuries of associations. Pearl-grey in tint, wind-worn in aspect, and set in the emerald of the pastoral country, they impress us exceedingly. Murage duties were imposed of old to defray the expenses of repairs, and murengers appointed to see they were made.

The walls of Berwick-upon-Tweed are also still in good case. They are made of earth and faced with well-tooled, regularly-laid courses of strong stonework, and measure a mile and a quarter and 272 yards in length. On the top of them is a fine wide walk contouring the town, some portions fronting the Tweed, some the country, and others the sea-shore. There were four principal gateways, of which three—Shoregate, Cowgate, and Bridgegate—remain, with their heavy wooden gates and massive bolts and hinges intact. These fortifications are assigned to Queen Elizabeth's reign, though there was a wall round Berwick for centuries before that time. Sometimes claimed and occupied by England, and at others by Scotland, the town has been the scene of frequent warfare, with its vicissitudes and catastrophes. King John took possession of Berwick and burned it, after which it was rebuilt and fortified by the Scots on a more extensive scale. Then Edward I. stormed it, when the streets were said by the old historians to run blood and the mills to be set agoing with blood. Wallace next took possession of it, with the end that, after he was executed, half of his body was exposed on Berwick Bridge. Then Edward II. assembled the most numerous army there that had ever crossed the Borders, lodging his soldiery both within and without the walls; and after the fight with Bruce at Bannockburn, he returned and issued a proclamation concerning the loss of his privy seal. And then Bruce took Berwick and assembled his Parliament in it; upon which Edward returned and commenced operations to regain

it. We are told that at this time the walls were not so high but that an assailant might strike any one on the top of them with a spear, and that he ordered escalades to be made at different places at the same time, which, however, were not successful. It was in this assault that the curious contrivance called 'the sow' was used, which contained a party of men who were moved in it close up to the foot of the walls so that they might undermine them. The besieged threw a stone down on it, which split it to pieces. Although the drawbridge before one of the gates was successfully burnt, the English eventually retired, and there was a truce for two years. Bruce immediately strengthened and raised the walls, and built additional towers. Edward III. subsequently appeared on the same scene and remained for a month before the walls, and left the memory of one more tragedy by hanging the two sons of Sir Alexander Seton, the deputy governor, in front of the ramparts because that officer did not surrender the town at his bidding. Edward III. also came to Berwick on other occasions, and Edward IV. took possession of it. The prowess of the ancient Percies and of Douglas was also expended in feats of defence and attack here. The associations with the memories of Baliol, Bruce, Wallace, the Plantagenets, the Percies, and the Douglas are so vivid we should scarcely be surprised to find their footprints, or their scaling-ladders, or pennons, or to see the gleam of their armour, as we pass along. Thinking of all the heroism enacted on these walls, the brave dashes that were made at them, the sturdy repulses that were made on them, the fluctuating fortunes, the alternations of fierce exultation and terrible despair of those who defended them, it almost takes away our breath when we remember how quietly James VI. of Scotland became James I. of England; how politely William Selby, gentleman porter, handed him the keys of Berwick on his first progress southwards to take possession of his inheritance; how courteously the mayor delivered up the charters to him, and how heartily he was received and cheered by the inhabitants. The mutability of mundane affairs could be scarcely brought home to us more convincingly.

We have all heard that 'the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall.' Carlisle was one of the various cities to which the Parliamentary forces laid siege. As in Chester, famine at last brought about its capitulation, but not till after a blockade of eight months' duration. We have but traces and tales of the gallant walls on which the sun shone fair, and that performed such an important part in

this defence. They are said to have originated with William Rufus, who designed that there should be three gateways in them, giving access from Ireland, Scotland, and England respectively. Along this border there were also walls round Newcastle-on-Tyne and Alnwick. The story runs that, in the reign of Edward I., a party of Scots entered Newcastle in broad day and carried off one of the principal inhabitants before help could be organised, and hence the building of the huge wall, two miles in circuit, which had seven massive gateways and many towers. Antiquaries still point to fragments of it here and there in the busy city. At Alnwick only one of the great gateways is left; for although there are two standing, one of them was rebuilt in the last century. The solitary survival from old times guards the southern entrance into the town. It is built of hewn sandstone in huge blocks, whereof the edges have been rounded by centuries of storms, leaving somewhat wide interstices; and wear and tear, and smoke from the chimneys of neighbouring houses, have given it the solemn tint of a thundercloud. We may see there was once a moat in front of it, and there is still the deep groove in its cavern-like archway, between its two semi-octagonal towers, down which the great portcullis could be lowered at need. The documents preserved by the chamberlains of this little border town include 'Letters patent to gather a collection for building the town wall against the Scots,' dated 1473. In the next century the gateway mentioned was officially described in a survey as 'of thre howse height besyd the battlement and faire turret.' When no longer required against the dauntless Scots, it was used as a place of detention; and now that it is no longer wanted for that purpose, the band of the militia practises in it. We may see from the rough indications of the junction of the wall with the tower that it was six feet wide, and reached up to the top of the second of the 'thre howses' in height. Durham has not preserved any considerable remains of its former environment.

The city of York still maintains its Plantagenet walls; their parapets rising and falling with merlons and embrasures alternately, as of yore. There are four bars or gateways to them, and several posterns; and there are walks upon the tops of them. The excellence of their silvery-grey masonry is an abiding testimony to the ancient wealth and importance of the city; and their superb strength seems to confirm the historical fact that it was once the first in the kingdom. They form a fit surrounding to

the magnificent minster, the numerous churches, the substantial streets, the old Guildhall, with its rows of oak tree-trunks for pillars, the numerous almshouses and hospitals, and the various buildings that peace and prosperity have erected in these later days. They picture to us, too, the time that we almost look upon as a romance, when the kings of England were kings of France; for on Micklegate Bar, still very noble and impressive, where the heads of those who suffered for treason were usually exposed, are sculptured the arms of France as well as those of England. Monk Bar also heraldically asserts the same claim, quartering the French arms on a panel. Walm-gate shows us the ancient barbican. Bootham Bar, which is the entrance from the north, has been despoiled of this feature. King Richard II. gave the title of Lord Mayor to the chief personage in the corporation; and that compliment seems quite recent compared with the antiquity of the renown and consequence of the city. William the Conqueror found it impregnable, save by famine; and centuries before he put foot in England it was a flourishing Roman city, known as Eboracum, a circumstance still commemorated in the signature of the archbishop. The walls seem to preserve all these traditions and many more, as a casket might do. Another town in Yorkshire, Richmond, once inclosed by a wall with three gateways, has not been so careful of its possessions. When visited by Leland, the antiquary and librarian of Henry VIII., he saw the circumvallation; but the gateways, French-gate, Barr-gate, and Finkle-gate, were already demolished, or decayed.

Almost equally central are other towns that were once enringed by walls, of which there are no remains of much consequence, such as Northampton, Stafford, Leicester, Oxford, Worcester, Nottingham, Warwick, and Coventry. Sir William Dugdale, herald and antiquary, tells us in his diary, or almanac, as he called it, how he was sent in his capacity of herald, 'with a trumpet,' to various castles and cities that were holding out against King Charles I., to demand that their inhabitants should lay down their arms, with the alternative of being proclaimed traitors. Coventry was one of these. The wall is stated by various authorities to have been three miles in circumference, to have had thirty-two towers on it, twelve gates, and to have been nine feet thick. The building of it was extended over forty years, commencing in the middle of the fourteenth century. On the Restoration, Charles II. ordered its demolition in con-

sequence of the refusal of the citizens to support his father's cause. We have word that the walls round Shrewsbury took thirty-two years to build. This was in the reign of Henry III. Some portions of them are still in good repair, and flights of steps give access to walks on the summit of them. On the eastern coast there are examples at Norwich, Ipswich, and Colchester, which have not been maintained in their integrity, but of which we may still see traces. The wall round Norwich was of more than usual dimensions, in consequence of many gardens being included in its circumference.

On the Welsh border there were several walled towns—Ludlow, Hereford, Monmouth, and Chepstow, for example—of which the encircling masonry has now disappeared. In Wales, Edward I. built walls round Conway, Carnarvon, and Beaumaris, at the same time that he erected his splendid castles there; and there were walls round Carmarthen, Montgomery, and Tenby. The wall round Conway is a mile and a quarter in length and twelve feet wide, and has twenty-one strong semicircular towers along its length, and it has three noble gateways with towers, besides minor entrances. As at Chester, Berwick, and York, the summit is used as a promenade. From it may be seen the wide winding waters whence the pearl was taken that Sir R. Wynne presented to the Queen of Charles II., and that now adorns the crown of England; the irregular configuration of the town, always compared to that of the national harp; the adjoining castle; the adjacent woods, and the surrounding hills. The wall round Carnarvon is nearly entire, though only a portion of it is open for public enjoyment. We may see it almost exactly as Edward I. saw it when Henry le Elreton, master-mason, and his workmen and the conquered Welsh peasants delivered it and the great castle into his hands, finished; or, as his queen, Eleanor, saw it when she took up her residence in the castle that her babe might be born in Wales. There are two chief gateways to it, one facing the mountains, the other the Menai Straits; and there are many round towers along it—chosen in such works to be circular or semicircular, as less likely to be injured by the possible operations of battering-rams. The Beaumaris walls have not been preserved.

The south of England is not without examples. The walls round Chichester, for instance, are maintained in repair. They must have borne the brunt of some rough usage when Sir William Waller took the town with the Parliamentary forces in the Civil

War. Like so many others, they are about a mile and a half in length; and they are used as a public promenade. Exeter, too, retains some of the strong stone wall that Athelstan built, which was also a mile and a half in circumference; and its citizens utilise it as a public walk. At Totnes there is one gateway left. Dorchester can point to traces of circumvallation. Southampton's walls have not been maintained. Canterbury has only a length of its old walling. Winchelsea is more fortunate; here, again, the walls are nearly entire, and are utilised as a promenade. The inhabitants of Lewes can still point to vestiges of their walls; as may those of Sandwich, where one of the gateways, Fisher's-gate, is still standing; and there is a length of earthen rampart called the Boulevard. The walls of Gloucester were demolished by order of Charles II. Bristol has saved only one gateway.

Glancing over the country in this way, it will be seen that we are still in possession of a few of the fortifications with which our forefathers made themselves secure from surprise. They are of extreme interest; and for the sake of auld lang syne need not be grudged their standing-room, the necessity of improvement notwithstanding.

The oldest books of the Corporation of London date back to the reign of Edward I.; and they tell us that two sergeants, 'skilful men and fluent of speech,' kept the city gates all day, and carefully noted who passed in and out. At curfew every gate was shut and secured, and the taverns were also closed. Then six of the most 'competent' men in each ward turned out into the streets, and kept watch and ward all night. The boats on the river had to be moored on the city side of it, and four men guarded the river all night on both sides of the bridge. When there was extra excitement, or anticipation of attack, as in the time of Edward III. on the arrival of certain galleys at the North Foreland, for instance, as many as forty men-at-arms and sixty archers kept watch all night between the Tower of London and Billingsgate, which watch was divided fairly between the different trade companies, night by night. The sawyers, spurriers, bowyers, and girdlers kept watch on Mondays; the drapers and tailors on Tuesdays; the mercers and apothecaries on Wednesdays; the fishmongers and butchers on Thursdays; the pelters and vintners on Fridays; the goldsmiths and saddlers on Saturdays; and the ironmongers, armourers, and cutlers on Sundays. From these early records we learn, too, that one of the city gates, Aldgate,

with the rooms above it and the cellar below it, was let by the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty on lease to Geoffrey Chaucer, and that the poet undertook to occupy it himself and keep it in repair 'for the whole life of him.' The agreement was subject to a reservation giving the mayor power to enter the said rooms in time of defence of the city, and to use them as might be expedient. There is mention, also, of an elm tree growing by London Wall, near Bishopsgate, that was too old and dry to last long, and was consequently likely to fall, whereby there would be damage to the shop of one, Roger Poyntel, opposite to it.

Our colonists, nowadays, do not appear to build walls round their settlements, even in new countries. A handful or thin line of brave men seems to be as much protection as is considered necessary for the boundaries of them. As far back, however, as the days of the ancient Briton in this country, the accepted idea of security was a circular rampart thrown up round the cluster of huts that formed a town. When the Romans came, stone walls became the order of the day round every town, and across the whole island. The Normans, too, put their faith in walls. In the days of the Plantagenets, wall-building was carried on to a still greater extent. Ingenuity was taxed to the utmost to devise special machines by which to counteract the strength of their defence—such as huge catapults that threw enormous stones over them; the movable contrivance that was the same height as the walls, and enabled besiegers to stand on a level with the tops of them; as well as the sow that undermined them, and the battering-ram that overthrew them. Famine, in the end, was generally the real foe that caused those they sheltered to capitulate. In those days, in other particulars, the defence was stronger than the attack. The besieged had a plan of throwing out temporary overhanging wooden galleries, through the flooring of which they dropped stones, molten lead, burning flax, and other trifles on the heads of those who approached sufficiently near; and when a breach was likely to be made at any point, they built up hastily, behind it, a fresh barrier, so that when it was accomplished, those who entered found themselves confronted with it, and still on the outside of the enclosure.

Reference has been made to the manner of the masonry. Masons in different centuries had special ways of treating their stonework. The Normans used small stones, such as men could lift singly; and they were all about the same size, perhaps ten or

twelve inches square, which has given their work a bead-like regularity. They made a facing on each front of their walls, and filled up the intervening space with rough rubble. In later times, stones of more varied sizes were used, and more irregularity became the rule. In some courses a stone not high enough to reach the level of the course above it was supplemented by another to attain the requisite height; in others, one too large ascended half-way up the course above it, and the necessary level had to be regained by the use of one much smaller than the rest. Later still, much larger and more even-sized stones were used. Even then, the extreme regularity of modern masonry was not in vogue. The manner of masonry gives us the age of it. Ferruginous and other streaks in the stratification of the stones, mosses, lichens, stone-crop and other wall-plants, shade and damp, sunshine and wind, give us the incomparable tints of it. Look at our old town walls as we may, now that we are so far from the necessity of their use, we must always regard them as memorials of the valour, prudence, and industry of the men who made England the very desirable possession to which we have succeeded.

Occasionally we come across mention of their repair. In St. Alphege's Church, Canterbury, there is a monument to the memory of Henry Gosborn, 'at sundrie times mayre of the same cete,' who gave twenty marks to repair the city walls. And in the register of All Saints' Church, Hereford, we may read against the date 1648, 'payd for mending the towne walles for the use of the parish xs.'



*CLEG KELLY, ARAB OF THE CITY:*

*HIS PROGRESS AND ADVENTURES.<sup>1</sup>*

BY S. R. CROCKETT,

AUTHOR OF 'THE STICKIT MINISTER,' 'THE RAIDERS,' ETC.

ADVENTURE L.

GENERAL THEOPHILUS RUFF.

CLEG slept that night in a hay-shed half a mile out of the town. He did not mean to go the Sandyknowes till the morrow. And even then it was not quite clear to him what he could do to help the widow. But as usual he would think it out during the night.

The morning came, fiery with lamb's wool in fluffy wisps all about the sky. Cleg shook himself, yawned, and dusted off the hay from his garments.

Then he stepped over the edge of the stack and put his foot to the road. He was very hungry and he had nothing upon which to break his fast, except only the water of the brook. He stooped at the first burn which crossed the road, and drank his fill. Presently he met a man who came walking smartly down the road. He carried a cow switch in his hand and chewed a straw.

'Can you tell me the road to Sandyknowes, if you please?' said Cleg, politely.

The rustic with the straw in his mouth looked at Cleg all over carefully. Then he roared with laughter, while Cleg flushed angrily.

'Your boots are no marrows!'<sup>2</sup> he cried. 'O Lord, a stemmed bonnet and his grandfather's waistcoat!'

And he went off again into such a fit of laughter that he let the straw slip out of his mouth. But he perceived his loss, and lifted it from the dust, wiping it carefully upon the dirtiest part of his trousers before restoring it to the corner of his mouth.

'Can ye tell me the road to Sandyknowes, man?' said Cleg again, with a little more sharpness and less politeness.

'I can, but I'll no!' gaped the rustic. And he went into another prolonged fit of merriment, fairly hugging himself and

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1895, in the United States of America by D. Appleton & Co.

<sup>2</sup> Not neighbours.

squirming in his enjoyment. It was the best jest he had had for a month. And he rather fancied he landed some good ones.

Cleg Kelly's hand dropped upon a stone. The stone whizzed through the air, and took effect on the third button of the man of straw's new waistcoat.

The laugh ended in a gasp. The gasp was succeeded by a bad word, and then the young man gave chase. Cleg pretended to run slowly—'to encourage him,' as he said afterwards. The yokel thought all the time that he was just about to catch Cleg, but always just at the critical moment that slippery youth darted a dozen yards ahead and again avoided him.

At last the young man gave up the chase. He had suffered indignities enough. He had lost his straw. But he had an appointment to keep with a farmer three miles further on to whom he was offering his valuable services. So he had to perforce to turn away, and content himself with promising what he would do to Cleg when he caught him.

What Cleg did was simpler. He patrolled the heights above, keeping exact pace, step for step, with his enemy below. And with the aid of the pebbles which plentifully strewed the brae face, he afforded the young man of the straw some of the finest and most interesting active exercise in getting out of the way he had had for many years. Indeed, his whole line of march for more than a mile, was completely enfiladed by the artillery of the enemy.

'Will ye tell me the road to Sandyknowes noo?' cried Cleg, jubilantly, as he kept the youth skipping from side to side of the highway.

At last he bade his adversary farewell, with a double machine-gun fire of words and heavier ammunition.

'This will maybe learn ye, country,' he cried, 'after this to gie a civil answer to a civil question.'

'Wait till I catch you—' the young man shouted, stung to desperation.

Whereupon, just for luck, Cleg ran in and delivered a volley at point blank range, which sent the man of straw clattering up the road. It was certainly not wise to dally with the prize marksman of the Sooth Back, who in his good days could break any particular pane in a fifth story window that you liked to specify, nine times out of ten.

After this Cleg Kelly returned along the heights to find out the way to Sandyknowes for himself. More than a mile back, a

girl driving cows pointed out to him the little path which led up to Mirren's door. But Cleg did not go up directly. He played idly about, whittling sticks and poking in hedge roots in his assumed character of vagrant boy. Yet all the time he kept a bright look-out upon the door of the little house among the flowerbeds. The window blinds were drawn down, and stared white like empty eye sockets of bone. The thought of the brave, strong man who lay dead within oppressed Cleg's heart. Presently he saw a woman come to the door, and go after the cow over the little meadow pasture. Muckle Alick's wife, he thought. But he was wrong. It was her warm-hearted neighbour, Mistress Fraser. Then presently he saw Boy Hugh come running round the back of the house.

Cleg had arrived in time for Muckle Alick's funeral day. The large company of mourners began to gather very early. All the town of Netherby was there. Even the District Superintendent of the railway, who happened to be in the neighbourhood on a tour, had telegraphed for his 'best blacks' from his wife in Greenock. And there he was, standing outside the house, waiting for the minister to finish the service, like any common man.

Poor James Cannon was there, the tears coursing steadily down his cheeks. The provost and magistrates were there. Every member of the School Board was there, all agreed for once. Such a funeral had never been seen in Netherby within the memory of man. That was the exact phrase used (it is believed not for the first time) in describing the occasion in the 'Netherby Chronicle and Advertiser.' But otherwise Alick's dying request for silence was scrupulously regarded.

When the hearse moved away from the door, and the sombre congregation fell in behind it, Mirren Douglas came to the door and watched it out of sight. The good women who abode in the house to company with her in her bereavement, begged her to go in and compose herself. But she would not.

'I am in no ways discomposed,' she said, 'but I will watch him oot o' sicht for the last time. I did it every mornin', ye ken,' she explained to them. 'Let me bide!'

The black procession went serpentine down the road from Sandyknowes, the men pacing slowly and gravely after the horses between the summer hedges and under the green beech leaves.

Soon it approached the turn which would hide the hearse from those standing at the door of the house. But a little hillock rose, grassy to the top, at the gable end. It was the place to which

she was used to run out to watch for his return, in order to 'mask' the tea in time for his supper, that all might be ready for him when he came home wearied.

Mirren Douglas ran out thither, and, standing on the top of the hillock, she waved her hand to that which was going out of sight. She did not care who saw her.

'Fare ye weel, Alick,' she cried, 'fair ye weel that ever wast o' men the kindest. Few are the choice hearts that will match thine—aye, even up there, where thou art gane. And nane like to thysel' hast thou left amang us. Fare ye weel, my ain man Alick! Naeboddy's man but mine!'

And with that she turned and walked in quite quietly.

As the funeral passed the end of the road Cleg withdrew behind the hedge, because, though his heart was full of love for the strong man whom he had seen but once, he did not wish to disgrace that solemn procession with his sleeved waistcoat and unpaired boots. As the hearse passed him Cleg took off his railway cap and stood bareheaded behind the hedge. So intent was he on the procession, that he did not see a tall tightly-coated man of military carriage who had stepped over the field towards him, and now stood silently by his side. The old officer also took off his hat, and stood reverently enough till the last of the mourners had passed by.

Then he laid his hand upon Cleg's shoulder.

'I'll trouble you for the price of my railway ticket!' he said. Cleg turned. It was the man who had laughed when he was pitched out of the carriage at Dunnure by Sulky Jamie!

For a moment his readiness forsook Cleg. He stood silent and gazed dumbly at the tall figure before him, and at the right hand which pulled grimly at the drooping moustache.

'You had better come away to the police station!' said the gentleman.

'Ye'll hae to catch me first, then!' cried Cleg, suddenly twisting himself free and springing over into the highway. The old soldier made no attempt to follow, but continued to gaze fixedly at Cleg.

'What is your name, boy?' he said, still keeping his eyes upon the lad.

'Slim Jim Snipe o' Slippery Lane!' replied Cleg promptly, 'and muckle obleeged to ye for speerin'!'

'You young imp!' cried the old man, advancing to the fence with his cane uplifted threateningly, 'would you dare to insult me?'

Cleg retreated.

‘That’s a guid enough name to gie to the poliss,’ he said. ‘If ye ask me ceevilly, I’ll tell you. Nae thanks to you that I got here ava!’

‘I beg your pardon,’ said the old soldier, lifting his hat as to an equal, with a certain punctilious restraint. ‘I have the honour to inform you that my name is Major-General Theophilus Ruff, of Barnbogle and Trostan.’

‘And mine,’ said Cleg Kelly, taking off his stemmed bonnet as politely, ‘is Cleg Kelly o’ the Sooth Back o’ the Canongate, and late o’ Callender’s Yaird!’

The General bowed ceremoniously.

‘And now,’ he said, ‘what do you propose to do about my railway ticket?’

‘I’ll work it out!’ said Cleg, quickly.

There was something in ‘the looks of the starchy old geeser’ (as Cleg remarked to himself) which the boy rather liked, though without doubt he was mad as a hatter.

‘Work it out,’ cried the General; ‘what can you do?’

‘Anything!’ said Cleg. (It was his one touch of his father’s dialect that he still said ‘annýthing.’)

‘That’s nothing!’ said the General.

‘Wait till you see,’ retorted Cleg. ‘You try me. I’m nae country gawk, but reared in the heart o’ the toon. I can rin errands. I can howk<sup>1</sup> yairds for taties—or,’ he added, thinking of his flower-garden round the old construction hut, ‘for flooers. And if I dinna ken the way to do onything, I can find oot.’

The General appeared to consider.

‘Do you see that house over there among the trees—across the railway?’

‘Aye,’ said Cleg, ‘I canna help seein’ it! It’s big eneuch and ugly eneuch to be a jail!’

‘Do you think that you could keep that house in order?’

‘Me?’ said Cleg, ‘me keep yon hoose—it’s as big as the Infirmary.’

‘I live there all by myself,’ said the General. ‘I cannot have women about my place. The sight of them kills me. And I cannot trust a grown man not to bring a woman about the place. I might try a lad.’

Cleg looked carefully from the General to the house and back again. He was not sure that it might not be a joke.

<sup>1</sup> Dig.

'Have you a character?' asked the old man.

'Aye,' said Cleg, 'Miss Celie wad gie me yin.'

The General turned pale and stamped with his foot.

'A woman,' he said, 'I could not apply to a woman. There is always something odious about a woman's letter. I actually do not recover from the shock of handling the writing of one of them for days. Do you not know any one else?'

'There's Maister Donald Iverach,' said Cleg. 'He wad gie me a character if I got Miss Celie to ask him,' answered Cleg.

'My nephew in Edinburgh, that young three-legged stool! You'll do nothing of the kind,' cried the General. 'I would not give a brass button for his own character. And besides, from the tone in which you speak, I have little doubt that the two persons you mention are contemplating matrimony. I do not wish any communication with anything so disgusting—much less when one of the parties is an ungrateful and grasping relative of my own.'

By this time Cleg had had enough of the General's catechism.

'I'll be requiring a reference mysel,' he said, in the tone which he had heard Mistress Roy of the paper-shop adopt, when a new customer asked for a week's credit.

'A what?' said the General, astonished.

'A reference as to your moral character, if I am to serve in your house!' replied Cleg, unabashed.

The General clapped his hands with unfeigned pleasure.

'Bless you, my boy, you please me!' he said, chuckling; 'do you know that it is more than fifty years since General Theophilus Ruff had such a thing?'

'All right,' said Cleg, 'suppose we baith chance the moral characters.'

'Done!' said the old soldier, offering Cleg his hand.

Cleg took it and wrung it hard.

'I think we'll agree very well,' he said. 'I may be Ruff by name, but I am Theophilus by nature. That's Greek, my boy—all I can remember, indeed. The folk about here will tell you that I am crazy. They are no judges. And my nephew wishes I were. Once his father tried to prove it. But when the judge had once looked inside my account books, and examined my system of book-keeping, he said that, mad as I might be, it was a kind of madness which was very well able to take care of itself.'

Cleg accompanied the General over the fields to his house. The walks and drives were completely overgrown with mossy grass and

tangled ferns. The gates were all padlocked and spiked. Whenever the General came to one, he unlocked it with a brightly polished steel master-key which he took from his pocket. Then, as soon as they had passed through, he locked it behind him again as securely as before. 'Spiked on the top,' he said to Cleg, with a cunning look, 'keeps out the women, you see. They don't like to have their frills and furbelows torn.'

Cleg nodded as though he understood. He was not particular either way.

'By the by, you don't mind coffins and things?' said the old soldier, glancing swiftly under his brows at Cleg.

'I don't think so, if they are empty. I yince slept in a coffin shop for three months!' said Cleg.

'Have you anything you want to settle before you engage with me?' asked the General.

'Yes,' said Cleg, 'there's a wife over the hedge yonder that has lost her man. And I maun hae either the afternoon or the fore-nicht to help her.'

'Take any part of the day you like. Only change your clothes when you come back,' said the General testily, 'but mind, if you bring any woman inside the policies, I'll give you up to the police for obtaining railway tickets under false pretences.'

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## ADVENTURE LI.

### THE GENERAL'S ESTABLISHMENT.

THEY were now standing at the front door. Cleg had never seen such a house as this in his life. It was barred and defended like the Calton jail, but no glass was to be seen in any of the windows. Indeed, through some of the openings which served for lighting, one could see straight through to the barred windows on the further side.

Barnogle House had in time past been an ancient fortalice. But both the former and the present lairds had spent large sums upon alterations and repairs. The latest of these, General Theophilus Ruff, had a vast and far-reaching local fame. Gamesome lasses skirled at his name, and refused to keep their trysts for the terror of meeting him, wrapped in his blue military cloak, stalking lonely by the light of the moon. The very poachers would not fish

in his streams or shoot in his coverts. He had at once the repute of a wizard and the fame of a miser—rich beyond calculation, but seeing things unseen to mortals. ‘He wasna canny!’ summed up the collective verdict of the countryside.

Theophilus Ruff had been an Indian officer at the time of the Mutiny. And those terrible days of midsummer, when the sun dried up the blood even as it was spilt, had changed the gay casual young officer into the man whom all the country knew as the ‘daft general.’

His father had been first a spendthrift and then a ‘neegar’—that is, one who has become as great a screw as he had formerly been a mighty and lavish spender.

The popular report of the contents of Barnbogle House told of chests of gold and silver, cases of the most precious jewels, the spoil of captured Indian cities—all watched over by the General himself with an armoury of deadly weapons. For it was not the least of his terrors that he dwelt all alone in that huge hundred-barred castle.

Yet there had been a time when Theophilus Ruff drove coach and six, and when he saw only the gayest of gallant company. Among themselves the chin-shaking elders would tell with many cross-shoulder glances of the bold wanton eyes of ladies with once famous names, who had sat beside Theophilus Ruff when he drove that coach and four, of the golden candlesticks which had sparkled on the board, wide branching, holding aloft many lights. Then Barnbogle was a gay place indeed, alive with brilliant company, humming with mirth. For General Theophilus Ruff had ‘used the company of the singing woman,’ and, as the Writ sayeth, he had been taken in her attempts.

‘He’s garrin’ the Indian yellow boys spin!’ the Netherby people said of him at this time. Yet they said it with a kind of pride, that such wickedness should have happened in their parish.

But suddenly one morning, when the repair to his house was greatest, when gold tresses shone most aureate, bright eyes most winsome and sparkling, Theophilus Ruff came downstairs and gave every soul within his house an hour’s notice to quit. Great was the consternation, mighty the upheaval. Ladies, lately so *débonnaire*, left by carriagefuls wrangling fiercely as they went. Their gay companions took horse and rode silently and wrathfully away. Theophilus Ruff stood on the step of Barnbogle House and grimly watched them go. Then he went upstairs, called his ser-



vants into the drawing-room, and dismissed them, paying them their wages and board for six months in full. He kept on a stable man or two till he could sell his horses, a manservant till he had disposed of his cattle. Then he let his more distant grass parks, and dwelt alone in the great house with barred and defended policies. After this workmen from Glasgow were quartered at Barnbogle for nearly a year. With them there came a man-cook to prepare their food, and rough masons' labourers were lodged in the dainty, dismantled bedrooms where last had dwelt the ladies of the blonde allures.

Now and then, on Sundays, one of these Glasgow callants would steal out, at the risk of discovery and dismissal, to see the Netherby lasses. Or, mayhap, an elder smith or joiner would escape to the public house of a dark evening. But it was at the peril of their places and their excellent wages.

To them chiefly could be traced the tales of mighty strong-rooms, of triple-barred gratings, of wondrously fitting doors with bolts, which, at the click of a key worn on the watch chain, locked so firmly that none could open again without secret passwords.

During this period General Theophilus Ruff had become an extremely pious person. Every Sunday he conducted service with his workmen in person. One day he would read the prayers and Litany of the Church of England, with such a grace of intonation and a dignity that it caused the douce Glasgow Presbyterians to fear that even double wages would hardly make up to them for their souls' peril in thus sacrificing to idols.

But by the succeeding Sunday the General had discarded the service-book, and he would lead them in prayer with the fervour and interjectional fervour of a 'ranter'—which at that date was the name by which all revival preachers were called.

Every church in the neighbourhood benefited by the benefactions of the General. And there was not a division of the Derbyites, Close, Open, or Original, which did not receive a visit from him, and which had not good cause to believe that the Brethren had secured the richest convert the sect had ever made. But the General contented himself with making the most liberal contributions, and with listening to the brothers' mourning for each others' backslidings, while at the same time rejoicing that they only of all mankind could escape hell-fire. Then he would return home, and the very next day proceed to give another denomination the benefit of the doubt.

But, nevertheless, while the fit lasted, the General was ready to

assist all and sundry to erect suitable places of worship. His purse was long and deep. So the district of Netherby is distinguished among its neighbours for the number of its spires and for the surpassing whiteness of the outside of its cup and platter.

The only stipulation which the General made was that he and he only should have the right to prescribe the plan of the building, and the time at which it was to be finished. This is the reason why the 'Englishy' kirk worships in a tabernacle erected in miniature of Mr. Spurgeon's. So that the heart of the incumbent (who left the Church of England (in England) to secure greater liberty of ritual) is daily broken by the impossibility of having a procession within it, other than one briefly semicircular; and also by the fact that he has to read his sermon behind a table, only fitted for holding the glass of water and Bible which completely equip the popular tribune.

Similarly the Kirk of Scotland by law established in Netherby presents all the characteristics of a Little Bethel meeting-house. And a new minister of æsthetic tastes has to wrestle with the fact that there is no place in which to bestow an organ, except in the coal-cellar from which the heating apparatus is worked.

But both the Auld Lights and the Baptists are housed in haughty fanes—not large, indeed, but built on the most approved cathedral principles. The meeting-house of the Baptists, indeed, has no less than two spires and the beginnings of another, after the fashion of Lichfield. The whole front of the Free Kirk is a-glitter with quartz-faced rock. For during the time of its erection Theophilus Ruff would arrive each day with his pockets full of stones with this shell-white glance upon them. He even marked spots upon the moor, and sent out masons to bring in the pieces which took his fancy. And one by one these all found their way into the frontage of the Free Kirk.

The most curious point about all this building of religious edifices was, that Theophilus Ruff never allowed one of them to be finished. When the last turret of the spire was on the point of being finished, Theophilus would dismiss all the men, order the unfinished pinnacle to be covered with lead to preserve it from the weather, and so leave the church with an ugly hooded hump upon its back.

Or he would leave a rough stone dyke and a dozen old sand pits and lime heaps lying for years about the gate, just as they had been thrown down at the time when the building was begun.

He preferred to see one gate-post up and the other down. He had been known to build a mill and fit it with expensive machinery, to construct a mill dam with the most approved modern sluices, and import the most advanced American 'notions' in the way of farm implements. Then one fine morning he would arrive, and, when everything was almost complete, pay the labourers their wages, discharge the engineers in the midst of fixing a steam boiler or laying hot-water pipes for the most improved method of preparing food for cattle. Thereafter he would write their masters a cheque, and there was an end. Not an ounce of water would ever run out of that granite-embanked mill dam. Not a wheel of that beautiful machinery would ever turn round. No horse wearing shoe-iron would ever tread the asphalted floor of these sanitary stables. Year after year the whole premises stood empty. The glass would early disappear from the windows under a galling cross fire from the catapults of all the boys in the neighbourhood, with whom it was a point of honour to break everything breakable about the various 'follies' of General Theophilus Ruff. Never did houses get the reputation of being haunted, so quickly as those buildings erected by him in all manner of unlikely places. Even during the very week after the workmen had been unceremoniously dismissed, and while the new gloss was yet on the handles of the doors and the shop polish upon the machinery, the place and neighbourhood began to be deserted after dusk by every man, woman, and child in the neighbourhood.

Nay, more than this, the same mysterious blight was instantly communicated to any property acquired by the General. For at this time it was his habit to buy all that came into the market, without any discrimination whatever. He had been known to buy the middle house of a row of respectable tenements, turn out the occupants, look through the windows one by one to see if they were all gone, then lock the door, and stalk solemnly away with the key in his pocket.

That very night the premises were haunted. The next day the boys began to break the windows, from a safe distance with their catapults, frightening each other the while with the cry that the General was coming. In six months the house was a mere melancholy wreck, in which tramps camped at nights, and (if the police did not occasionally interfere) pulled out the frames of the windows and the fittings of the kitchen to burn over their fires.

It was no wonder that Cleg Kelly looked with much interest

upon Barnbogle House. And had he known its sinister repute, and the character of his new master, he might never have set foot within its doors. But he had never heard of Theophilus, as the General was familiarly called by all the neighbourhood—behind his back. The minister of the U.P. denomination (the only one in the town which had not been fostered by the General's money) explained on a sacramental occasion that Theophilus meant a friend of God, but hastened to add that this might be taken ironically, and that even the devil sometimes appeared in the guise of an angel of light.

Nevertheless it was at the time thought a strange thing that the U.P. cow died on the U.P. pasture, soon after the close of the service at which this explanation was delivered from the U.P. pulpit.

This induced a carefulness of speech with regard to the General in the pulpits of other denominations—except, perhaps, when the ministers had probationers supplying for them. For probationers never have any cows.

When Cleg and he arrived at the house, the General bowed a moment, with his back to his visitor, over the handle of the front door, whirled a many-lettered combination, clicked a key, touched a knob, and lo! the massive door swung noiselessly back.

When he invited Cleg to enter, Cleg put his foot over the threshold as if he had been entering the Calton jail. But he had pledged himself, and could not in honour draw back. Besides, Cleg had in him, as we have seen, the spirit of the natural adventurer. He constantly did things for the sake of seeing what would come of it, and embarked upon perilous adventures only to see how the problem would work itself out.

The hall in which he found himself was of old panelled oak, with lights which came from very high above. Oak furniture stood sparsely here and there. The only remarkable things were a couple of plain white tablets let into the wall at either side, like marble memorials in a church.

Through many passages and past the doors of innumerable rooms, Theophilus Ruff led our young hero. Book cases filled with solemn-looking books stood all along the corridors. Marble timepieces squatted silently on the ledges. White statues held out cold glimmering arms from dusky recesses. Here and there, on little round tables by oriel windows, large-type family Bibles lay open, many of them having bookmarks inserted here and there—

some of discoloured ribbon, but many of common pink and white string such as is used by country grocers to tie up parcels of sugar.

They went next through a great echoing kitchen, with all manner of rusted machinery for roasting and turning, cobwebbing the walls; by the side of vast black cooking-ranges, past a glimmering and diminishing array of brass pans and silver dish-covers upon the walls, Cleg followed the General like his shadow.

'We shall have some dinner presently,' said Theophilus Ruff. 'I always dine in the middle of the day ever since I began to keep house for myself.'

He spun another combination lock, clicked a key, and Cleg found himself in a little brick addition, plastered like a swallow's nest against the rear wall of Barnbogle House.

Here were a little table of scoured woodwork and a cheap cooking-range with a paraffin stove, which, like all its kind, leaked a little. Upon a shelf under the window were tumbled roughly a cooking pot, a frying-pan, a skillet, a brander, two tin plates, and half-a-dozen cheap knives and forks, all of the poorest and most ordinary description, and most of them dirty in the extreme.

The General ushered Cleg into this place with some ceremony and condescension, like a superior initiating a new and untried assistant into the work of his department.

'I will show you how to light the stove,' he said; 'it is an exceedingly convenient invention. I wish we had had them in the army in my time. I will do the cooking myself on this occasion, in order that you may see in what manner you may best assist me in the future.'

'There are herring here,' he said, waving his hand to a barrel which showed through a sparred locker, 'and a ham there beyond. Butter you will find in that firkin on your left. It is the best Danish from Kiel. The tinned beef on the shelves is to be kept for emergencies. It is not to be touched. The butter I import myself, and dispose of what I do not use to an Italian warehouseman in Netherby. I find that it takes the place of lard also. Here is flour for sauces, and I always bring home a four-pound loaf every second day, which I find to be amply sufficient. I propose to continue the duty, and shall bring two in future. If there is anything necessary for your health which you do not find, I shall be happy to supply it. I think I have a suit of clothes—not my own, but which I happen to possess. They can easily be adapted for your use.'

## ADVENTURE LII.

## THE THREE COFFINS IN THE STRONG ROOM.

WHILE the General was explaining all these things, he was at the same time deftly handling the gridiron upon which he was cooking the four red herrings which he had laid out. These, with bread and the aforesaid best specially-imported Danish butter, dug out of the keg with a scoop, furnished their simple meal. General Theophilus made tea in a black kettle, by the simple process of putting in a soup ladle filled with tea and allowing the water in the kettle to come to the boil.

‘The tea is of the best quality,’ he said, ‘though I am somewhat prodigal of it, as you see. But a man must have some luxuries.’

Yet all the time, while Cleg was partaking of the herrings, cutting the bread, and drinking the tea, he was oppressed by the dark overwhelming bulk of the house behind him, through which he had been led. He instinctively felt it to be full of secrets, of unknown echoing passages, doors that clicked and sprung, and of all untold and unutterable mysteries.

All through their dinner time the General was most courteously polite, handing the salt and helping the herrings with infinite address. And when Cleg in his ignorance or his awkwardness committed a solecism, the General only in the slightest degree emphasised the correctness of his own demeanour, so that Cleg, if he chose, might benefit by the lesson in deportment. Not that Cleg needed many, for had he not often taken tea with Miss Celie Tennant, which in itself was a charmingly liberal education?

When the meal was finished, Theophilus Ruff took Cleg into a little room adjoining. Here there was a fixed wash-tub and a tiny boiler.

‘I do my own washing, you see. Cleanliness is most important!’ the General explained. ‘I learned the art while campaigning in Afghanistan. For the present, therefore, I shall continue to do the washing, though I shall be glad of your assistance in the matter of drying and ironing!’

Cleg could hardly credit his ears—a General and the owner of all this wealth, talking freely of doing his own washing. Cleg looked at the beautiful linen sheets on the bed and marvelled still

more. Then he remembered what Theophilus had said about the presence of women.

'This is your bedroom,' said the General, opening a still smaller room, which contained nothing but a washstand and a small 'scissors' camp-bed. Upon a nail behind the doors hung a couple of suits of clothes.

'These are yours,' explained the General, 'this room is also yours. I shall not again enter it. I beg of you, therefore, that when you have been visiting your friend the widow you will wear one of these suits, either as it pleases you. But when you come into the rooms which I share with you, or undertake any of the duties connected with your position, you will take the trouble to change into the other.'

Cleg touched the nearer suit of clothes gently with his hand. It was of fine texture, though of a fashion somewhat antique, with wide lapels to the coat and the vest very long. The General opened a drawer.

'Here,' he said, 'you will find collars, shirts, and stockings which, though a little large for you, are such as you will rapidly grow into. Consider them as your own. Assure yourself completely that the owner of these has no further need for them.'

Cleg thanked his benefactor frankly, but without subservience or profusion.

'Now,' said the General, turning rapidly upon Cleg, 'I should like to come to financial terms with you. I am willing to give you one pound sterling or twenty shillings a week and your food. At the present rate of the rupee in India, from which much of my income is derived, I am not desirous of making it more. But in the event of any decided appreciation in the price of silver, I should be willing to consider your claims to a supplement.'

'It's far ower muckle as it is,' cried honest Cleg. 'Man, I wad be glad o' the half o't!'

The General waved his hand.

'My dear sir,' he said, 'you are as yet unaware of the intensely peculiar services which your position here will require of you. You may have to see strange things sometimes, and to learn to say nothing. I desire, therefore, to remunerate you suitably in advance. What I shall reveal to you is perfectly harmless, as I shall show you. But still I am aware that there is a not unnatural prejudice against such experiences, especially among the young. We will call it, therefore, for the present a pound a week.'

Cleg nodded. He was willing to sleep in a vault amongst skulls and crossbones, with a reliable up-to-time ghost thrown in, for a pound a week.

‘I will now show you my own bedroom,’ he said.

The General opened the locks of the doors leading into the house with the same precise caution, and with some additional secrecy as well. But even in this the General behaved with a gentlemanly reticence.

‘You will observe,’ he said, ‘that I do not for the present make you free of the passwords of the fortress. That in time will doubtless come; but in the meantime you will consider me as the governor of the castle, with discipline to maintain and my own secrets to keep.’

‘Your nerves are strong, I trust?’ he added, as they passed along gloomy passages through which the winds blew gustily as in some cave of the winds.

‘I’m no feared, gin that’s what ye mean. I dinna ken aught about nerves,’ said Cleg.

The General led him sideways down a flight of steps like one that goes stealthily into a cellar.

They stopped before a door of massive iron, painted red as a ship is before she is launched, and with the boltheads neatly picked out in white.

‘You observe,’ said the General, ‘this door is entirely of my own construction—aided, that is, by the most skilled smiths and mechanics. You notice that the rock upon which the house is built is above our heads, and also that the door is really excavated in the stone itself. The iron frame upon which the door closes is mortised so deeply and completely into the solid rock all round, that to all intents and purposes it is practically one piece with it.’

The General pointed upwards to where a pale yellow gleam on the wall showed through a range of open and glassless, but triply barred windows.

‘That,’ he said, is *Cheiranthus Cheiri*, the common, yellow, or wild wallflower—of a different species from that of the garden and, in my opinion, a much finer plant. It is growing up there on the natural rock. So that I sleep, as sayeth the Scripture, “within the living stone”!’

Cleg looked at the General. His eyes seemed to grow darker, his figure became more erect. He continued every few minutes to refer to his watch.



'This lock,' he said, patting the keyhole, 'is a highly ingenious union of a time-lock and the commoner letter combination lock. This morning I set the wards to open at two in the afternoon. So that it is now almost the time when we shall be able by the application of the key-word to open the door.'

He waited till the hands of the watch were opposite the hour.

'Now!' he said, and stepped forward with some show of eagerness.

The son of the burglar looked on with an interest which was almost painful.

The General twirled the lock till he had brought five letters into line upon the dial. Then he inserted a little key which hung at his watch-chain. The massive red iron door, with its white-studded nails, swung back softly of its own accord.

'A simple application of the principle of the water balance,' he said, 'thus—I open the lock, the water runs out and the door opens. In another five minutes the small cistern will fill of its own accord, and its weight will automatically close the door.'

Cleg hung back. He was not afraid, as he had said. But it seemed an uncanny place to be shut up in with only a madman for company. For Cleg had no doubt whatever that the General was out of his mind.

General Theophilus Ruff noticed his hesitancy.

'Do not be afraid. I have the combinations all in the inside of my watch scales, so that even if I were suddenly to die here, you would still be able to make your way out.'

The two stepped within, Cleg being ashamed to show any further feelings of reluctance to trust his benefactor.

The General touched a match to a large lamp which stood on a pedestal. The whole room, which had been pitchy dark a moment before, seemed now fairly bursting with light.

'My bedroom!' said the General, circling the place with his hand, with the air of one who makes an important introduction.

The walls were of red-painted iron throughout, the red of farm carts in the district, and the bolts were again picked out with white. But the furniture was the strange thing. There was nothing whatever in the room save three coffins, each arranged squarely upon its own table.

The lids of the two at either side were hinged and closed. The centre one stood open. The coffins were not large or fine ones, but, on the contrary, common and covered with black cloth.

The lid of the centre one was off, and stood leaning against the wall at the coffin head. Cleg could easily read the inscription, which was in white letters upon a black painted plate:—

MAJOR-GENERAL THEOPHILUS RUFF,

E.I.C. BENGAL ARMY.

BORN JULY 21ST, 18—.

DECEIVED JULY 21ST, 18—

UNDECEIVED JULY 21ST, 18—

DIED, JULY 21ST, 18—.

‘It is not long now,’ he said, pointing to the latter date. ‘I have not added the year, you observe. But it was revealed that all my days of fate should culminate on the 21st of July. And so hitherto they have. I do not think I shall see more than other four.’

Then a new thought seemed to strike him. He turned to Cleg Kelly sharply.

‘Note the lettering on the coffins,’ he said; ‘I did it all with an ordinary sharpened knitting needle. I bought a plain black tin plate from the carpenter of the village, and he showed me how the paint scrapes off. It is quite easy. But I have done it much more neatly than could the carpenter himself. I have since attended quite a number of male funerals in order to observe the quality of the lettering upon the coffin. I do assure you it is, in general, disgracefully slipshod. The man does not appear to take the least pains to improve. I have even thought of offering to do the job for him.’

Cleg was continuing to look about him, when a sudden noise behind him caused him to leap to the side. The great red iron door had swung to with a little well-oiled click.

The General smiled indulgently and reassuringly.

‘It is only the water balance I told you of. It is now full; the little wet-bob rises to the top, and the door swings to of its own accord.’

Cleg continued to look about him. The room was about thirty feet square and half as high. But there was no bedstead or any other furniture to be seen.

The General noticed his perplexity.

‘I observe,’ he said, smiling, ‘that you are looking for my bed. Here it is,’ laying his hand on the central coffin. ‘Oblige me with your hand. I usually depend upon a stick, but your shoulder is better.’

The General balanced himself for a moment upon the edge of the coffin, and let his head drop back upon the little white pad. Then he arranged his shoulders into the fiddle-shaped swell, and deftly drew in his feet after him.

'Now,' he said, 'damp the herbs in that pipe. Light a ribbon of the prepared paper at the lamp, and put it in the bowl to smoulder.'

Cleg hastened to obey. It was a large-headed Indian pipe with a flexible handle, and a mouthpiece of fine pale amber.

'You observe,' said the General, as he calmly and carefully adjusted his pipe-stem over the edge of the coffin, 'I do not use ordinary tobacco, but a mixture of Indian hemp and *datura stramonium*, or thornapple, a common dunghill plant. With ordinary people the smoking of these would produce madness. But in my case they produce only a peculiar exaltation, and then a kind of ethereal coma, without at all being followed by the evil effects of opium.'

He beckoned Cleg to come nearer. Cleg did so, and took up his position at the foot of the coffin with some reluctance.

'Now,' he said, 'I am about to take my siesta. Do you set the time arrangement by carefully turning the hands of the small clock to seven—the lower dial, if you please. Thank you. Now bring the letters of the word FALSE to the face of the lock attachment, and you will be able to open it by the use of this duplicate key. The same word will (for this day only) enable you to open the outer door—from the inside, that is, not again from the outside. The pass-word is changed every day. I always write it on a paper inside my watch every morning.'

As Cleg was leaving the room the face and neck of the General were suddenly jerked up, so that he rose almost to a sitting position. Cleg's muscles twitched, and with a sharp cry he leaped into the air.

The General waved the hand which was not employed in managing the pipe-stem, upon which his eyes were steadily fixed.

'I beg your pardon most heartily,' he said, 'I should have warned you of this. The fact is, I have an automatic attachment, which I have applied beneath the pillow, by which at certain intervals my head is raised. For though so remarkably spare of person, I have several times in the East been threatened with apoplexy; and, indeed, I suffer constantly from asthma, for which I find the *datura stramonium* most useful.'

And as Cleg whirled the combination circles in imitation of the General, he prayed that he might never again have to enter that ghastly chamber. Yet it was his fortune to abide with the General four years as his body servant, and to enter the strong-room of Barnbogle nearly every day.

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### ADVENTURE LIII.

#### A STORMY MORNING AT LOCH SPELLANDERIE.

It had been a stormy morning at Loch Spellanderie. It was not wholly that the winds howled gustily up the loch, or that the tiny breakers lashed the shore in mimic fury. Mistress McWalter had ofttimes been a deceived woman, but never before had she taken to her bosom so complete a viper as Vara Kavannah. She had, indeed, been telling her so for well nigh four years. Even Kit Kennedy had become for once almost an angel of light when compared with her. The reason of the sudden riot was that Cleg Kelly had been discovered talking to Vara by the orchard dyke the night before.

‘Ye brazen-faced besom—ye toon’s madam,’ cried Mrs. McWalter, ‘I’ll learn you to bring your ragged, unkempt, stravagin followers here. Guidman, gin ye were worth your salt, as ye are not, ye wad tak’ speech in hand, and order sic a randy instantly frae ’boot the hoose!’

It was early in the morning. Mrs. McWalter was still in bed, and her husband was pretending to be asleep. But she was well acquainted with his guile.

‘Ye needna pretend ye are sleepin’, John, for brawly do I ken that ye hear every word.’

Vara, grown by this time into a tall, handsome girl, was already brushing out the kitchen and lighting the fire. Kit Kennedy was whistling cheerfully about the stables. Mistress McWalter always assisted at reveille in the house of Loch Spellanderie. Her voice was so sharp and shrill that it could easily reach every corner of the house from her bed. And upon occasion, when she felt that she was generally doing herself justice, it had been known to sweep the cart-shed, and even beat upon the walls of the barn with considerable effect. But that was, of course, when the front door of the dwelling-house was open.

While thus lying comfortably upon her back, Mistress McWalter could keep up, in a high-pitched falsetto, a steady and destructive criticism of life as it was represented below in the sweeps of Vara's brush and the patter of Kit Kennedy's clogs upon the stone floor.

'What are ye doin' near the dresser, ye sly ill-contrivin' limmer,' she cried; 'hae I no telled ye a thousand times, that if I catch ye takkin' as muckle as a sup o' the milk, that was skimmed yestreen for the bairn's breakfast this mornin', I will hae the polissman at ye? But the jail wad be no surprise to the likes o' you. Na, I'm guessin' ye hae been weel acquaint wi' the poliss a' your days. Tak' up the water-cans and gang your ways to the well for water. Then haste ye fast back and put on the muckle pot and the porridge pot, baith o' them. Or, my certes, I'll come at ye wi' a stick, ye careless, trapesin' slut, ye!'

Vara was not slow in obeying this command. To go to the well meant at the least to be for five minutes out of the hearing of the all-compassing tongue of Mistress McWalter, and out of the shrill ding-dong of her vocabulary. It was not much, still but it was something.

The girl took the blue cans readily, and went towards the door.

'Gang some deal quaiter,' cried Mistress McWalter, 'or, by my faith, I'll thresh ye like a sheaf o' corn when I rise to ye, ye misleared gamester frae the streets! Dinna wauken a' the puir tired bairns, for they were honestly gotten and weel brocht up. And shut the door after ye, when ye gang oot. Ye want us a' to get our deaths o' cauld, nae doot!'

The anger that burned in Vara's breast was healthy and natural, and it would have done her a world of good if she had been able to allow herself the safety valve of intemperate speech. But she only said to herself, 'I'll thole awhile yet for Boy Hugh's and wee Gavin's sake, till they can fend for themselves. I need the siller she pays me.'

Kit Kennedy met Vara as she crossed the yard. Now in order to reach the well, it was necessary to go through the gate at the far angle of the yard, and to walk some distance along the grassy road which led to the next farm. The gusts blew off the lake and twirled Vara's hair becomingly about her face. She was certainly growing a tall, shapely, personable lass. And so thought Kit Kennedy, and said so with his eyes.

Kit was also tall and strong. There was nothing rustic about his appearance. He had the profile and pose of head of the young

Apollo of the Bow. He did not, indeed, possess the sinewy, gypsy alertness of Cleg Kelly, nor yet the devil's grit, turned, on the whole, to good intents, which drove that youth safely through so many adventures. Kit Kennedy was slower, more thoughtful, more meditative. Cleg never by any chance wasted a moment in meditation, so long as there was a chance to do anything. And when he did, it was only that he might again dash the more determinedly and certainly into the arena of action.

But Kit Kennedy could call friends out of the visionary air to sit with him in 'sessions of sweet silent thought.' Often he walked day after day in a world all his own. And the most stinging words of Mistress McWalter did not affect him one whit more than the gusts of wind-born rain which dashed at him across the lake.

In the same circumstances Cleg would simply have smitten Mistress McWalter with a stone, or, if more convenient, with a poker, and so departed well content. But Kit Kennedy forbore, and made nothing of her persecution. He could dodge her blows by watching her hand. And he could go on calmly rehearsing the adventures of Sir Aylmer de Vallance, while the abuse of his aunt provided a ready-made background of storm and fret, which gave a delicious relish to a victorious single combat in Kit's imagination.

When Kit met Vara on the well road he took the cans naturally out of her hands, as if he had been well accustomed to doing it. He had been waiting for her. In his heart he always called her his lady Gloriana, and it was only with difficulty that he could remember to call her Vara. Kit had been much happier during the years since Vara came. He had now a heroine for his romances, as well as a companion for his hours of ease. For Kit went about acting another life all day long. He fed the bullocks to the clatter of cavalry hoofs. He shepherded the sheep toward pastures new, to the blast of trumpet and the beat of drum. Or, as a great general, he stood gloomily apart upon a knoll, with his staff around him, and sent a barking aide-de-camp here and another there, to direct the woolly battalions how to make their attack upon the bridge. He always thrust one hand into his breast, in order to represent the correct attitude of a great general on such occasions. He was compelled to unloose the third button of his waistcoat in order to do it. This seemed strange. He had never read that this was necessary. He wondered what heroes did in that case. But it struck him afterwards that very likely they had their waistcoats made open on purpose.

Again, in his books of chivalry there was always a lady to be the guiding star of every life of adventure. Each knight, if he was of any respectability at all, provided himself at least with one. The great Don Quixote had done that. For the Knight Dolorous was, in the opinion of Kit Kennedy, as indeed in that of all fair-minded people, a most high-minded and ill-used man.

Kit had tried in various directions to find a lady of his vows before Vara came. For lack of better, he had even tried to imagine his aunt as a divinity, beautiful and cruel. But something was always happening to destroy this illusion. Nothing is more hurtful to exalted sentiment than a box on the ear, administered unexpectedly. So after a fair trial Kit was compelled definitely to give his aunt up, as a possible queen of love and courtesy. It could not be done, even with all Kit's very generous goodwill. So, instead, he called her the False Duessa, the black hag Sycorax, and especially and generally Beelzebubba, for the last name pleased him greatly. And whenever she mocked him with her bitter tongue, Kit hugged himself, saying, 'Ah! if only I were to call her Beelzebubba! Little knows she that in the history of my mighty and knightly deeds, she is condemned to go down to posterity yet unborn, under the name of the Loathly Beelzebubba!'

So Kit carried the Lady Gloriana's silver vessels to the fountain of the Elixir of Life, swinging them lightly and talking briskly all the way.

Vara looked often at Kit, with his free breezy ways and erect carriage. Indeed, she looked so often, that if Cleg had been within sight there would certainly have been another fight.

But Vara was constantly mindful of Cleg. She prayed for him night and morning. She remembered all his goodness, and she wished that he could oftener come to see her. But in the meantime it was undoubtedly pleasant to have some one at hand, so ready to help with sympathy for herself and abuse of the enemy as Kit Kennedy.

The lad and the girl stood awhile at the well, leaning elbows upon the dyke, while Vara confided to Kit all the morning enormities of Mistress McWalter, and Kit bade her be of good cheer, for there was a good time coming for them both. And also, doubtless, a very bad time for Beelzebubba. It always was so in the story books.

'How splendid,' said Kit, 'if the devil were just to come for her as he did for poor Faust. He will some day, you may depend.

Beelzebubba would be coming after me with a stick. She would run on and on, getting nearer and nearer to the barn end. I would show the devil exactly where to wait for her. Then I should put my hat on a stick and she would come, crawling, crawling slowly—to get a whack at me. By and by she would get to the corner, and then—*pouch!* the devil would jump at her and catch her, the earth fly open, and nothing be left of Beelzebubba but a smell of sulphur like there is after a bee-killing.’

The vision was monstrously comfortable as Kit painted it. But Vara did not laugh.

‘I think it’s wicked to speak that gate,’ she said.

‘What?’ said Kit, hardly able to believe his ears, yet scenting a new and unsuspected perfection in his lady Gloriana; ‘it is only my aunt. It is Beelzebubba.’

Vara shook her head. She could not give reasons, but she did not think such talk could be right even to imagine.

‘She is no that ill after a’, if you consider that she keeps us,’ she said.

Kit did not know that Vara had known intimately a far worse woman than Mistress McWalter.

At the door Kit gave the cans of water to Vara, brimming full as he had carried them, but silently, lest his aunt should hear from her bed above. He touched Vara’s hand lightly for reward. For he was a boy as full of sentiment as his books were primed with it. He had brought a dozen of his father’s volumes with him, and though his aunt daily prophesied their destruction by fire, Kit thought that she knew better than to do that.

But, while Vara had been gone to the well for the water, momentous things had been happening in the privacy of the chamber shared by Mistress McWalter and her husband. The worm had turned. But, alas! even when worms turn, they do not gain much by it. Except that perhaps they may assist the early bird to wriggle down its breakfast a little more easily.

Mistress McWalter had gone storming along her devious way of abuse after Vara’s departure.

‘I wish ye wad let that lassie alane!’ suddenly broke in John McWalter, awaking out of his deep silence at the thirtieth repetition of the phrase ‘impident madam of the street.’ ‘The lassie’s weel eneuch so far as I see, gin ye wad only let her alane!’

For a long minute Mistress McWalter lay petrified with astonishment. The like of this had not happened since six



months after their marriage. But the checked tide of her speech was not long in overflowing the barrier like a bursting flood.

'Is't come to this between you an' me, John McWalter. That I may rise and pack, and tak' awa me and my bairns, puir harmless bits o' things? For it comes to that! After a' my thirty years about the hoose o' Loch Spellanderie, that ye should tak' the pairt o' a reckless randy gang-the-road trollop, against your ain married wife! Have I watched and tended ye for this, when ye had the trouble in your inside, and could get rest neither day nor nicht, you wantin' aye mustard plaisters? Is it to be lichtlied for a lichtfit rantipole limmer that I hae fed ye and clad ye—aye, and tended your bairns, washing them back and front ilka Saturday nicht wi' a bit o' flannel and guid yellow soap, forby drying them after that wi' a rough towel? And noo since I am to hae a besom like this preferred before me—I'll rise and be gaun. I'll bide nae mair about this hoose. Guid be thanked there's them in the warld that thinks mair o' me than John McWalter, my ain marriet man!'

'Aye, juist na,' said John McWalter, roused at last. 'E'en gang your ways, Mistress, if ye can make a better o't. Ye're braw and welcome to tramp it as far as this hoose is concerned. I'm thinkin' that your new freends will be brave and sune tired o' ye!'

Mistress McWalter bounced out of bed and began hurriedly to gather her apparel, as though she meditated leaving the house just as she was. She would have given a considerable sum of money if at that moment she could have wept real wet tears. However, she did her best with a dry towel.

'To think,' sobbed she, bouncing from chair to chair, 'that ye prefer a wandering gipsy's brat o' a hizzie to me! O what for did I ever leave my mither, and the bonny hoose o' Knockshin, where I was so muckle thoct on? Waes me, for I am but a puir heart-broken deceivit woman!'

At this very moment Vara came in bearing her cans, with a lightened heart after her journey to the well with Kit Kennedy. With a louder voice and more abounding thankfulness, Mistress McWalter took up the burden of her tale.

'Aye, here comes your base limmer. Ye had better be awa doon to her, John McWalter,' cried the Mistress of Loch Spellanderie, 'or she may tak' the country again, after the thief-like loon wha cam' seekin' her on Monday nicht, nae farther gane.'

Then Mistress McWalter went down stairs and opened more

direct fire. It was certainly a stormy day at Loch Spellanderie, little doubt was there of that. For the winds roared about the farm on the hill above the water. And within Mistress McWalter's tongue thundered like great guns in a naval engagement. Vara went about her work with the tear on her pale cheek all that day, and a wonder in her heart what she had done to deserve such cruelty.

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### ADVENTURE LIV.

#### KIT KENNEDY'S FAREWELL.

It was about half-past four in the afternoon that Vara was coming round the corner of the barn carrying an armful of hay. She was undisguisedly sobbing now. For though she did not cry in the house where Mistress McWalter could see her, it was too much for her to restrain herself when she was alone out of doors.

John McWalter met her and stopped, with his usual elaborate pretence of being in a hurry and not having a moment to spare. He had really been doing nothing all the afternoon, but looking for a chance of speaking to her.

'Vara, dinna greet, my lassie,' he said, 'ye maunna heed the mistress' tongue. We a' get oor share o't! Can ye no bide for a day or twa, what I had tane to bed wi' me every nicht for thirty year?'

'Thank you,' said Vara, 'I am gaun awa' the nicht.'

'Where are ye gaun, my lassie,' asked John McWalter kindly.

'To see Hugh and Gavin, my twa wee brithers at Sandy-knowes,' said Vara, 'and maybe I'll be some use there. An' if not, we will just hae to gang farther on, and look for my faither again.'

'Weel,' said John McWalter, 'Guid kens I dinna blame ye. Maybe after a', it wad be as weel. I can see plainly there is gaun to be nae peace here, and it was a' my blame no haudin' my tongue this mornin'. But here's something that will help ye on your road wherever ye gang, my lassie, near or far. There's nae better friend in the world that I ken o' than just a pound note.'

And he slipped Vara a dirty little square of paper folded hard in his hand.

'I canna tak' it,' said Vara protestingly, with the paper in her fingers.

‘Hoots,’ said John McWalter, ‘I’m no needin’ it. I hae plenty. And I canna let ye gang oot o’ my hoose unplenished and unprovided, ony mair than if ye war my ain dochter. Tak’ the pickle siller, lassie, and welcome. And hark ye, mind and crave the mistress for your full wage forbye. She’ll think a heap mair o’ ye for doin’ that. And forbye, she’ll no jalloose<sup>1</sup> me so readily.’

And that honest man John McWalter slipped like a thief of the night in at the back door of the barn.

Vara promptly announced her intention of going away that evening. ‘Aye and welcome,’ said Mistress McWalter, ‘the like o’ you should never hae entered my door.’

‘I shall want my wages,’ said Vara, plucking up courage and remembering her master’s words.

‘Wages, ye randy,’ cried the goodwife of Loch Spellanderie; ‘wages! Set ye up, indeed, ye crawlin’ blastie! Think ye that honest folk’s wages are for the like o’ you, that canna bide awa’ frae your deboshed paramours, and that lies in wait to entrap decent folk’s men, silly craiturs that they are?’

‘I am but a young lassie,’ said Vara, calmly, ‘and think on nane o’ thae things. Neither will ony body believe them but yoursel’. But I’m gaun to hae my wages, or I’ll gang to the kirk yett next Sabbath, and tell a’ the neebours how ye treat your servants, starvin’ them on scraps like dogs, making their lives a burden to them to get them no to bide aboot the hoose, and then at the hinder end threatening them to gie them nae wages.’

This threat, which would have feared no one who was conscious of good intent, somewhat stilled Mrs. McWalter’s fury. For she knew that anything of the kind would be greedily listened to, and retailed at all the tea drinking in the neighbourhood. And she felt, also, that she had not quite the character in the country-side upon which such accusations would fall harmless.

She went to a locked drawer.

‘Here’s your wages,’ she said, ‘and an ill wish gang wi’ them. Glad am I to be rid of you!’ Even thus Vara took her departure from the house of Loch Spellanderie. John McWalter covertly watched her carrying her bundle out of the yard. He was looking round the corner of a corn stack. He dared not come out and bid the girl farewell because of his wife. But the tear was now in his own eye,

<sup>1</sup> Suspect.

'It micht hae been my ain lassie leavin' anither man's hoose. I am wae for her,' he said. 'But I'm glad it was a ten pund note that I slippit her. And whatna state wad the wife no be in, gin she kenned.'

And there came a faint pleasure into his grieved heart as he watched Vara out of sight.

Meanwhile Mistress McWalter stood at the door with victory in the very poise of her ungainly figure. She had disdained to utter a word, as Vara went past her and quietly bade her 'Good-night!' But now she cried, 'Kit Kennedy! Kit Kennedy! Kit Kennedy!' with all the penetrative power of her voice.

But there was no answer. Kit was not to be found.

For Kit Kennedy was in a better place. He was bidding his lady Gloriana adieu. He had, indeed, never let Vara know that he had distinguished her by that name, nor, indeed, save by his kindness and help, that he thought of her at all.

But now she was going away for ever. Her little bundle was in her hand. Her all was in it, and what Loch Spellanderie would be without her, Kit did not like to think just yet.

It was under the orchard apple trees, at the place where they overhang the wall, that Kit was waiting.

'I'm vexed, Vara, I'm sair vexed that ye are gaun awa' to leave us!' said Kit Kennedy, hanging his head. 'I do not ken what we will do without you. It will no be the same place ava!'

'Fare ye weel, lad,' Vara said, holding out her hand; 'ye hae been kind to me. Aye, just past speakin' o'!'

'I'll carry your bundle as far as the march dyke, gin ye'll let me,' said Kit, for once, bashfully. 'I canna bear to think on ye gangin' like this!'

'Ye had better no,' said Vara, 'she micht see ye!'

'Her!' said Kit, with a scornful look over his shoulder, 'I wadna care a buckie gin she was walkin' up the loan ahint us!'

Yet, in spite of this gallant defiance, Vara turned round to make sure that the goodwife of Loch Spellanderie was not in the place designated.

They walked a long while in silence. It was Kit who spoke first.

'Vara,' he said, 'will ye whiles think on me?'

'Of course I will that,' said Vara readily, 'ye hae been verra kind to me here!'

'I'm but a laddie, I ken,' said Kit, 'but ye micht no a'thegither forget me. I'll never forget you, lassie!'

There fell another silence between them.

'Ye'll be gaun back to be near *him*?' said Kit, a little sullenly.

'Aye,' replied Vara, in a voice that was almost a whisper, 'maybe! Ye see we hae kenned yin anither a' oor lives. And he kens hoo I was brocht up—and a' about my folk! And I ken his.'

'I'm jaloosin' ye'll be desperate fond o' him?' said Kit, in the same hang-dog way, as if he were taking pleasure in his own pain.

'He fed the bairns wi' milk and bread,' replied Vara softly; 'aye, and gied us a' that he had when we were starvin'! He gied up the very roof abune his heid, to shelter us when we were turned oot on the street. I canna help bein' fond o' him, Kit. 'Deed I canna.'

Kit Kennedy thought a long time, till, indeed, they had walked quite across a field. Then he spoke.

'I canna feed ye, nor yet look after the bairns for ye. I hae nae hoose to put ye in, Vara. But O, I am *that* fond of ye. It's like to break my heart.'

Vara stretched out her hand.

'An' I'm fond o' you too, laddie!' she said.

'Aye, but no the way I mean!' said Kit sadly, with a sob in his voice.

'I'll be aye thinkin' on ye,' said Vara. 'I wish ye war awa' frae this place.'

'Dinna gie that a thocht!' said Kit, bravely; 'I'm no mindin' a hair for my auntie—at least, I wadna if ye had only bided, so that whiles I could hae looked at ye, Vara!'

They had been walking hand in hand for some time. Kit Kennedy was tingling with a great desire. His heart was beating violently, as he nerved himself for the plunge.

They were at the march-dyke, just where it plunged into the wood of birches and alders. The path went down close along the lake shore from that point. The trees made a green haze of dusk there, with airs blowing cool from off the lake.

'Gloriana,' said Kit suddenly, 'will ye gie me a bit kiss to mind ye by?'

Vara looked at the lad with eyes of shy terror. This was indeed something new. Even Cleg, who would readily have died for her, or given her his coat or his house, if he had one, had never offered to kiss her. So at the sound of Kit's voice her heart also drummed in her ears empty, as if her head were deep under water.

She stood still, looking away from him, but not turning her head down. Kit bent his head and kissed her fairly.

A strange pang ran responsively to Vara's heart—a flash of rapture to Kit's. They parted without a word, the girl walking sedately out of the shadows in one direction, and the lad running with all his might back to the farm in the other.

Each had their own several communings.

Vara said to herself, 'Why does not Cleg think to speak to me like that?'

It was a great blunder on Cleg's part, certainly, and, if heart-aches were to be spared, one which he should speedily set himself to repair.

And as Kit Kennedy went home he said, over and over, 'I hae kissed her. I hae kissed her. Naething and naebody can take that from me, at least.'

But with the stilling of his leaping and rejoicing heart came the thought—'But had I the right? He fed them and clothed them, and never asked as much. He is better than I. I will not trouble them any more. For he is better and worthier than I.'

So Kit's dreams and imaginings helped him to something more knightly in his renunciation than in the brief rapturous flash of possession.

## ADVENTURE LV.

### A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY.

MEANWHILE Cleg was looking after the General's interests when, had he known it, he ought rather to have been looking after his own. He closed the doors of the great house that afternoon, as he had done for many months, and left his master in his strange bed. He was not afraid now, any more. For, in spite of his madness, there was something engaging about the General, something at once childlike and ingenuous, which came out in the close intercourse of two people living altogether alone.

Cleg went into the little brick addition at the back, and the barred doors of the great house shut mechanically behind him.

Cleg was making up his mind to ask the General to let him live out of the house. Cleg was thinking, also, of speaking to Vara. But then Vara might not agree. Had he ever asked her? Of course he had not. It was 'soft'—so he had held up to this point

to speak to a girl about such things. But yet the idea had its pleasures, and some day he would speak to her about it. Had he been hidden that day in the little copse by the march-dyke, on the road from Loch Spellanderie, he might have heard something very much to his advantage, which might have spurred him on to speak for himself, even at the risk of being considered exceedingly 'soft.'

But the mere fact that he thought of it at all, argued a mighty change in this Cleg of ours. He was no more only an Arab of the city all these years. He had given Mirren half his wages and saved the rest, so that, with the Christmas presents the General had given him, he had nearly a hundred pounds in the bank.

Cleg pushed his way through the thickly matted copses of spurge laurel and wet-shot alder. He was going to Sandyknowes. The lush green Solomon's seal was growing all around, with its broad-veined green leaves. A little farther on he came on the pure white blossoms of bog trefoil, with its flossy, delicate petals, lace-edged like feminine frilleries.

A thought came into Cleg's mind at the time which bore fruit afterwards. He thought that, if at any time he should lose his position with the General, he knew what he should do. For Cleg was an optimist, and a working, scheming optimist as well. The man who succeeds in this world is doubtless the man who, according to the copybook maxim, gives his undivided attention to the matter in hand. But he is also the man who has always a scheme or two in reserve. He is the man who is ready, if need be, to 'fight it out on this line all summer,' but who has also at the same time other fighting lines in reserve for the autumn and winter campaigns.

So Cleg, with his ready brain, turned the wild flowers into a means of getting the little house in the background for Vara and himself, even if the General's kindness should vanish away as quickly and unexpectedly as it had come.

The house of Sandyknowes was very quiet. Mirren Douglas had put away vain regrets even as she had laid away Muckle Alick's things—and that was as neatly as if he was to need them next Sabbath when he made ready for the kirk. She had reviewed her position. And for four years, with Vara's and Cleg's help, she had owed no man anything, and had brought up Hugh and Gavin as if they were her own. But she never thought of herself as Alick's widow. She was his wife still.

Alick and she had been saving people. Also he had been, as was said, 'a weel-likit man about the station,' and he had left her nearly four hundred pounds in the bank. But this Mirren, like a prudent woman, had resolved not to touch if she could help it. She had still six years to run of the nineteen years' lease of Sandyknowes—its grass parks and its gardens, its beeskeps and little office houses. But she was often a little wearied at night, cumbered with much service. She felt that now she needed help.

Her thoughts fell on Vara. Should she not bring her home? But yet how could she take her away till the term from Mistress McWalter of Loch Spellanderie?

At that very moment Vara herself opened the door and walked in.

'Wi' lassie!' cried the astonished Mirren Douglas, 'what for hae ye left your place? Hae ye gotten leave to bide a' nicht?'

'I hae gotten my fee an' my leave, like the brownie Kit Kennedy sings about!' said Vara pleasantly.

'And what's the reason o' that?' said Mirren, with great anxiety in her motherly face.

'The master and the mistress fell oot about me,' said Vara simply.

'Then I needna ask what yin o' them was in your favour,' said Mirren, sharply.

'I must look out for a place,' said Vara. 'Oh, Mirren Douglas, ye hae been kind to me. But I couldna think o' pittin' you to fash and trouble ony longer, noo that I'm woman muckle, and able to be doin' for mysel'.'

'Lassie,' said little Mistress Mirren Douglas of Sandyknowes, 'will ye hae this place here? I was gaun awa' to look for a lass this very minute. Will ye bide at Sandyknowes, at least till ye will be wantin' to leave us o' your ain accord some day?'

'Aye, that I will, and heartily!' cried Vara, smiling gladly.

And the tender-hearted little woman in black fairly took Vara in her arms and wept over her.

'I canna think what's come ower me thae days,' she said; 'I greet that easy. And everything that I tak' in my fingers breaks. Since Alick gaed awa' I think whiles that my fingers hae a' grown to be thumbs!'

There was a rap at the door. Vara rose naturally and went to it as if she had never been away. It was Cleg Kelly.

All his greeting was just 'Weel, Vara!' He did not so much



as offer to take her hand. Clever as he thought himself, Cleg Kelly had a great deal to learn. Yet that very moment he had been dreaming of the little house which was to grow out of the General's bounty, and out of the trefoil and forget-me-not in the bog. Yet, when he found his sweetheart at the back of the door, he could only mutter 'Weel, Vara!' Nothing more.

Cleg and Vara went in together, without speaking. Mirren rose to shake hands. But Little Hugh was before her. He distinguished himself by summarily tumbling Gavin heels over head and scrambling towards the visitor.

'Cleg Kelly! Cleg Kelly!' he cried. 'I want ye to fecht the Drabble and gar him gie me back my pistol. I'm big enough noo! There's an awesome heap o' wild beasts here to shoot if only I had a pistol. In the wood at the back there's lots o' elephants, and leopards, and—and teegars,' he added, when he found that Cleg looked sufficiently credulous.

'And how do ye get on with the daft General?' asked Mirren, with great interest in her face.

Cleg was amused at her question. He had become quite accustomed to the wonder on people's faces, usually shading into awe, when they asked him concerning his position in the household of the redoubtable General Theophilus Ruff.

'Fine,' said Cleg. 'Him and me 'grees fine. I hae nae faut to the General.'

'Preserve us,' said Mirren, 'I never heard the like. The auld wizard hadna had a leevin' soul about him before you came, since his Indian servant Copper-Blackie died. And that's ten-year since. And to think that ye hae nae faut to him!'

She looked at Cleg again.

'Noo, come,' she said, 'sit doon and tell us a' about what's inside the hoose.'

But Cleg remained uninterestingly discreet. He said nothing about the General's bedroom; but he filled up the tale with the most minute details concerning the vaulted passages, the iron-barred casements in the hall, and the camp-like conveniences of the little brick building at the back.

Vara and Mirren Douglas listened with close attention. Hugh stopped teasing the cat with a feather, as it was trying to go to sleep on the hearthrug. Gavin was already asleep, with a brass door-knob and a whip clutched in his hands.

'Aweel,' said Mirren, when Cleg had finished, 'I thought it

was a deal waur than that. But he maun be a fearsome creature to leeve wi', the General. Yet he is nane so ill a neebour to me.'

Cleg uncrossed his legs and became instantly at ease. Mirren looked affectionately at Vara.

'Heard ye,' she said, 'that I hae gotten a new servant lass! I am able to do without her wage. And it is worth far mair for the company,' she added.

'I wish I could bide and help ye too, for Alick's sake,' said Cleg, shyly.

Mirren rose and ran to the boy. Hastily Cleg held out his hand, and Mirren Douglas clasped it. He was afraid that she was going to kiss him, and though he admitted the thing as an abstract possibility of the future, it had not quite come to that with him yet.

'Cleg,' she said, 'ye are a kind, good lad.'

'Aye, that he is,' chimed in Vara; 'and ye wad say so if ye kenned him as I do.'

Cleg began to expand in this atmosphere of appreciation. He decided to wait for tea. The hours sped all too swiftly, and the appointed time arrived before he knew it, when he must return to the great barred prison with the little brick martin's nest attached to the back of it.

But before Cleg went away, he brought in the water for the night, filling all the cans. He scoured the milk pails ready for the milking of Mirren Douglas's three cows. He split abundance of kindling wood. He brought in the peats off the stack—enough to do for all the following day. He swept the yard clean as a hearth, with a worn stable brush. He promised to come back on the morrow and sweep the chimney, when Mirren puffed her cheeks at the smoke which blew down it occasionally. Then he brought home the cows, assisted by Hugh, Vara watching meanwhile a little wistfully from the gate. She felt sure that if it had been Kit Kennedy, he would not have chosen Hugh to help him. Mirren watched the girl with sharp, kindly eyes, but she said nothing.

When Cleg had done everything that he could think of for Vara and her mistress, he tied a new whip lash on Gavin's driving stick, tossed Hugh up to the ceiling, and departed.

Vara came with him to the door. Cleg did not even attempt to shake hands. On the contrary, he edged cautiously away lest Vara should offer to do it. 'A chap looks saft aye shakin' hands'

was how he explained the matter to himself. So when Vara stood a moment at the doorstep, with her hands wrapped tightly in her white apron and her eyes upon the bee hives, Cleg looked at her a long time. It was exceedingly good to look upon her, and he had a little heartache all to himself as he thought of Theophilus Ruff in his terrible bedroom. Vara seemed all sunshine and pleasantness. But still he could think of nothing to say, till he was about ten yards down the walk. Then at last he spoke.

‘Ye are takkin’ your meat weel to a’ appearance,’ he said.

Vara understood his meaning and was pleased. It was more to her from Cleg than all Kit Kennedy’s sweet speeches. Her mind was mightily relieved. Cleg would learn yet.

But Vara only replied, ‘Do you think so, Cleg?’

‘Guidnicht, Vara,’ said Cleg, soberly.

And with that he took his way sedately over the fields and disappeared into the coppice towards the house of Barnogle. Vara watched him out of sight; but now not so wistfully. There was a proud little expression in her face. She looked almost conscious of her growing beauty.

‘He maun think an awfu’ deal o’ me to say that!’ she told herself.

When she went back into the house Mirren Douglas was just putting on her milking apron. She pretended to busy herself with the strings.

‘Cleg doesna improve muckle in looks,’ she said; ‘he’s no great beauty, is he noo?’

She spoke with intent to see what Vara would reply. For, after her sorrow, the old Mirren was springing up again like roses in an Indian summer.

‘I never think muckle about his looks when I see him,’ said Vara quickly. ‘If he had looked like an angel, he couldna hae been kinder to me.’

‘Hoots, lassie,’ said Mirren hastily, ‘I was only jokin’ ye. He is growin’ a fine personable lad, and when he has some flesh on his banes and a wee tait o’ mair growth about his face, he’ll do verra weel.’

‘He does very weel as he is, I think,’ said the loyal Vara, who was not yet appeased. ‘He has chappit the firewood, fetched the water, brocht in the peats and stalled the kye, soopit the yaird—and he is coming back the morn to clean the lum.’

‘And to see you, Vara,’ said Mirren Douglas, with wicked

meaning in her tone. 'What said ye at the door when he cannily bade ye Guidnicht, Vara?'

'He said I was lookin' like takkin' my meat weel,' said Vara, demurely pulling at the corner of her apron, where a knot of the lace was coming loose. At least Vara was rapidly loosening it.

'Let your apron be, lassie; what ill-will hae ye at it?' cried Mirren from the doorstep.

Vara dropped the loop as if it had been white-hot iron. And as Mirren Douglas carried her milking stool to the byre, she dropped a few tears. 'I mind sae weel,' she said to herself, 'the time when Alick was a lad and coming about the place, I used to like naething better than for folk to be aye botherin' me about him!'

And if 'bothering' be a provocative to love, Mirren resolved that neither Vara nor Cleg should lack the amatorious irritant.

*(To be continued.)*

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*CLARISSA FURIOSA.*<sup>1</sup>

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. DENT'S TERMS.

'You do not convince me,' remarked Mr. Dent. 'Lady Luttrell does not convince me. Even the young man himself does not convince me; though I make you welcome to the admission that he has established a title to my respect which I did not think that I should ever be called upon to bestow in that quarter. After hearing you all at full length and holding my own tongue quite short, I still remain of opinion that this marriage would, at best, be a very hazardous experiment.'

He was sitting in the spacious, but rather gloomy library in Portland Place, the four walls of which, had they been endowed with ears and the power of articulation, could have reported many shrewd and sensible sayings of his; for he was a man of no small influence in the political and financial world, and all sorts and conditions of his fellow-countrymen were wont to seek interviews with him. But shrewdness and common sense were likely to prove of little avail in the present instance, and his niece, who had been permitted by Lady Luttrell to return to the shelter of his roof that day, only laughed.

'As if every marriage was not a hazardous experiment!' cried she.

'Well; but one endeavours to minimise the risk. Or rather, one would if one could. After a London season or two, you would

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States of America, 1896, by W. E. Norris.

know a great deal more than you know now, you would have met a great many more men than you have met yet——'

'And I should have lost the only man in the world whom I can ever wish to marry,' interrupted Clarissa. 'Don't you understand, Uncle Tom, that that is the beginning and the end of the whole question? You may not like it—though why you should dislike it I can't imagine—but what has happened has happened, and cannot be helped.'

'*Reste à savoir*, as Lady Luttrell might say,' returned Mr. Dent, with a smile. 'You can't marry your Guy without my consent, remember, for the very prosaic reason that there won't be money enough. Upon that point Sir Robert and I have exchanged confidences which leave us quite of one mind. And although I cannot expect you to believe me, it is nevertheless a fact that things which have been done are frequently undone.'

'I shall be my own mistress in three years,' said Clarissa, her countenance darkening somewhat; 'but I suppose you hope that he will have forgotten me by that time.'

Then, all of a sudden, her eyes filled with tears, her lips quivered and she hurriedly snatched a handkerchief out of her pocket.

'Oh, why should you wish to be so cruel to us!' she exclaimed. 'What harm have we ever done you? Why can you not let us be happy together in our own way?'

Mr. Dent rose and laid his hand gently upon his niece's shoulder. 'My dear,' answered he, 'I can't tell you why. There are reasons—your inexperience is a very obvious one—but it would be useless, or worse than useless, I dare say, to mention them all. Sir Robert will tell you what occurs at a Cabinet Council when an intelligent minority chances to be in the right. The intelligent minority bows to the misguided majority and hopes, against hope, for the best. I take it that that is my present rather unenviable position.'

Clarissa flung her arms round his neck. 'You consent, then!' she cried joyfully; 'I was sure you would!'

'Ah, well!—upon conditions. First of all, let me explain to you that the estate left by your poor father was of such a kind and the directions of his will were so worded that I cannot possibly say now, nor shall I be able to say until the time comes for handing your fortune over to you, what it will amount to. During the interim there is an invested capital, of which I am to allow you as much or as little of the interest as I may think fit. At present this produces, I find, 800*l.* a year, or thereabouts—which, of

course, is not a large income. Not large enough, I mean, to enable you to support a husband.'

'Surely it is not usual to talk about wives supporting their husbands!' interpolated Clarissa, without a smile.

'It is not usual to talk about their doing so; yet they are often expected to do it. And that is my humble little point. I am not going to provide Guy Luttrell with the means of throwing up his commission; I am not going to add to your income; I might even retain the whole of it and allow it to accumulate for your ultimate benefit if I chose. But as you are evidently in earnest, and as he assures me that he is, that amount, and no more, you shall have for the next three years. Guy has his pay and an allowance, which, I suspect, is not a very magnificent one, from his father. Consequently, if my terms are accepted, you and he will have to follow the drum on foreign service, and for some time to come you will not be much, if at all, better off than your neighbours. It remains to be seen whether these terms will be accepted or not.'

They were, at all events, instantly and unhesitatingly accepted by Clarissa, whose demonstrations of joy and gratitude her uncle had some temporary difficulty in repressing.

'Don't be in such a desperate hurry,' he pleaded; 'you have certainly nothing to thank me for, and it may turn out that you have nothing to rejoice over. Here is the unvarnished truth: I am rich and childless; I could easily afford to give you what you want and what, I suppose, the Luttrells hope for. But, rightly or wrongly, my wishes and views are opposed to yours in this matter; so I have decided as I have told you. I shall not budge from the position that I have taken up: let us hear now what the other side has to say.'

'If by "the other side" you mean Guy, I know very well what he will say,' Clarissa declared confidently.

Had she not, indeed, already received assurances from him which forbade her to entertain the shadow of a doubt upon that point? During the *pourparlers* which had been carried on between Sir Robert and Lady Luttrell and Mr. Dent, the upshot of which had been but partially divulged, her lover and she had stood aside; but there had been no faltering in the resolution of either of them. Guy, to be sure, had generously refused to hold her in any way bound to him, and had confessed and impressed upon her that her uncle's consent must be a necessary preliminary to their marriage; but not for one moment did she believe that

he would allow such considerations as had just been specified to separate them. To suppose that he would was tantamount to supposing that he had never really cared for her at all—which was manifestly absurd.

When, therefore, she set forth to keep a certain appointment, her heart was light and her spirits as joyous as the sunshine of that spring afternoon, which had triumphed over the London mist and smoke and was reminding many a prisoner in the vast, dirty city of green fields and budding woods and clear streams far away. Seated in a closed carriage beside her somnolent aunt, who was to drop her in Grosvenor Place before taking the three customary turns round the park which represented Mrs. Dent's daily share of fresh air and exercise, she rehearsed by anticipation the imminent colloquy. Guy, who was to be up from Aldershot for the day, would meet her with an air of suppressed eagerness and interrogation and with his eyes a little more widely opened than usual; Lady Luttrell and Madeline would seize her and guess her news before she had time to speak; and then, no doubt, it would be admitted on all hands that she had been justified in boasting of her ability to vanquish Uncle Tom. For the fact was that these good people had not succeeded in getting anything in the shape of an answer out of him, save that he would say what he had to say to his niece and to nobody else; nor had Clarissa been relinquished to his guardianship without grave apprehensions, numerous injunctions and even a few tears.

'How happy we are all going to be!' the girl could not help ejaculating, as she sat upright and looked out through the carriage-window at the passing stream of vehicles and brisk pedestrians. It seemed to her that everybody and everything had suddenly assumed a sympathetic mien of joyousness, appropriate to the occasion.

'Well—perhaps,' agreed Mrs. Dent somewhat dubiously. And then, raising her head a little from her cushions and smiling kindly enough upon her young neighbour: 'I am sure I hope you are, my dear. I should have thought that your uncle might easily have made you all a good deal happier; but he says he has his reasons, and he generally knows best.'

Now, if one of Mr. Dent's reasons for acting as he had done had been to impose a test upon Guy Luttrell which would cause that ease-loving fellow to jib, he would have been compelled to acknowledge the futility of so cynical a calculation, had he witnessed the meeting which took place a few minutes later between



his niece and her betrothed. For no sooner had Clarissa been admitted into Sir Robert Luttrell's house than Guy stepped quickly forward and drew her into the library on the ground floor, whispering, as he did so:

'Tell me first!—whether you bring good or evil tidings, I don't want to hear them in the presence of a third person.'

He was a good deal agitated—more agitated than she had ever seen him before; his brows were slightly contracted, his lips twitched, and the hand which grasped hers had lost its accustomed cool firmness. Looking into his face, she saw, with a glow of joy at her heart, how he loved her and feared to lose her, and she could not resist the temptation of prolonging those delicious moments by holding him in suspense.

'Well,' she answered slowly, 'I don't know that my tidings ought to be called exactly good. That will be for you to say after you have been told what they are.'

But of course there was but one verdict for him to pronounce; and he pronounced it with such fervour, with such exuberant and boyish glee, that she was fain to burst out laughing and crying simultaneously while she listened to him.

'Eight hundred a year!—why, it's positive affluence! Add that to my own little pittance, and we shall be able to live like fighting-cocks out at Colombo, where the regiment is to go in the autumn. Dear old boy!—may his shadow never grow less! I had fully made up my mind, do you know—and so had the governor—that he didn't mean to have me at any price. I say, Clarissa, would you kindly excuse me if I jumped over the table once or twice? Unless I can let off steam somehow or other, I won't be answerable for the consequences.'

He actually did it (and it was no easy thing to do either), springing and alighting with the grace and dexterity of a trained athlete, while she exclaimed, through her laughter and her tears, 'Oh, Guy, how *can* you be so silly! What would the Pau people, whom you were too lazy to dance with and who always accused you of giving yourself airs, think if they could see you now!'

'They would think, my love,' he answered, as he paused beside her, panting a little, 'that nobody in the wide world has so good a right to jump for joy as I have at the present moment.'

And, with that, he broke forth into passionate language which has been used a thousand times before and will be used a thousand times again—language which had the charm of com-

plete novelty for its hearer, if not for its utterer, but which neither of them, it is to be feared, could recall at this time of day without some retrospective embarrassment. Presently he was seized with abrupt misgivings. Had he, after all, any business to accept this great sacrifice on the part of the woman whom he loved? Was she quite sure that she was prepared to brave expatriation and a tropical climate and a host of minor discomforts? Ought she not, perhaps, to take a few more days for reflection and consideration?

Her answer was what he must have expected, although he had not spoken insincerely. At the bottom of his heart there may have lurked a vague impression that he, too, was about to make a sacrifice, that he might, if it had so pleased him, have secured a wealthier bride, have remained in England amongst his friends and amused himself far better than he was likely to do in Ceylon. But nothing resembling this took definite shape in his thoughts. He was perfectly happy; he was going to be united to the girl whom he adored; old Dent had behaved like a trump, and he would not change places with any man living.

It was reserved for Lady Luttrell to detect and point out, later in the day, the shadows which flecked an otherwise sunny prospect. Not in the presence of Guy and her future daughter-in-law did she embark upon so ungracious a task; to them she was as affectionate and congratulatory as they could have wished her to be. She even sent a kind message to Mr. Dent, although she was extremely angry with him. But to her husband she could not help avowing that things had not gone quite as she had desired and intended them to do.

‘One hardly knows what to think about it,’ she said, anxious lines appearing upon her forehead. ‘It is a genuine love-match, and that is so far satisfactory; yet 800*l.* a year seems very little, and we are given no idea of how much more there will be. I suppose Mr. Dent must have counted upon our refusing his offer. Considering what he owes to you, it is scarcely pretty of him to treat us in that way.’

Sir Robert, who had returned from the House of Commons tired and sleepy, was moved to mirth by this last remark. ‘Dent may be pardoned,’ said he, ‘if he is of opinion that I owe him considerably more than he owes me. For my own part, I stand amazed at his good nature; for I think, as I have told you all along, that he has a pretty strong case against us. We, of course, protest that we are blameless, that we never coveted his niece’s

fortune nor laid plots to gain possession of it, and that we really couldn't foresee the sudden descent of Cupid upon the scene. Very well; he takes our word for that—which is more than I should have done, if I had been he—consents to a marriage which he doesn't like, promises that the girl shall have the full income to which she is entitled, and—proceeds to button up his pockets. To me that appears such handsome behaviour that I declare I shall not know which way to look the next time I meet him.'

'But he will not always keep them buttoned!' protested Lady Luttrell. 'Surely you do not mean that, Robert!'

'I mean,' answered Sir Robert, 'that Dent has an absolute right to do as he pleases with his own; I mean that all manner of unexpected contingencies may arise—that his invalid wife may die, for example, and that he may marry again. I mean that some people are too clever by half, and that other people are not necessarily heiresses because their deceased father has had a certain amount of interest in a banking business. I mean that Miss Clarissa is a charming young lady, that Guy is at least as lucky as he deserves to be, and that it will do neither of them the slightest harm to spend the first years of their married life in an inexpensive colony. Finally, I mean that nothing of all this has been my doing, that I decline all responsibility for the consequences, and that I am now going to bed.'

But this was putting the case at its very worst; and in the course of a day or two Lady Luttrell was able to feel almost, if not entirely, contented with her son's bargain. It was a great pity that he should be driven out of his native land, it was a great pity that so much needless mystery should be made respecting Clarissa's ultimate inheritance, and it was not very nice of Mr. Dent to allude to certain episodes in Guy's history which might have been matched in the history of no matter what young man of the world; still, when all was said, much cause for thankfulness remained. A more richly dowered girl than Clarissa Dent might perhaps have been discovered; but it did not by any means follow that Guy would have deigned to espouse her, while it was tolerably certain that he must eventually succeed to the wealth of his uncle by marriage. Then, too, there was the comfort of knowing that the young people were honestly, not to say absurdly, enamoured of one another; and this was really a great comfort to her ladyship, who loved romance, so long as it could be brought into line with reason and prudence.

As for Mr. Dent, it may be assumed that he was not overjoyed when his niece returned, with sparkling eyes and a becoming flush upon her cheeks, to tell him that everything was settled; but he only raised his shoulders slightly and remarked:

‘So be it! You have troubles before you, my dear; but you would have had troubles before you in any event, and neither I nor anybody else could have preserved you from them.’

The Rev. Paul Luttrell was of a different opinion, and as he was a man who seldom hesitated to express any opinion that he might entertain, he rated his parents soundly for the part that they had taken in this affair and told his brother in so many words that he ought to be ashamed himself.

‘But, my dear fellow,’ objected Guy, after listening patiently and good-humouredly enough to a recital of the causes which should have sufficed to debar him from any attempt to win the affections of a mere child, ‘you make no allowances for human nature. As it happens, I scrupulously abstained from attempting to win her affections—not for the reasons that you give, which, with all due respect to you, I think are rather rot, but because I didn’t like the idea of grabbing a big fortune. I couldn’t help loving her, and I suppose she couldn’t help loving me. Was I to turn my back upon her and take to my heels, after I had discovered the truth, merely on account of the possibility that she may become rich some day? She isn’t rich now, you know.’

‘No; not on that account, but on account of what you are pleased to call “rot.”’

‘What extraordinary beggars you parsons are!’ exclaimed Guy, throwing up his hands; ‘you are always preaching forgiveness of sins; but deuce a bit will you forgive, or believe a man when anybody else would understand, as a matter of course, that he is going to turn over a new leaf!’

‘*Litera scripta manet,*’ returned Paul somewhat doggedly. ‘I don’t doubt your intention to turn over a new leaf; but how would you like your wife to run her eye over the old ones?’

‘I shouldn’t like it at all,’ Guy confessed, laughing a little, ‘and I don’t suppose she would find them edifying or profitable reading either. Parson as you are, you must know as well as I do that precious few men reach my age without having passed through some little experiences which are best forgotten. So don’t be an ass, old man, and for goodness’ sake, don’t go and make Clarissa miserable by telling her tales out of school.’

Paul could not and did not do that. He confined himself to reading Miss Dent a brief lecture upon the duties and trials of matrimony, the necessity of giving and taking, bearing and forbearing, and so forth—all of which struck her as a little commonplace, though doubtless well meant. But when he went on to say that all would depend upon whether she took the Christian view of marriage or regarded it merely as a social contract, to be dissolved at will, she made so bold as to inquire what he was driving at.

‘Are we not going to be married in church?’ she asked.

‘Oh, yes; and you are going to be married by me, I believe. But many people are married in church who afterwards appeal to the Divorce Court, and a still larger number live more or less avowedly apart because, as they allege, they “can’t get on together.” I want you to realise that, however convenient such arrangements may be, they are opposed to the Christian doctrine.’

‘Well,’ answered Clarissa, after considering for a moment, ‘I won’t argue the point; for nothing can be more certain than that I shall never wish to make an arrangement of that kind.’

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## CHAPTER X.

### CAPTAIN AND MRS. LUTTRELL.

IF, as certain competent judges are wont to affirm, happiness in some shape or form be of necessity the object of every human being’s aspirations and efforts, Clarissa Dent’s triumph over such apprehensive well-wishers as her uncle and the Reverend Paul Luttrell must be pronounced to have been complete; for unquestionably she was as happy as any girl could be during the six weeks which followed the public announcement of her betrothal.

‘And that, after all,’ Mr. Dent was fain to acknowledge, with a smile and a shrug, ‘is the main thing. What an old brute you would think me if I were to warn you that you must not expect these halcyon days to last. Moreover, you wouldn’t believe me, and I should be quite sorry if you did. Let me, instead, give you a time-honoured piece of advice which I am sure you will act upon and recommend you, now that the weather is so nice and sunshiny, to make hay and gather roses.’

She was very ready to do that, and roses in ample quantities were scattered upon her path. The Luttrell family—pleased, upon

the whole, with the turn that affairs had taken, sanguine as to eventualities and really attached to their future relative—did all they could to render a London season pleasant for her, and of course they could do a great deal. The responsibilities of *chaperonage*—which, indeed, she was not in a state of health to assume—were taken off Mrs. Dent's shoulders; Clarissa was given opportunities of meeting the most distinguished men and women of the day which, with her eager craving to see what everybody and everything were like, when surveyed at close quarters, she appreciated to the full, and what was highly satisfactory was that amongst all the great personages who seemed to enjoy talking to her she could not discover Guy's equal. She amused him not a little by telling him as much.

'If you only knew what a commonplace, every-day sort of fellow I am!' said he. 'Not that I want you to know. For that matter, I daresay a good many people would laugh if I were to give them my opinion of you; though I defy anybody to call you commonplace.'

He was, in truth, proud of her, of her social success, of the ease with which she comported herself in no matter what situation, and of her personal beauty, which, as is so often the case, had developed amazingly under the influence of her heartfelt contentment. Moreover, he was very deeply in love.

It was in the month of June that the marriage took place, with every desirable accompaniment in the shape of costly wedding gifts, fashionable guests, music, flowers and strips of crimson carpet. The young couple departed to spend a brief honeymoon in the Isle of Wight, and as they drove away, Mr. Dent, who chanced to be standing at Sir Robert Luttrell's elbow, remarked:

'Well, you have done it now.'

'Don't say *I* have done it,' protested that eminent statesman; 'it really isn't fair to say that I have done it. From first to last I never had a finger in the business, and you yourself admitted that I had done what in me lay to keep faith with you.'

'Then I will say that *we* have done it. Likewise *they* have done it. I don't know what your sensations may be, Luttrell, but I feel very much as if I had just slaughtered a poor little lamb. Oh, it's all right; it was quite inevitable; lambs must be killed, and butchers are useful, respectable members of the community. But Nature never intended me to be a butcher, and that is why I am afraid I shall have no appetite for dinner to-day.'

‘What the deuce are you talking about, man?’ asked Sir Robert wonderingly and a little resentfully. ‘Do you think that my son is going to ill-treat your niece?’

‘One hopes not; one doesn’t quite see why he should, and one remembers that he has the average share of good qualities. Only he is no more like what she thinks he is than that very admirable painting of a little boy in frilled drawers is like the right honourable gentleman the present Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—and sooner or later she is bound to find that out.’

‘You might say the same of any man in London whom she could have married,’ observed Sir Robert, still slightly ruffled.

‘Very likely. After all, I may be disquieting myself in vain; for women seldom or never take things as one expects that they will take them. Added to which, as I said just now, it couldn’t have been helped.’

If any discoveries of a painful or startling nature awaited the bride, she certainly had not made them when, a month later, she arrived at the small furnished house near Aldershot which had been prepared to receive her. To Madeline, in the absence of any confidential friend of riper years, she had written several long letters from the Isle of Wight, describing her perfect felicity and extolling her husband’s goodness, his chivalry, the marvellous modesty and simplicity of his character. It was never Clarissa’s way to keep silence when under the sway of emotion.

The little Aldershot house, for which Guy had many apologies to offer, she pronounced charming. Of course it would have been ridiculous to waste money upon furnishing an abode which they would have to quit so soon, and she rather enjoyed the novel sensation of being compelled to consider ways and means. It looked delightfully snug and cosy, she said.

‘Oh, well—it’s hideous, to tell the truth,’ Guy answered, with a rueful little laugh; ‘but I daresay it can be made to do for the time, and there wasn’t much choice. We’ll make ourselves more comfortable when we get out to Colombo. Now the next thing will be that you will have to be introduced to the ladies of the regiment, whom I don’t know particularly well myself. I’m afraid you are sure to hate them.’

But Clarissa was not in the mood to hate anybody, nor, so far as she could judge, did the ladies who made haste to call upon her deserve detestation. They were perhaps a little dull; they did not seem to have much to say upon topics of general interest,

and a certain subdued defiance was noticeable in the manner of all of them. But Mrs. Antrobus, the colonel's wife, a tall woman with a hook nose, a harsh voice, and a candid style of expressing herself, explained this latter phenomenon.

'You find us a bit standoffish, eh?' said she, in response to a remark which Clarissa certainly had not intended to convey that impression. "Well, you mustn't be surprised at that, and it won't last any longer than you choose. We aren't going to be patronised, that's all; and when a man leaves the Guards to join the Cumberland Rangers, we don't think he is performing such a wonderful act of condescension that he need give himself airs upon the strength of it. Your husband, as I dare say you know, has done scarcely any regimental duty at all as yet, and the idea seems to be that he is inclined to turn up his nose at his brother officers. I'm bound to say that I haven't observed this myself; still it's just as well to warn you at starting that that sort of thing is very bad form and is sure to be resented. So I hope, for your own sake, you won't go in for it.'

Clarissa mildly disclaimed, on Guy's behalf and on her own, any desire to act in the manner described; but she was not greatly fascinated with Mrs. Antrobus, who, after putting a few direct, abrupt questions as to the state of Sir Robert Luttrell's and Mr. Dent's respective finances, concluded her visit by remarking:

'Well, I don't suppose you will be with us long; but I dare say you will get on all right, if you can manage to bear in mind that we consider ourselves as good as anybody.'

Guy was much diverted by the report which was subsequently given to him of this rather formidable lady's warnings.

'So they suspect us of being haughty, do they?' said he. 'I am not sure that it isn't a useful sort of reputation to have—for you, I mean; because you probably won't care to be very intimate with these women. The men are as decent a lot of fellows as one could wish to meet. Perhaps I ought to dine at mess every now and then, though.'

He took care to display sociability in that particular every guest night, and it may be presumed that the sacrifice did not cost him any very serious amount of personal inconvenience. Popular Guy Luttrell had always been and was always sure to be; while Mrs. Harvey, Mrs. Durand, and the rest of them soon found themselves sufficiently at ease in his wife's presence to chatter



freely, after the manner of their kind, about their babies and about small garrison scandals.

To Clarissa they and their subjects of conversation were, it must be owned, altogether unimportant. She had at this time merged her identity in that of her husband, on whose account she was beginning to dream ambitious dreams and whose retention of his present undistinguished position she thought, with Mrs. Antrobus, would probably not be protracted. Brave, soldierly, and gifted (as she had persuaded herself) with talents far exceeding the average, he might aspire to something a long way above the reach of the Major Harveys and the Captain Durands with whom he was for the moment associating. Already by anticipation she saw him conferring lustre upon an ancient name by rising to the rank of General in early life. Others, whose inferiority to him required no demonstration, had achieved this, and why not he?

‘But I don’t think Captain Luttrell is a very keen soldier, is he?’ objected Mrs. Harvey, to whom Clarissa was encouraged, one day, to confide something of these visions of military glory. ‘His heart isn’t in it, like the heart of my poor, dear old Jack, who is sure to be laid on the shelf before long.’

Mrs. Harvey was a quiet, dowdy little woman, with a large family, a small income, and a sad, yet resigned, conviction that nobody in the world was quite so badly off as she and her Jack.

‘I don’t say so in a disparaging spirit,’ she hastened to add; ‘of course your husband has many interests in life besides soldiering, and it stands to reason that he will leave the army when he succeeds to his property, if not sooner. What is very serious earnest to us can only be play to him, you see.’

Clarissa declared that she was certain Guy did not regard his profession in that light.

‘Ah, well!’ sighed the elder woman wistfully, ‘he can afford to regard it in what light he pleases. If he chooses to take it in earnest, his father’s influence, no doubt, will be powerful enough to do almost anything for him; but I should have thought, like most other young men of fortune—and I’m sure one can’t blame them!—he did not regard anything as particularly serious, except play.’

To speak of Guy Luttrell as a young man of fortune was scarcely accurate; but it was only too true that he greatly preferred play to work, and there was one form of play to which he was more addicted than his wife had as yet had occasion to

discover. Of this she was made aware, after a fashion which distressed her not a little, at a ball given by one of the cavalry regiments stationed in Aldershot at that time. She had been spending a most enjoyable evening and had danced a great deal with her husband, who had gladdened her heart by assuring her that he would never, if he could help it, dance with anybody else; but as there were one or two ladies present with whom it was quite imperative upon him to dance, he had left her for a time in the supper-room, and thus it was that a fragment of dialogue which ought to have been conducted in lower tones reached her ears. Two resplendent young officers, standing side by side and sharing a bottle of champagne, were discussing some third person, whose name did not immediately transpire.

‘Oh, yes; very good chap, but an awful gambler. Shouldn’t wonder if he were to come a regular howler one of these fine days. Loses his money like a man, though; I must say that for him.’

‘Ah, so I hear. He was playing poker at our mess the other night and dropped a pretty tidy sum before he went home, I believe. It got too hot for me, I know. Didn’t he have the name of being rather a thirsty soul, too, when he was in the Guards?’

‘Well, yes; there was a row about it on one occasion, some years ago, I think. I forget exactly what happened; but he was over head and ears in debt at the time and, what with one thing and another, I fancy he got a hint to go. However, he is supposed to have turned over a new leaf now; so I daresay he’ll be all right.’

‘H’m! his father is hardish up, by all accounts.’

‘What, old Luttrell? Yes, very likely; but Master Guy has married a woman with a pot of money. If she’s a sensible woman she’ll put him on a liberal allowance and keep the key of the cellar.’

‘I’ll be hanged if I’d allow my wife to treat me like that!’

‘Oh, I expect you would, and I’m sure Luttrell will. Any woman could ride him in a snaffle bit—let alone a sensible one.’

‘For how long?’

‘Well, until he met another woman, I suppose. But he isn’t exactly a colt nowadays, and it will be his wife’s own fault if she lets him get out of her hand.’

The two good-humoured calumniators—if calumniators they were—moved away, leaving a woman who was, unfortunately, far

more sensitive than sensible to ruminate over their careless words. Clarissa was certainly not happy in the character of an involuntary eavesdropper, and now—as once before in the garden of the Château de Grancy—she lacked the requisite wisdom to disregard what she had had no business to hear. When she and her husband returned home, Guy, who could not help noticing how pale, silent, and depressed she was, implored her vainly for some little time to tell him what was the matter; but she could not go to sleep with such a heavy weight upon her mind, and she ended by relating the whole episode—not without tears.

For a moment Guy looked grave; but then, somewhat to her surprise and chagrin, he began to laugh.

‘So you thought you had married a tipping gamester, did you?’ said he. ‘Oh, no; things aren’t quite so bad as that, though I must plead guilty to having played poker with those fellows when I was asked and to having lost my money. It wasn’t a very formidable sum, as far as I can remember, and you yourself can bear witness that I came home sober. But look here, Clarissa—rather than that you should cry about it, I’ll cheerfully promise never to touch a card again. I don’t much want to take the pledge, and I don’t think it is exactly necessary; still, if you insist——’

Clarissa, seized by a sudden access of shame and remorse, jumped up and laid her finger upon his lips. ‘Don’t say such things!’ she exclaimed. ‘I knew that what those horrid men said couldn’t be true, and I wouldn’t for the world make you promise to give up a single one of your amusements; only—well, I suppose I ought not to have listened at all.’

‘It’s a good rule not to listen when one’s friends are being discussed,’ agreed Guy, smiling. ‘I always think I know as much about my friends as I want to know, and if there’s more to be discovered, I’d rather find it out for myself than hear it from other people. One either trusts a man or one doesn’t, you see. If one doesn’t, he is hardly what you could call a friend, is he?’

Clarissa hung her head. ‘Have I behaved as if I distrusted you, Guy?’ she asked, in a quivering voice.

‘No, indeed you haven’t, my love!’ he exclaimed, taking her in his arms and kissing her. ‘You have trusted yourself to me, and I hope you will never have reason to repent of your bargain. Of course I am not as young as you are—I only wish I were!—and if I could begin my life over again, I should leave undone

a good many things that I have done; but that's impossible, so there's no use in worrying about it. As for gambling and drink, you may make your mind easy; I'm ready to forswear them both, if you wish.'

'Oh, but I don't!' protested Clarissa; 'I never meant that.'

'Well, then, I'll forswear excess. Now are you contented?—and may we dismiss the subject?'

She could not but reply gratefully and penitently in the affirmative. There was something more which she had thought of mentioning—something about Guy's alleged proneness to be led by women—but, after what had passed, she felt that it would be unworthy and humiliating to make further demands upon his forbearance. Besides, what could he have told her? As he had said, one either trusts a man or one doesn't.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### SOME GOOD DAYS AND A BAD ONE.

IT was in the month of October that Guy Luttrell and his wife left London for Brindisi on their way to join the Cumberland Rangers in Ceylon. Not altogether for nothing, even in these democratic days, is one the eldest son of a Cabinet Minister, and it had been found practicable to spare both Clarissa and her attentive husband the horrors of a troopship voyage. It might have been found practicable—or so, at any rate, Lady Luttrell had hoped—to spare them the trials of exile into the bargain; but Mr. Dent had not appeared to understand certain thinly-veiled hints to that effect, and had contented himself with handing his niece a cheque to defray the cost of the overland journey. Clarissa, for her part, did not dread exile, nor was she able to mingle her tears with those of her mother-in-law and Madeline when the time came to say farewell. Setting aside the circumstance that she wanted to see something of the world in a geographical as well as a social sense, she was still in that state of selfish beatitude which is apt to characterise the newly-married and which renders them, while it lasts, such extremely poor company for other people.

'Do you know,' she said confidentially to Guy, when at length they stood, beneath a cloudless blue sky, upon the deck of the P. and O. steamer which was to conduct them to their destination,

'I am rather glad to think that we have several years of foreign service before us. I feel as if I should have you more to myself in that far-away place than I should if you were within reach of all your gay friends at home.'

'Well, if you're glad, I'm glad,' he responded cheerfully.

As a matter of fact, he thought that there was only one country worth living in, and, fond though as he was of sport, would a thousand times rather have shot partridges and pheasants in England than elks and elephants in Ceylon; but he was of a contented, philosophical disposition, besides being anxious above all things to give pleasure to the woman whom he loved. For her sake he had given up a good deal, and was prepared to give up more, if need should be. In deference to her prejudices, he had eschewed gambling and had almost eschewed backing horses; he was honestly desirous of proving himself a model husband, nor could anybody deny that his conduct, so far, had been above reproach. Consequently, the withering sun of the Red Sea blazed down upon two happy mortals whom their fellow-passengers pronounced to be singularly unsociable and who had no querulous complaints to address to the captain.

And when—a little to Clarissa's regret—there came an end to days and nights of steaming across the wide Indian Ocean and she obtained her first view of the exquisite island which was to be her temporary home, the last thing that could have entered her mind would have been to complain of such a destiny. There are, of course, people—and even a good many of them—who complain loudly of an enforced residence at Colombo; but then they know what the tropics are, and have ceased to be enchanted by sights, sounds, and scents which are full of wonder and delight for the new-comer. Clarissa, too, was to weary, in process of time, of perpetual summer, to gaze with languid indifference at tall, graceful palms, feathery bamboos, marvellous flowering shrubs and gorgeous creepers, to sicken at the fragrant odours of the sunset hour and to long for the grey skies, the keen air, and the comfortable coal-fires of an island less favoured by Nature. *Tout passe, tout lasse*; but a merciful Creator has hidden the future from us; and so, unless we are very unlucky indeed, we all get a fair share of good days in the course of our little lives.

Now, the days which Captain and Mrs. Luttrell spent in setting up and garnishing a charming abode for themselves within easy distance of the barracks were altogether good days. Guy secured

without difficulty (for the question of rent was not, after all, a very important one) a spacious, one-storied dwelling, situated in the so-called Cinnamon Gardens, a broad, flat expanse of many acres, covered with bushes of the shrub which, under the old Dutch rule, used to be jealously protected as a chief source of revenue, but which has ceased to be cultivated now that Government monopolies are no more. The house, surrounded by a wide, cool verandah, the pillars of which were concealed in luxuriant wreaths and festoons of climbing plants, satisfied Clarissa's soul, and if she expended a good deal of money in adding to its beauties, there was no great harm in that, seeing that a considerable balance still remained in her hands out of Uncle Tom's cheque.

'This is an improvement upon Aldershot, isn't it?' she exclaimed exultantly, on the first evening when she and her husband dined together in their new abode, after quitting the rather noisy hotel where they had been sojourning; and Guy could not but agree that it was.

'If one is to be buried alive, one really couldn't wish for a prettier grave,' he had the generosity to add.

But they were in no danger of being buried alive, and although Guy, with his limited notions of what constitutes society, would not perhaps have allowed that such a thing could exist in Ceylon, social intercourse was accorded to the young couple in doses almost too large to be conveniently swallowed. The Governor and his wife, who had received letters from the home authorities, showed them much hospitality; other officials followed suit; what with polo, cricket matches, informal race meetings, dinners and dances, Clarissa's engagement book soon became so full that she began to sigh for rest and would fain have declined a few invitations.

'Well, I don't think it would be prudent to start doing that just yet,' Guy said, when consulted upon the point. 'We shall only make ourselves unpopular if we do, and it's a pity to be unpopular. Later on there may be reasonable excuses, you know.'

There was going to be an excuse: of that the young wife was aware, and the thought of what was coming affected her nerves and her spirits sometimes. But as yet she had mentioned this to nobody but her husband, who made light of it, assuring her that it was the greatest mistake in the world to take time by the forelock in such cases. The fact was that he enjoyed seeing people, and she felt that it would be unpardonably selfish to condemn him to the life of solitude which would have better suited her own tastes.

Looking back—as she often did afterwards—upon those weeks and months of well-nigh uninterrupted gaiety, she had difficulty in recalling the precise moment at which it began to dawn upon her that her tastes and Guy's were essentially dissimilar. Some differences of opinion, which could scarcely be called quarrels, she did remember. At the time she penitently attributed them—with reason, it may be—to an irritability of temper on her part which was something new to her and which she could not always control. It was certain that Guy was very patient and very forgiving. But he did not hesitate to leave her for a week at a time when an opportunity offered of joining in a shooting expedition; his leisure hours were chiefly spent in playing polo or educating a couple of young horses which he had bought; he could not make himself domestic, he could not pretend to take an interest in the books which she devoured so eagerly; still less could he discuss theology with her, as she sometimes essayed to lead him into doing. In the matter of religion Guy's notions were beautifully simple. He neither thought much about it nor practised it himself; but he was convinced that sceptics were a bad lot, while scepticism in women shocked him almost as much as downright immorality—possibly even a little more.

'You shouldn't let your mind run upon such questions,' he said reprovingly to Clarissa; 'once you start upon that line you can't tell where the deuce you'll stop. It would look awfully bad if you gave up going to church just because there are some things that you can't understand. If it comes to that, who *does* understand them? Of course I don't set up to be an authority; but—but there's the Church, you know, and the early Fathers, and all those learned old chaps. Don't you think it's a little bit arrogant to assume that they have been telling lies for the last eighteen hundred years or so?'

There was no rejoinder to be made to so highly orthodox a method of dealing with an incipient unbeliever, and from that day forth Clarissa had to confide her doubts and perplexities to the birds, the flowers, and the waving trees that stood her in stead of human company when escape from human company was practicable. She loved her husband as much as ever; but her respect and admiration for him were, unfortunately, on the wane.

As time went on a lull supervened in the gaities of Colombo. The Governor had gone up to Kandy, official entertainments were at an end, and the excuse for retirement of which mention has

been made had so far ceased to be a secret to the ladies of the Cumberland Rangers that Mrs. Luttrell was enabled, without giving offence, to absent herself from their daily gatherings on Galle Face, that long and broad esplanade which the society of the place frequents in the cool of the evening, and where great rollers, thundering in from the Indian Ocean, bring fresh breezes and a smell of the sea with them.

‘Not that I consider it very wise of you,’ Mrs. Antrobus said, in her abrupt way, one day.

Despite her bluntness and occasional rudeness of manner, Mrs. Antrobus was a kind-hearted woman, and Clarissa, who had grown accustomed to her ways, was never very sorry to see her marching up the garden, swinging her sunshade upon a long fore-finger.

‘You see,’ the good lady went on, ‘I have had a considerable experience of men, and you mustn’t mind my telling you that the best of them want watching. As for your husband, I think myself that he is a very good fellow; but anybody can see with half an eye that he is just the sort of man to get himself into scrapes when there are pretty women about. I dare say you wouldn’t consider Mrs. Durand pretty——’

‘Mrs. Durand!’ interjected Clarissa, in accents of disdainful surprise.

‘Oh, I don’t call her pretty; but she’s pretty enough for the purpose and silly enough for anything. Just now she has taken it into her empty little head that your husband admires her, and she is as pleased as Punch in consequence. Likewise she is laying herself out to attract him.’

‘Really she is most welcome,’ Clarissa declared, with her chin in the air.

‘Well, then, my dear, she oughtn’t to be. I don’t say that this present flirtation is likely to lead to any harm; only if you let him begin, he’ll go on—mind that. Tell me to mind my own business, if you like—you won’t offend me—but take the advice of a woman who has knocked about the world and kept her eyes open, and don’t you be deterred by false pride from making rules while you have it in your power to make them. You can mould your husband now; you won’t be able to mould him a year or two hence.’

There might be some truth in that; but Clarissa could not condescend to profit by counsels which struck her as vulgar, coarse, and founded upon a complete misconception of the only attitude



which a wife could assume with dignity. Colonel Antrobus, who was notoriously under the thumb of his authoritative spouse, was a submissive husband, no doubt; but a woman who respects herself does not care to have a submissive husband. If he cannot behave himself properly unless her eye is upon him, he must behave improperly; it is absolutely essential to their common happiness that she should be able to trust him, and Clarissa, as may be remembered, had made up her mind to trust Guy.

When she was once more alone, therefore, she contrived to laugh—though not very heartily—at the well-meant warning with which she had been favoured. Mrs. Durand!—a common, flashy woman, who wore jewels in the daytime, addressed young subalterns by their surnames, without any prefix, and smoked cigarettes publicly in order that she might earn the proud distinction of being called fast!—it would indeed be a sorry compliment to Guy's taste to suppose him capable of being fascinated by such a charmer. She had half a mind to tell him, as a good joke, when he came in, of the susceptibility with which he was credited; but, upon second thoughts, she decided to say nothing about it. The joke was not such a very good one, after all.

Assuredly it was not in consequence of what Mrs. Antrobus had said that Clarissa was prevailed upon, on the following Sunday, to join a luncheon party at Mount Lavinia which, as she was informed, was to be graced by Mrs. Durand's presence. Mount Lavinia, situated at a distance of some seven miles along the Galle road, is a favourite place of resort on the first day of the week with Colombo residents, and Guy mentioned casually, one evening, that he had promised to drive thither with 'the Durands and one or two other cheery people.'

'I wish you would come too,' he added; 'but I suppose there would be no use in asking you to do that.'

There would not have been much use in so doing (for she dreaded the heat and fatigue that the excursion would entail) had he not seemed to take her refusal rather too much for granted. As it was, she was tempted—just by way of watching the effect of her reply upon him—to say, 'Oh, I don't know; I think I should rather like it.'

But, although she had not really intended to go, she could not back out of it when his face lighted up with unmistakable pleasure and when he exclaimed, 'That's first-rate! We'll put the bay pony in the cart, then, and drive over together, like Darby and

Joan. You'd rather do that than go in the waggonette with the others, wouldn't you?'

It was, at all events, not unpleasant to be made aware of his own implied preference, and if Clarissa had not enjoyed that Sunday drive, she would have been hard to please. But she did enjoy it to the full, the conditions being in all respects as favourable as could be desired. The heat was not too oppressive; the way along the broad, red road, between the thundering surf and the still lagoon which adjoins Colombo, presented a series of stationary or moving pictures which gladdened the eye with their rich, varied colouring. The groves of cocoa-palms, the vivid green paddy-fields, the marvellous flowering trees—golden, scarlet, orange and white; the graceful, feminine-looking Singhalese, walking bare-headed, their long, glossy hair gathered into a tight knot and fastened by a tortoiseshell comb; the turbaned Tamils; the palm-thatched carts, drawn by small, humped-necked bullocks—all these, if they had no longer the first charm of novelty for Clarissa, still sufficed to rejoice her heart.

'I remember,' said she, 'one day when I was at Haccombe Luttrell a groom passed us on the road, exercising a big chestnut mare of your father's. The mare was very fresh, and she stopped for a minute to kick so furiously that I made haste to scramble up a bank and get out of range of her heels. A labourer who was on the other side of the hedge popped his head up and stared. Then he turned to me and, jerking his thumb towards the mare, remarked, with a grin, "I reckon her's glad her's livin'." Well, that is just how I feel now. I am glad I'm alive!'

Guy was delighted to hear it, and said so. A tropical climate did not produce quite that effect upon him, nor could he comprehend why beautiful scenery or brilliant colours should be exhilarating; but that his wife was enamoured of existence was all the better news because she had scarcely seemed to be so of late. He drew his whip across the pony's flanks, laughing contentedly.

'I knew it would do you all the good in the world to come out of your shell for a few hours,' he remarked.

It was certainly doing her good; although she read what was in his mind and realised, as she had recently learned to do, that she must suit her conversation to him if she wished to spend a happy day. But that, for the moment, seemed to be no such hard matter. Lovers—and lovers these two still were—can always find

one engrossing subject to talk about, and the fact is that Guy and Clarissa talked about little or nothing else while the fast-trotting little pony drew them towards Mount Lavinia a long way in advance of the heavier equipage which contained their fellow-excursionists.

When the waggonette drew up in front of the hotel, its occupants found a lady who was in the best of good humours waiting to receive them. It must be owned that Clarissa did not always exert herself to be agreeable to the Mrs. Harveys and Mrs. Durands with whom she had so little in common; but on this occasion they profited by the good will which she entertained towards the world at large. The luncheon party proved a complete success, and Guy, for his part, noted with some satisfaction that his wife was doing her best to make it so.

The subsequent proceedings, unluckily, proved less successful and less satisfactory from Clarissa's point of view. She had supposed that, after a reasonable delay for coffee and cigarettes, she would be allowed to resume her seat in the pony-cart; but it appeared that so speedy a return to Colombo had never been contemplated by the organisers of the jaunt. One by one—or rather, two by two—the lunchers strolled out of the room, Guy pairing off with Mrs. Durand, and when Clarissa ventured upon some tentative suggestion as to its being nearly time to make a start, the lady whom she addressed exclaimed:

'Bless you, no!—not for the next three hours. We're all going to sit upon the beach and throw stones into the sea until the sun goes down. You aren't afraid of malaria, are you? I can lend you wraps, if you forgot to bring any.'

It was a bore, but there was no help for it; so Clarissa accepted the escort of Major Harvey, a dull, lean, lanky man with a very long moustache, and walked down in his company to the beach, where neither Guy nor Mrs. Durand were to be seen. There, with patient impatience, she sat for what seemed to her an interminable length of time, while her companion confided to her some of the sorrows of an impoverished married man. Major Harvey, she gathered from his own account of himself, had once been a bright ornament of society, a distinguished sportsman and athlete, and (as was only to be expected) something of a lady-killer; but now, alas! he had neither money, leisure, nor time to do himself justice. Everything had to be sacrificed to the children, who were 'tumbling over one another like rabbits.' Mrs. Luttrell

might take his word for it that precious few men would be such fools as to marry if they could only foresee what awaited them.

‘I should have thought that Mrs. Harvey had at least as much to complain of as you can have,’ Clarissa remarked at last.

But indeed she was scarcely listening to him, and had not yet acquired the habit, which in after years became a second nature to her, of plunging into the fray on behalf of her own sex upon the slightest provocation. What preoccupied and annoyed her was that, although, as has been mentioned, the party had split up into couples, and although some pronounced flirtations were being carried on in her immediate vicinity, Guy and Mrs. Durand had apparently thought fit to seek a more sequestered spot in which to exchange ideas. She was not jealous—how could she possibly be jealous of that woman!—but she felt that Guy was making himself and her a little ridiculous; nor was her vexation diminished by certain jocose comments upon his prolonged absence which presently began to make themselves heard.

However, there was worse to come. The sun was upon the point of sinking, the brief twilight would soon give place to night, the waggonette and the pony-cart were drawn up in readiness, with lighted lamps; yet the assembled company was still short by two of its proper strength. Messengers were despatched in quest of the truants and returned, having failed to discover them; everybody was showing signs of impatience, while one person was becoming seriously uneasy. Only Captain Durand, to whom such experiences were perhaps no novelty, remarked philosophically that he was sure it would be all right.

‘Luttrell will drive Katie in the pony-cart, if Mrs. Luttrell doesn’t mind coming with us.’

‘I really think it would be best,’ said Mrs. Harvey. ‘I don’t want to hurry anybody, but I am afraid I *must* get back to the children, and it isn’t as if there could be the least cause for alarm. The pony goes so much faster than these poor old horses that Captain Luttrell will be certain to overtake us soon.’

Clarissa, with a smile upon her lips and something not unlike rage in her heart, assented; and a very miserable drive back to Colombo she had. Her fellow-passengers, it was true, refrained from humorous remarks; but that scarcely mended matters, since it was obvious that they did so out of sheer pity for her. Moreover, the pony-cart did not catch up the waggonette.

Clarissa had reached home, and was noting the near approach

of the usual dinner hour with mingled wrath and apprehension, when the crunching of wheels upon the gravel made her aware that she might safely indulge the former sentiment, if she chose. Guy hurried in, full of apologies and looking very like a naughty schoolboy.

‘So awfully sorry you had to drive back with those wearisome people! I’m afraid you must have been cursing me. The fact is that we walked on and on, without thinking of looking at our watches, and then——’

‘It doesn’t in the least signify,’ interrupted Clarissa coldly; ‘I can quite understand your having forgotten what time it was in such charming and refined company.’

‘Come, Clarissa, you surely don’t think that I prefer Mrs. Durand’s company to yours!’

‘I am afraid the others must have thought so, and that was not very pleasant. However, nothing of the kind will occur again; for your excursions will be made without me in future. So, as I say, it doesn’t in the least signify.’

Her intention, of course—whether she knew it or not—was to provoke one of those quarrels, followed by an explanation and a reconciliation, which all women love and all men abhor; the very last thing for which she was prepared was that her husband should ignore the challenge. Yet that was just what he did. With a half-deprecating glance at her, he murmured something about running off to change his clothes, and promptly suited the action to the word. On his return he seemed to have forgotten that anything was amiss; throughout dinner he talked pleasantly, if somewhat more volubly than usual, and immediately afterwards he departed for the barracks, whither, as he alleged, duty summoned him.

Clarissa, as soon as she was alone, sank down into a chair, covered her face with her hands and sobbed bitterly. It was no exaggeration to say that she would have submitted to insult and cruelty rather than to such a method of treatment. All was over, she felt—the dream was at an end. Possibly Guy loved Mrs. Durand, possibly he loved nobody: what was beyond a doubt was that he no longer loved his wife, or he never could have behaved as he had done.

## CHAPTER XII.

## SEVERAL MISTAKES ARE MADE.

SIR ROBERT LUTTRELL, who was a man of experience, had often been heard to declare that anything on earth is better than a row; and possibly his convictions in that respect had been transmitted, together with other desirable and undesirable inheritances, to his eldest son. At all events, Guy would have thought himself a very great fool if he had made any further allusion to an unfortunate occurrence which Clarissa appeared to have dismissed from her mind. In reality there are, of course, exceptions to every rule. Thunderstorms clear the air, wars prepare the way for prolonged periods of peace, even domestic broils may be preferable to polite estrangements. On the other hand, it is not to be denied that those who value liberty and a quiet life can very often obtain both by obstinate, selfish good humour, and from the day of that ill-fated expedition to Mount Lavinia Guy at least enjoyed the privilege of being his own master.

The privilege was one which, as a matter of fact, he did enjoy and make the most of. He was not much at home; he spent a good many hours in the society of Mrs. Durand, who rather amused him; he soon managed to persuade himself that Clarissa liked solitude and was as well satisfied with their actual mode of life as he was.

'I hope you don't find this sort of thing awfully slow,' he said to her once, with a solicitude which he not unfrequently displayed, and which, if he had only known it, was infinitely more distressing to her than the neglect to which she was becoming habituated.

'Oh, no,' she answered; 'I have plenty of books to read, thank you.'

Guy seldom opened a book. Lazy though he was by temperament, it was incomprehensible to him that history, philosophy, poetry, or fiction could form any substitute for an active share in the drama of existence. Still he was generously willing to make every allowance for diversity of tastes, and he deemed it not unnatural that, under all the circumstances, his wife should feel unequal to social exertions.

For the rest, she had a few friends: amongst others, Lady Brook, the Governor's wife, a quiet, delicate, rather melancholy

woman, the greater part of whose life had been spent in colonies, which she did not like, and in enforced separation from her children, whom she adored. This middle-aged, prematurely grey-haired lady, having taken a fancy to Clarissa, asked her, soon after the new year, to spend a week at Kandy, where the Governor was then residing, and Guy (whose military duties detained him at Colombo) joined with Mrs. Luttrell's medical attendant in urging her to accept the invitation. A little change was just what she wanted, they both declared. So, although she herself was of opinion that what she wanted was not so much a little as a great change and that the latter was unobtainable, she yielded to their entreaties and went.

The Pavilion, as the Governor's residence at Kandy is called, is a less spacious and imposing edifice than the Queen's House at Colombo; large entertainments are less obligatory there, and as Sir George Brook was away on a tour to the more distant districts of the island during Clarissa's stay, she had a quiet, pleasant time of it in the company of her hostess. With the place itself she was enchanted—as indeed all who have seen it must be. Situated some 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, it can boast of a climate in many respects superior to that of Colombo, while retaining the luxuriant tropical vegetation in which Clarissa had not ceased to delight. The slim, lofty palms, the green, wooded hills, the purple mountains in the distance and the red-roofed Buddhist temples, reflected on the placid surface of the lake, near to which the Pavilion stands, did not fail to charm her; every turn of the winding roads drew a fresh cry of admiration from her during her drives with Lady Brook, who smiled rather sadly and said:

'Yes, it is very lovely; but I often think how gladly I would exchange it all for some grubby little house in South Kensington! In a few more years, I am thankful to say, George will be able to take his pension, and then, I hope, we shall never stir out of England again.'

'But won't he be rather sorry to have come to the end of his career?' Clarissa asked.

'Ah, there it is! Perhaps he will enter Parliament, though; and then, you see, he is not as young as he was. For a young man, of course, it is everything to have a career—and to be interested in it. Otherwise they are so apt to get into mischief.'

'I suppose they are,' agreed Clarissa pensively.

She had already discovered—and the discovery was most dis-

tasteful to her—that Guy was not particularly interested in his career. It might be that he had also got into mischief, or was likely to do so. If Lady Brook had meant to convey something in the nature of a hint (and very probably she had, being acquainted with the Luttrell family and being likewise of necessity acquainted with the gossip of the community which her husband ruled), she was too discreet to over-emphasise it. Shy by nature and trained to excessive caution by her many years of official life, she would have felt it impossible to offer advice to the young wife, save in general terms.

In general terms, however, she took occasion more than once to state what, according to her notions, a wife's duties were. She was quite old-fashioned; her notions differed completely from those which her hearer was gradually forming; her standpoint as regarded the relations between her sex and the other was one of convinced and contented inferiority. But she was so kind, so simple, so far from presuming to dictate or rebuke, that no one could wish to dispute with her. Moreover, there were other subjects upon which she was able to speak with authority; and Clarissa, who was rather badly in need of a friend at the time, was thankful enough to have found one whose dispositions were thoroughly maternal. Her visit to Kandy was prolonged from a week to a fortnight—Guy, whose permission was asked by post, offering no objection—and when she returned to Colombo, she was in noticeably improved health and spirits. She even brought back with her a stock of good resolutions; for she had been a good deal influenced, if not exactly convinced, by the precepts of her gentle hostess. Without admitting that woman's sole mission in life is to bring up children and study the comfort of a husband, she nevertheless perceived that woman's happiness is in a large measure dependent upon her tacit adoption of some such system.

Now, Guy Luttrell, to do him justice, was the easiest man in the world to live with, and it may be added that he asked nothing better than to live upon terms of amity and affection with his wife. Any little sacrifice that he could have made to please her—such as, for example, the relinquishment of his intimacy with Mrs. Durand—would have been cheerfully incurred; still one does not (or, at any rate, he did not) make sacrifices without being asked to do so; so that, in the course of the months that followed, Clarissa found more than one opportunity of trying her good resolutions by a practical test. Upon the whole, however, those months were not



unpleasant to her; nor, during the last weeks of the period, had she to complain of any lack of care or sympathy.

When, early in May, her baby was born and mother and infant were pronounced by the doctor to be going on as well as possible, Guy drew a long breath of relief. He had been more apprehensive than he had cared to avow, and now that his mind had been set at rest, he could not permit considerations of petty economy to deter him from despatching needlessly diffuse telegrams to anxious relatives at home. The anxious relatives would perhaps have been rather better pleased if he had been able to announce the birth of an heir to the family honours and estates; but he himself was very well satisfied with his little daughter, to whom in due course was given her grandmother's name of Antoinette, and whom he did not find nearly as repulsive as the generality of the human young. Soon after Clarissa's recovery, which was a speedy one, it was thought advisable that she should be removed to a less relaxing climate, and, Lady Brook, who was deeply interested in babies and mothers, having kindly offered the use of the Governor's cottage at Nuwara Eliya to Mrs. Luttrell, Guy obtained a few weeks' leave in order to escort his charges thither.

There cannot be many places within the tropics where a complete change of climate is so easily obtainable as in Ceylon, or where the ascent to a height of 6,000 feet above the sea can be accomplished in a luxurious railway carriage. The travellers reached their journey's end to find themselves in a fresh, verdant, mountainous district, the temperature and scenery of which might have reminded them of Scotland in summer, but for the masses of scarlet and crimson rhododendrons which were just then in full glory. They were even likely ere long--so the servants at the Queen's Cottage assured them--to renew acquaintance with a genuine Scotch mist; for the south-west monsoon was nearly due, and rainy days are the rule rather than the exception at Nuwara Eliya. For the time being, however, the skies were clear, the air was crisp and bracing, and the pretty, English-looking garden had already nooks and corners admirably adapted to the requirements of a convalescent. Clarissa was very happy there with her baby and her temporarily domesticated husband, who had few temptations to quit her side. At certain seasons of the year this high sanatorium is thickly populated and the inhabitants entertain one another with much vigour; but just then everybody had gone down to Kandy or Colombo; even sport was not to be had in the

neighbourhood without preparatory arrangements which Guy was too indolent to undertake, and so the Luttrells practically had the place to themselves, with undisturbed enjoyment of their own company. It was a sort of pause—a truce, as it were—in their lives, which one of them at odd moments felt to be only a truce, but which, for all that, was restful and delightful.

When at length the rain began to fall, it descended in such earnest that for three days in succession Clarissa was confined to the house; although Guy paddled out in a mackintosh and shooting-boots, because, as he said, one really couldn't sit indoors from morning to night.

'Of course you can't,' his wife agreed compassionately, 'and I don't see how you can stay any longer here either. It is different for me; I have baby, and books to read and letters to write; and Lady Brook told me I might use the house as long as I pleased. So I think, if you don't mind, I should like to remain where I am for another week or ten days. But you must go back to Colombo and—and amuse yourself.'

He protested a little; but his scruples were not very difficult to overcome. It would certainly be a pity for Clarissa to leave her present quarters prematurely, seeing that she had derived so much benefit from the change to the hills, and that the baby appeared to be thriving. On the other hand, he supposed he ought to be thinking of a return to the regiment. Not, to be sure, that he was very much wanted, so far as the discharge of routine duty went; but a *gymkhana*, he explained, was to be held at Colombo in a few weeks' time, and he had promised to ride in it.

'And I fancy I shall about win, if I can begin schooling the pony at once. At present he knows nothing at all.'

'Oh, you are not going to ride one of your own, then?' asked Clarissa.

'No, not one of my own; he belongs to—to another fellow,' Guy answered rather hurriedly.

What would have been the use of telling her that the pony was the property of Mrs. Durand? She might not have liked it if he had, and they had been getting on so comfortably of late without any mention of Mrs. Durand's name. So Guy departed on the morrow, and Clarissa was left to her baby, her books, and her meditations—which latter were cheerful or the reverse in accordance with the mood in which she chanced to be. She had wit enough to perceive that, by a little judicious closing of the

eyes and by acquiescence in the waste of her husband's career, she might lead as happy a life as falls to the lot of most women ; but at the bottom of her heart she was becoming more and more conscious that she would be able to do neither the one nor the other. Consequently, there seemed to be breakers ahead.

An occasional fine day, sandwiched in between many wet ones, prevented her from growing weary of her solitude, and a reluctance to resume regular habits would probably have detained her indefinitely at Nuwara Eliya if Lady Brook had not expressed a wish by post that she should return to Colombo.

'I am sure,' that kind and sagacious lady wrote, 'you have been long enough alone now, and I think you ought to see our *gymkhana*, in which your husband, I am told, is to take part. Besides, I have something to say to you which may concern both you and him.'

A few days later Clarissa, having regretfully discarded the warm English gowns which she had been wearing, and having resumed a garb more suited to the steamy heat of the Singhalese capital, called at the Queen's House, where she received the communication which Lady Brook had been instructed not to commit to paper. The Governor-General of India, it appeared, would shortly be in want of a new aide-de-camp, and Sir George Brook had reason to believe that he could secure the berth for Captain Luttrell, should the latter care to accept it. There would be drawbacks, no doubt ; but these, in the opinion of Sir George and Lady Brook, would be more than counterbalanced by contingent advantages.

'It is not as if there could be any question of your being separated from your child,' Lady Brook said ; 'she is, fortunately, far too young for that to be necessary. And Sir George thinks that this appointment would give your husband opportunities of getting on which he could never hope to obtain while he remains with his regiment.'

In short, Clarissa was urged to use her influence with Guy, whose consent to act in furtherance of his own interests seemed, for some reason or other, to be considered doubtful. Lady Brook was kindly and affectionate, but scarcely explicit. She told her young friend how sorry she would be to lose her and how much she hoped that they might meet again in England ; she did not tell her—how could she ?—what Sir George, a rather bluff, peremptory personage, had said upon the subject—'The fellow had

better be got out of the place ; he's doing no good here. Running after some woman, I hear, and not unlikely to make a fool of himself and bring about a scandal. It wouldn't be the first time, you know. Probably he is too lazy to jump at a chance which most men would be glad enough to have ; but I should think you might do some good by having a little talk with his wife.'

Clarissa was somewhat mystified, divining that there was more than met the eye in this sudden eagerness for Guy's promotion ; but her own slumbering ambition on his behalf was awakened, and she readily undertook to convey to him the informal intimation with which she was charged.

'Not good enough, my dear,' was the unexpected reply that she received from her husband that evening, after giving him a full account of Sir George and Lady Brook's benevolent designs. 'I have done A.D.C. work more than once, and I know only too well what it is. A bachelor may stand it, and even enjoy it, for a time, if he's young enough : a married A.D.C. is a sort of contradiction in terms—as I suspect you would be the first to discover, supposing that I were such an ass as to take this billet. But I'm not.'

'You must not think of me at all in the matter,' protested Clarissa eagerly ; 'what can a little temporary discomfort or inconvenience signify ? My one wish is that you should rise in your profession, and they say you are sure to do that by getting upon the Governor-General's staff.'

'Do they really ? How very little they must know about it ! To begin with, I haven't passed the Staff College ; secondly, no amount of backstairs influence could shove me into one of those appointments which crowds of more capable men are tearing and rending one another to seize ; thirdly and lastly, I really don't care a pin about rising in my profession.'

'I think you should be ashamed to say that !' cried Clarissa, flushing suddenly.

'Ah, my dear girl, you are ambitious and I am not ; that is the difference between us. But even if I were as ambitious and unscrupulous as—shall we say the majority of successful soldiers ?—I shouldn't advance in the slightest degree towards the rank of Field Marshal by transporting you and the baby to Calcutta or Simla. No ; I think we will leave well alone. Ceylon is not Paradise, I grant you ; still there are worse places, and, after all,

we aren't going to end our days here. If you can stand it for another year or two, so can I.'

She was as unable to shake his resolution as she was to make him lose his temper; although, truth to tell, she said some things, in the course of the discussion which followed, that would have tried the tempers of most men. He was amused by her vehemence, he was flattered by the exaggerated estimate which she had formed of his military capacities; but—he did not want to go to India, he was not ambitious, and there was an end of it.

'One would think that you had some special reason for wishing to stay in Ceylon!' she exclaimed at length.

He did not look at all guilty; he did not seem to understand (nor in fact did he understand) what she meant; but when, at the *gymkhana* on the following day, she saw him win a race very cleverly on Mrs. Durand's pony, and when she had to listen to the audible comments of Mrs. Antrobus and other ladies round about her, certain nascent suspicions of hers received ample confirmation. Before the day was over, she was sent for by the Governor's wife, who asked:

'Well, have you spoken to Captain Luttrell? Would he be willing to go?'

'Yes, I have spoken to him,' answered Clarissa quietly; 'but he is not willing to go. He thinks we are very well where we are.'

'But you know, my dear,' remonstrated Lady Brook, after a brief scrutiny of her neighbour, who was peering with short-sighted eyes at the paddock, where Mrs. Durand could be discerned in animated conversation with Captain Luttrell, 'I am afraid that is rather a mistake.'

'I dare say it is,' Clarissa agreed; 'only there is never much use in warning people that they are making mistakes, is there? I have made mistakes myself, in spite of having been duly warned.'

She might have added that she was likely to make a good many more; but, not having carried self-knowledge quite to that pitch, she only expressed her gratitude to Lady Brook and the Governor for their well-meant intentions, and began in a vague way to formulate inward intentions of her own which would have astonished Guy beyond measure, had they been imparted to him.

(To be continued.)

## NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY.<sup>1</sup>

### I.

PRIDE in the achievement of one's ancestors is almost as widely distributed a characteristic of mankind as the power of speech. It is as strongly developed in barbarous as in civilised peoples. Among the Chinese, a nation which seems to have been left hopelessly stranded on the borderland between barbarism and civilisation, in China the national religion centres round a worship of progenitors to very remote degrees. Exercises in genealogy happily form small part of the religious ritual of the more favoured nations of the West; but although no obligations of religion are in question, the Western nations exhibit, it may be in varying intensity, the same instinctive desire to do honour to the memories of those who, by character and exploits, have distinguished themselves from the mass of their countrymen. In what manner such honour may be most effectually, most prudently, paid by a civilised nation is the subject of my discourse to-night.

In a civilised state, no memorial of one who is credited by his countrymen with distinctive character and exploits can be rational and efficient unless it fulfil three conditions. It must be at once permanent, public, and perspicuous. By 'perspicuous' I mean that it should take such a shape as to leave no room for doubt in the mind of posterity what was the nature of the achievements or characteristics that generated in the nation the desire of commemoration. It should, in fact, offer to future ages a plain justification for its existence.

Pyramids and mausoleums, statues and columns, however fitting it may be to encourage them in the interests of art, all fail to satisfy one or other of the conditions of permanence, publicity, and perspicuity. Monuments in stone or brass may preserve a man's name for two or three centuries, but little purpose is served by the preservation of a man's bare name. Even epitaphs, which supply something more than a bare name, are not lasting, and are seldom sufficiently perspicuous. They are not always true, for 'in lapidary inscriptions,' as Dr. Johnson said, 'the writer is not upon oath,' and scrupulous truthfulness

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered at the Royal Institution on the evening of Friday, January 31.

is of the essence of commemorative perspicuity. Let not the memorialist put his trust in names, with whatever elegiac flourishes embellished! A grateful people often makes a great man's name a household word by christening with it some town or mountain or other familiar object. But the commemoration is inefficient. Language works on lines of penurious economy, and the word destined for memorial purposes very quickly fails to denote for those, who use it day by day, aught beyond the thing that it directly indicates. Its association with the deeds or character of its historic bearer gradually fades away. The town of Pittsburgh, in America, preserves in work-a-day life no memories of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, to honour whom the name was conferred. Who that talks of his brougham consciously glorifies an eminent Lord-Chancellor and pioneer of popular culture?

Very potent must be the drug that can serve as antidote against the opium of time. Experience proves that only one prescription is of any avail. 'The safest way,' wrote Thomas Fuller, 'to secure a memory from oblivion is by committing the same to writing.' The lover of literature may suggest that literature in the form of elegiac poetry may best meet the needs of the situation. Shelley's 'Adonais,' written in honour of Keats, Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,' are great monuments of great men, at once permanent, public, and perspicuous. Wolfe's 'Burial of Sir John Moore,' a different species of poetic composition, will keep Sir John Moore's fame alive more efficiently than any other memorial. But it is only by rare accident that great poets have memorialised great men. Wolfe's 'Burial of Sir John Moore' is unique. Commemorations like the 'Adonais' can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Milton's 'Lycidas' and Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' do not belong to the same category; they chronicle private lives or friendships which do not clearly call for public notice; they are immortal works of art, but they serve no commemorative purposes from a national point of view. The paucity of poetic memorials that serve a national purpose consequently compels the critic of a nation's commemorative methods to leave the poetic method out of account. It is to the prosaic, yet more accessible and more adaptable, machinery of biography that a nation must turn if her distinguished sons and daughters are to be accorded rational and efficient monuments. Biography is of its essence public and perspicuous; it is no less certainly permanent. The marble

statuary that surmounted the burial places of the heroes of Greece and Rome has for the most part crumbled away, but 'Plutarch's Lives' remain. Tacitus' 'Life of Agricola' has outlasted Agricola's mausoleum. 'Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments.' But biographical effort that shall seek to satisfy a nation's commemorative instinct must be specially organised for the service. Biography, as it is ordinarily practised, is controlled by no national considerations. It works fitfully. Change, caprice, domestic partiality, confer on one distinguished man and on thousands of lesser men biographic honours, but many others equally or more notable are left outside the biographic pale. If biography is to respond to a whole nation's commemorative aspirations, its bounds must be enlarged and defined, so as to admit, with unerring precision, everyone who has excited the nation's commemorative instincts, while the mode of treatment must be so contrived, so contracted, that the collected results may not overwhelm us by their bulk. Biography working with these aims and on these lines may justly be called national biography. And when other forms of national memorial shall be contrasted with a well-planned storehouse of national biography, I believe they will be seen to fade into 'insubstantial pageants.'

## II.

Those who have been brought up in the school of Carlyle and his disciple, the late Mr. Froude, are likely to fall into the error of assuming that the function of the national biographer is for practical purposes adequately performed by the national historian. Mr. Froude told us that his object through life as an historian was to discover and make visible illustrious men, and pay them ungrudging honour. He sought, he said, to give effect to the dictum of his master Carlyle: 'the history of mankind is the history of its great men; to find out these, clean the dirt from them and place them on their proper pedestals is the true function of the historian.' I differ with hesitation from authorities so eminent; but I am disposed to insist that 'to find out the great men, clean the dirt from them and place them on their proper pedestals' is the true function, not of the historian, but of the national biographer, and that the historian who sets out on such a quest is poaching on another's domain. The distinction between history and biography lies so much on the surface that a confusion between them



is barely justifiable. History may be compared to mechanics, the science which determines the power of bodies in the mass. Biography may be compared to chemistry, the science which analyses substances and explains their operation by their composition. The historian has to describe the aggregate movement of men, and the manner in which that aggregate movement moulds events and institutions, and mainly political events and institutions, which, despite all recent argument to the contrary, remain the historian's ultimate concern. Often the aggregate movement of men seems dominated by an evenly distributed impulse, whose origin cannot be distinctly traced to the independent action of any single atom in the great mass. Such is the characteristic of the great movement for electoral reform in the early years of this century. There the historian has no greater opportunity of bringing the biographical faculty into play than the political economist or statistician. At other times the impetus which sets the mass in motion is clearly seen to develop in the environment of one or two of its constituent particles. Such was the characteristic of the free-trade movement, mainly associated with the names of Cobden and John Bright. There the historian is bound to appraise in detail the capacity for action of those human particles, and his function for the moment approaches the domain of the biographer. But it does not do more than approach it. The historian has only to take into account those aspects of men's lives which affect the movements of the crowd that co-operates with them in the modification of political and social events and institutions. Details, biographical details, that shed no light on the evolution of society, on the aggregate movement of men, falls outside the historian's scope.

The biographer explores a very different country. Professionally he cares little or nothing for the evolution of society. From the mass of mankind he draws apart those units who are in a decisive degree distinguishable from their neighbours. He submits them to minute examination, and his record of observation becomes a mirror of their exploits and characteristics from the cradle to the grave. The historian looks at mankind through a field-glass: the biographer puts individual men under a magnifying glass. There is yet another difference. The historian's range of vision rarely covers the whole of those fields whence the biographer furnishes his laboratory to best effect. The historian's purpose is often served if he catch a shadowy glimpse, or no glimpse

at all, of personages who command the biographer's most earnest attention. Mr. Lecky has achieved conspicuous success as the historian of the eighteenth century, yet Dr. Johnson, who, from the biographer's point of view, is the most commanding figure of the period, he barely mentions. Benvenuto Cellini, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Samuel Pepys the diarist, are passed by the historian in almost complete silence, and no blame attaches to him. Yet the national biographer who neglects such men fails in his primary duty.

But while the historian and the biographer seek different goals, they can render one another very genuine service on the road. The intelligent biographer must frequently appeal for aid to the historian. An intelligent knowledge of the historical environment—of the contemporary trend of the aggregate movement of men—is often indispensable to the biographer, if he would portray in fitting perspective all the operations of his unit. One cannot detach a sovereign or a statesman from the political world in which he has his being. The circumstance of politics is the scenery of the statesman's biography. But it is the art of the biographer to sternly subordinate his scenery to his actors. He must never crowd his stage with upholstery and scenic apparatus that can only distract the spectators' attention from the proper interest of the piece. If you attempt the life of Mary Queen of Scots, you miss your aim when you obscure the human interest and personal adventure, in which her career abounds, by grafting upon it an exhaustive exposition of the intricate relations of Scottish Presbyterians with Roman Catholics, or of Queen Elizabeth's tortuous foreign policy. These things are the bricks and mortar of history. Fragments of them may be needed as props in outlying portions of the biographical edifice, but even then they must be kept largely out of sight.

The historian's debt to the biographer is even greater than the biographer's to the historian. The biographer hunts his quarry in wilds which lie remote from the historian's path. He has to make his way across many a dismal swamp in which the historian (happy man!) is not called upon to set foot. Parish registers, academic archives, family letters, unprinted memoranda, county histories, topographical monographs, genealogical dissertations and pedigrees are conspicuous features of the country in which the biographer has to pass his days. But such material, however uninviting to the historian, may at times secrete an important historic fact: it may at times throw a welcome light on an obscure

step in an historic movement. The historian invests his account of the vicissitudes of party government in the eighteenth century with sharper outline and greater vividness, after he has learned from the biographer all the ties of kinship or of early friendship which brought political colleagues together, or has realised the domestic rivalries which drove politicians into opposing camps. The persistency and the potency of the Roman Catholic movement in England, with the dynastic changes, the conspiracies and insurrections that flowed from it, is very inadequately apprehended by the historian who has not peered through the biographer's magnifying lens at the devoted men—from Sir Thomas More to the Gunpowder Plot conspirators, and many an apparently insignificant priest or Jesuit of later date—who, in steady, if stealthy, succession, have handed on from generation to generation the torch of their faith.

Undoubtedly the historian who is either too proud or too lazy to seek help from the records of biography neglects them at his peril. Macaulay, whose industry and research were as conspicuous as the brilliance of his literary style, made frequent appeal to biography with excellent effect. Mr. Froude, on the other hand, combined an admirable style—one of the most admirable in the whole range of English prose—with far less exhaustive methods of study. He scarcely seemed in his rôle of historian to recognise the existence of biography as an independent department of literature. Certainly to purely biographical records he scorned to make resort. His readers are the sufferers. More than once has he furnished leading historic figures with traits and motives which, although they be speciously supported by an uncorroborated sentence in some controversial document of State, are confuted by elementary biographical facts. And by misrepresenting historical characters, an historian is in danger of misrepresenting an historic movement. Queen Mary of England figures in Mr. Froude's pages as a hag-like bigot, devoid of patriotism or womanly feeling, who, detached from friends and followers, endeavours with insensate energy to divert the course of her country's history from its natural channel. Had Mr. Froude turned to so accessible a book as Miss Strickland's 'Life of Queen Mary' in her 'Queens of England,' he might have corrected some of his prepossessions, and interpreted more convincingly Queen Mary's career and policy. Miss Strickland's work fills a very humble niche in the temple of biographic art, but it is unwise in the historian to overlook the minute biographic

details that Miss Strickland's industry has brought together. In Queen Mary's case these details leave no doubt that she was a woman justifiably loyal to the faith in which she was educated and to which she had adhered in youth at the cost of persecution, or that she was supported on her accession to the throne by the majority of her people in her efforts to restore the Catholic religion. She was not destitute of love of country, as her dying words, fully attested, on the loss of Calais—of which Mr. Froude deprives her—amply prove. Neither the formation of her design nor her failure to effect it was due to any double dose in her of original sin. Her design was the product of many causes of which her personal zeal formed but one. Doubtless to its defeat her personal action largely contributed; but the error on her part which provoked disaster was feminine and not unpardonable: it was a mistake in the choice of a husband. By marrying an unpopular foreign cousin she weakened the attachment of the passive Catholic majority and gave the active Protestant minority the opportunity of investing their resistance to her religious policy with the colour of patriotism. And the sentiment of patriotism, once wildly excited, proved, as it always will, irresistible. Many other false impressions might Mr. Froude have spared his readers had he combined with his explorations in the orthodox historical authorities—the Rolls and Statutes of Parliament, contemporary chronicles, and the despatches of foreign Ambassadors—an occasional excursion into the byways of pedestrian biography. It may, however, be argued, on the part of the best-intentioned English historian, that of very few of the personages who cross and recross his pages, have biographies been hitherto accessible, and that it is unreasonable to expect him to add original biographic research to his expansive labours elsewhere. I admit the plea. But may I gently warn the English historian that it will not avail him long, for he will shortly have at his command a completed register of national biography? Then I believe some successor of Mr. Froude, rejoicing in the superiority of his instruments of toil, will apostrophise national biography in words that Cowper addressed to an ancient oak:—

'By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,  
The clock of history, facts and events  
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts  
Recovering, and misstated setting right.'

## III.

National biography is a branch of scholarly literature, and like all scholarly literature, it must be scrupulously exact and definite in statement, with all its references carefully verified, but it is undesirable that I should do more than suggest the characteristics which it shares with other branches of scholarly literature. It is more profitable to consider the characteristics which differentiate it from those branches and especially from the more familiar art of individual biography which ought to lie within the domain of scholarly literature, though we often observe it stray beyond the fold.

National biography, we have seen, commemorates within the limits of one literary cyclopædia the men and women who have excited the nation's commemorative instinct. Individual biography concentrates all its efforts on one man's career which it treats as in itself a sufficient subject for one literary enterprise. The principal difference between the two types of biography—the national type and the individual type—therefore revolves about a question of scale. Priestley's avowed object in scientific exposition 'to comprise as much knowledge as possible in the smallest compass,' dictates the method of national biography. Conciseness carried to the furthest limits consistent with the due performance of his commemorative functions, is the first law of the national biographer's being. The need is obvious. If you adopt in the component parts of national biography the generous dimensions on which the two most successful of our individual biographers, Boswell and Lockhart, planned their individual biographies of Dr. Johnson and Sir Walter Scott, your register of national biography would be barely confined to the 5,020 volumes, to which I understand they deem it convenient to extend encyclopædias in China. These mechanical considerations I am bound to dwell on, because no national biography is practicable if they be overlooked. They compel, too, the style of expression and arrangement of information which definitely separates national from individual biography.

The facts and characteristics that distinguish a man from other men and justify his commemoration must be stated by the national biographer with the utmost accuracy and clearness, but in the fewest possible words. Rhetoric, voluble enthusiasm, emotion, loquacious sentiment, can be accorded no place. Dates must loom larger in national than in individual biography, and

appear at shorter intervals. Minor achievements, preferments, the writings of authors, the works of painters or engravers, must be cast into the unexhilarating form of chronological series or catalogues. The difference in execution between individual biography and national biography is something like that between a picture and a map or plan. The individual biographer may be compared to a painter transferring a great building to canvas. The national biographer resembles the draftsman of an architectural elevation. The latter presents his results in the less artistic form; but the architectural plan need not be wholly destitute of artistic feeling. Similarly national biography, when competently executed, may embody some features of literary art. A skilful workman will, by some happy epithet or variety of phrasing, lighten for the reader the burden of mere tabulation. And when the national biographer's memoir is successfully completed, it should at any rate give the reader a sensation almost as pleasing as any that art can give—the feeling, namely, that to him has been imparted all the information for which his commemorative instinct craves.

Any temptation to furnish more knowledge than what is needful to produce that sensation should be resisted. The national biographer must nerve himself to omit much detail, much anecdote, that may find a lawful place in individual biography. The national biographer has to focus his observation on the distinctive aspects of men's lives. Some ordinary episodes—that a man was born on a certain day, that he was educated at a certain place, that he married, had children and died—undoubtedly call for record. They are essential to the completeness and coherence of the narrative, and no labour in making such information accurate is thrown away, but they must be strictly subordinated to the episodes making for distinction. The majority of the commonplace characteristics of existence the national biographer should silently take for granted. It is as supererogatory for him to specify, for example, that a man has the everyday domestic virtues—that he is as conscientious or as pious as many of his neighbours—as that he has two arms or two legs.

It is solely in the few careers which exhibit unusual spiritual tendencies or conspicuous deflections from the ordinary standard of morality that any reference to a man's moral or spiritual experience is justifiable. The biographer is bound to supply all the facts that effectually distinguish one man's characteristics

and exploits from those of his neighbour, and while the normal development of devotional sentiment or domestic virtue is in this connection immaterial, any departure from the normal development demands examination. Deviations from religious orthodoxy present no special difficulties, but much discretion in dealing with a life's moral disfigurements is enjoined on the national biographer. The smallness of the scale on which he works requires him to preserve a very just proportion between the various parts of his memoir, and he must give no more space to a man's lapses from virtue than their effect on his achievement justifies. Breaches of conventional morality consequently often sink into insignificance in national biography, and merit no notice at all. But whenever the lapses from public or private duty are notorious or chronic, the biographer's duty is plain. He has frankly to describe them. The marital adventures of Byron, Nelson, or Parnell, Coleridge's indulgence in opium, Porson's indulgence in drink, the crimes that have occasionally blackened the exploits of great explorers, are not only legitimate, they are essential topics in national biography. For the biographer to suppress them is to fail in a primary obligation. He must, of course, so handle such matters as to give as little pain as possible to friends or relatives who may be injured by the recital. The evidence must be conclusive, and should be briefly summed up with all the sobriety of a judge.

At every point of his work, and not alone at those points disastrously affecting a man's reputation, the national biographer has to cultivate the judicial temper, to cultivate it far more assiduously than the individual biographer. For national biography is to a large extent—to borrow a term well known in the sciences—a comparative study. The national biographer has not merely to record reputations: he has to adjust them. Due degree, priority, and place are to be observed among the subjects of his commemoration. As far as possible, the length of each memoir should be proportioned to the intrinsic value and interest of the character and achievement described, and every effort must be made to neutralise the distorting influences of contiguity, by which a higher value or interest ordinarily attaches to a distinguished action of our own day than to a like exploit in the past. A local benefactor must not be clothed in all the attributes of greatness which local sentiment allots him. At many another stage in the undertaking is it of the first importance to keep the balance of judgment true. Rival politicians, rival theologians,

rival artists, and rival inventors—men who have spent their lives in struggling on the same platform for the same position of prominence—each receives at the national biographer's hands an equal measure of consideration. Cromwell is not to be exalted at Charles I.'s expense, nor Charles I. at Cromwell's expense. Our account of Henry VIII. must not in any detail contradict our account of Cardinal Wolsey, especially in respect of those scenes in which both played a part. Careers embittered by controversy must be treated with due regard to all the interests involved, with a due sense of the obligation lying upon the national biographer of separately and successively subjecting each actor in the dispute to the like respectful handling. No eminent discovery in science or mechanics ever seems to have been made except by two, or it may be by three, persons at the same moment, all of whom claim to have been working quite independently. The national biographer, who has to deal consecutively with the achievements of each of these persons, must do what he can to determine judicially the point at issue among them.

Thus the method of national biography mainly differs from that of individual biography in its superior conciseness of statement; in its avoidance of the commonplace or trivial aspects of life; in its severely judicial temper; in its comparative principle. It may be admitted that the best specimens of national biography are inferior in artistic value to competent specimens of individual biography. But none the less, I believe that some of the methods of national biography might be adopted without disadvantage by the sister art. Individual biographies come almost daily from the press in this country in two, or even three, generous volumes. Their artistic features are not always conspicuous. The writer has rarely made any preliminary essay in the biographic art. He is not chosen, as a rule, because he is specially fitted for his task by literary capacity, but because he is a personal friend of surviving relatives, or a near kinsman of the departed hero. There may be something to be said for the dictum that they only ought to write a man's full life who have lived with him, but it is equally obvious that few of those who live with an eminent man know what is most worthy of remark about him. Every paper that their hero penned is often equally sacred in their eyes, equally deserving of admiration. Is the public commonly a gainer by the individual biographer's emancipation from the Spartan discipline that is imposed on the national biographer? No limit is set to his



diffuseness, to his indulgence in trivial details, to his partisan tendencies. And what is the usual result? A mass of irrelevant information or unimpressive sentiment is flung before the reader, and the hero's really eminent achievements and distinctive characteristics lie buried under the dust and ashes of special pleading, commonplace gossip, or helpless eulogy.

## IV.

The nation's commemorative instinct is excited by various persons in varying intensity. The national biographer aims at commemorating all who have excited the instinct in any appreciable degree in any department of national life. He therefore admits without question every statesman, divine, painter, author, inventor, actor, physician, man of science, traveller, musician, soldier, sailor, who has commanded the widespread regard of his countrymen. But as he descends from the heights of his Parnassus in his search for prey, he finds the need of setting definite limits to the area of his exploration. What, in other words, is the essential qualification for admission to a register of national biography? On what principle is the line of exclusion to be drawn? It is difficult to enunciate any principle that shall carry universal conviction. I take refuge in an Aristotelian definition, and say that no man's life should be admitted to a collection of national biography that does not present at least one action that is 'serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude.' I believe that the individual biographer might not unprofitably note the practical uses of this definition. The magnitude of any action varies, from the national biographer's point of view, according to the number of times that it has been accomplished or is capable of accomplishment. The production by Shakespeare of his thirty-seven plays is an action of the first magnitude, because the achievement is unique. The victory of Wellington at Waterloo is an action of lesser magnitude, because deeds of like calibre have been achieved by other military commanders and are doubtless capable, if the need arise, of accomplishment again. As we descend the scale of achievement we reach by slow gradations the level of actions which are accomplished, or are capable of accomplishment, by many thousands of persons. And actions of that character are never of the magnitude which justifies the notice of the national biographer.

The fact that a man is a devoted husband and father, an

efficient schoolmaster, an exemplary parish priest, gives him in itself no claim to admission within the portals of national biography, because his actions, however meritorious, are practically indistinguishable from those of thousands of his fellows. It follows further that official dignities, except of the rarest and most dignified kind, although they may offer an opportunity of distinction which a man might otherwise be without, give in themselves no claim to national commemoration. That a man should become a peer, a member of Parliament, a lord mayor, a dean, a professor, a vestryman and attend to his duties, are actions or experiences that have been accomplished, or are capable of accomplishment by too large a number of persons to render them in themselves of appreciable magnitude. There are, however, a few offices accessible to so few that the action of succeeding to any of them is a rare achievement, and is in itself an action of a certain magnitude. Kings and queens, prime ministers, archbishops and some other dignitaries hold offices inaccessible to most of us, and would all demand the national biographer's notice, even if they did not achieve any other action—'serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude'—which the character of their official position or their personal endowments commonly enables them to do.

But national biography will not fulfil its purpose unless it adopt a principle of inclusion that is generous as well as carefully guarded. National biography must be prepared to satisfy the commemorative instinct of all sections of a nation. Every great religious or political crisis generates, in large numbers of persons, distinctive achievements of the smaller magnitudes which specially excite the commemorative instinct of certain sections of the population. Most of those who went to the scaffold for refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of Henry VIII., those who went to the stake for refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Pope, the Roman Catholic priests who suffered death in Elizabeth's reign, many of the members of the Long Parliament, the military officers in the civil wars, the Dissenting ministers who were ejected in 1662 for refusing the oaths to Charles II., the early Quakers, the leading Nonjurors, all merit a well-investigated, brief biographical commemoration.

At the same time national biography must be prepared to satisfy the commemorative instinct in all emergencies. A reputation after a period of decline suddenly revives, or it fails to develop till long after the achievement which is its source has been com-

pleted. In such contingencies national biography can only be ready with its record of achievement, if it has been worked on lines of catholicity. Moreover, a liberal scheme of national biography can on occasion render the nation some medicinal service by correcting the workings of the commemorative instinct, which will now and then get out of order. It sometimes happens that a man, by some slight though important advance on what many predecessors, aiming at the same result, have accomplished, brings to perfection and to universal notice some mechanical invention or historical masterpiece which he would never have achieved but for the stepping-stones provided by the long series of preceding ventures that just missed success. A nation is inclined to bestow on the final workman all the honour which should in justice be proportionately distributed between him and the pioneers. National biography—largely designed—is almost the only machinery available to redress the balance. In the sciences, the corrective uses of national biography are especially pronounced. The seventeenth century experimenters with fire engines and water engines who first feebly demonstrated the powers of steam; Charles Morrison, who devised the electric telegraph in 1753; John Kay, the inventor of the fly-shuttle, the most important improvement ever made in the loom, should in any well-regulated commonwealth take their places among the benefactors of their race. This national biography assures.

## V.

But however widely the right-principled national biographer throws his net, it is obvious that of the aggregate mass of mankind very few are taken, very many are left. Statistics cannot determine the precise ratio that exists in a civilised state between the whole adult population and that section of it which excites the nation's commemorative instinct, and consequently claims the notice of the national biographer. But some data which I have drawn from my personal experience as a national biographer enables me to lay before you a few rough figures in this connection, which, if they serve no other purpose, may suggest on the one hand the amount of work which a national biographer has to get through, and on the other the probabilities that control any individual person's entrance within the national biographer's range of vision. I estimate that from the year 1000 A.D. to the end of

the present century some 30,000 persons who have lived and died in this kingdom have achieved such measure of distinction as to claim the national biographer's attention. Taking the total number of persons who have reached adult life in these islands, that is to say, omitting all who have died before reaching their twenty-fourth year, I find that one in every 5,000 has in the last nine centuries gained the distinctive level. These figures make allowance for the fact that disease removes half the inhabitants of the country before they have completed their twenty-fourth year, and consequently before they are offered any opportunity of distinction. If I base the calculation on the whole number of births, an infant's chance of attaining distinction is one in 10,000. The ratio slightly progresses from century to century. Up to the end of the seventeenth century the ratio for adults seems to have been one in 6,250. Last century it rose almost imperceptibly—to one in 6,000. In this century, when we include the English-speaking inhabitants of our colonies, but exclude the United States, the ratio sensibly rises, viz. to one in 4,000. The comparatively high rate in the Middle Ages I attribute to the opportunities of distinction offered by continuous warfare and the peculiar position of the Church and the numerous religious orders. The great crowd of ecclesiastical officers, who were incessantly recruited from the democracy, found openings for distinguished service not in the performance of ecclesiastical duties alone, but in the more promising fields of politics, law, and literature, which were, in the Middle Ages, almost exclusively ecclesiastical preserves. The rise of the ratio in the eighteenth century is surprisingly small considering the marked increase and diffusion of mental activity and of literary and scientific production. Its slenderness may be partly due to the absence of such stupendous crises in our national history as offered exceptionally extended opportunities of distinction to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while the introduction, in the later years, of the factory system tended, as it always will, to discourage originality of thought or action in a large section of the community. In the rise of the ratio of distinction in the present century, some allowance must be made, I fear, in my figures for the inevitable propensity to exaggerate the importance of contemporary achievement; but it is not wholly inexplicable on philosophic grounds. By the multiplication of intellectual callings—take engineering and its offshoots for example—and by the specialisation of science and art, the oppor-

tunities of distinction, of the lesser magnitudes at any rate, have been of late conspicuously augmented. Improvements in our educational machinery may, too, have enlarged the volume of the nation's intellectual capacity, which is the ultimate spring of distinctive achievement. Pursuing my statistics I note that at the present moment there are in the county of London about 600 adult persons qualifying for admission to a complete register of national biography, and of these about twenty should be women. In this last calculation I perhaps have made inadequate allowance for the recently developed energy among women which seems likely to generate unlooked-for exploits of more or less distinction. But no statistics are needed to prove that the woman's opportunities of distinction were infinitesimal in the past, and are very small compared with men's—something like one to thirty—at the present moment. Women will not therefore, I regret to reflect, have much claim on the attention of the national biographer for a very long time to come.

## VI.

In conclusion, I will briefly describe the efforts that have been hitherto made in this country in the direction of national biography, and the sketch may demonstrate the difficulties and dangers, mainly due to uncontrolled partisanship and diffuseness, which beset such enterprises. National biography, historically considered, is an outcome, or development of collections of biographies of special classes of men. Gradually the subject-matter expands until it comprehends all the classes of a nation. Class biography, the progenitor of national biography, was familiar to the Middle Ages. Mediæval literature abounds in collected lives of saints, of popes, of kings, of bishops and abbots. Literature was then almost solely practised by churchmen, and ecclesiastical bias hampered biographic effort. The Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries liberalised men's minds and widened their interests, but only very gradually was biographic work cleared of the theological taint.

In Henry VIII.'s reign, John Leland, the earliest and one of the most industrious of England's many antiquaries, prepared a dictionary of English writers which was published in Edward VI.'s reign, after a friend and disciple, Bishop Bale, had greatly enlarged it. Bale was a polemical Protestant, and sought to convert his

biographical dictionary into artillery against the Catholics. The endeavour met its natural fate. At the end of the sixteenth century, Pits, a staunch Catholic, retorted with a dictionary of English writers in which the abuse lavished by Bale on Catholics was now bestowed on Protestants. The spirit of Bale and Pits was with difficulty exorcised. It infects all their immediate successors, and was especially vivacious in that popular example of class biography, Foxe's 'Acts and Monuments,' commonly called his 'Book of Martyrs.'

But it was not only the theological bias which impaired the value of these early biographic efforts, and had to be extirpated before any genuine success could be attained. Some of them exhibit a patriotic or racial bias which is equally disastrous and equally conducive to falsification of accounts. The most signal marks of this malign influence are extant in a seventeenth-century dictionary of Scottish writers and Scottish historical personages, written by a perfervid Scotchman, Thomas Dempster. To exalt the reputation of his nation, he claims as of Scottish birth many distinguished men of other nations, and supports his bold contentions by pretended quotations from imaginary authors. One of his most curious and most wanton errors is his attempt to make the British queen, Boadicea, a Scottish author and princess. I could point to some later collections of Scottish biography, *e.g.* Mackenzie's 'Lives and Characters of the most Eminent Writers of the Scottish Nation,' published in three folio volumes early in the eighteenth century, in which pride of race has proved irresistible with somewhat similar results. But fanciful and inaccurate as Mackenzie's work was, it made a distinct step in the direction of national biography.

Meanwhile in England the movement was steadily progressing. In the great age of Elizabeth, which witnessed a marked development of national and literary feeling, biography as a department of literature was not neglected. North's great translation of Plutarch's 'Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans'—a unique essay in international biography—taught the English people to what perfection the art of biographical characterisation might be brought. At the same time, in a poetical publication called 'The Mirror of Magistrates,' which for fifty years underwent constant revision and enlargement, biography was first tentatively turned in this country to national account. Biographical narratives were given, on a uniform scale and within the bounds of a single volume,

of a long succession of historic heroes. The method followed happily soon grew antiquated. As a rule the ghost of the person commemorated was summoned by the poetic biographer and made to recount his exploits in very wordy verse. Shortly after the great Queen's death, a young courtier, Robert Naunton, wrote out accounts of her favourites, who included many eminent men, but he was deterred from telling all he knew by a pious dread of trampling upon the graves of persons now at rest.

The seventeenth century witnessed far more effective activity among collective biographers. At the beginning Henry Holland published his 'Heræologia,' in which a carefully engraved portrait was given of nearly seventy eminent persons of recent date, and their claims to commemoration succinctly stated. During the stress of the Civil Wars the nation's commemorative instinct was exceptionally excited and called into being many collections of lives of the leaders on both sides. Later on, Aubrey compiled his lives of eminent men, written, as he says, 'tumultuarily,' embodying his own reminiscences or the reminiscences of friends, setting out truth in all its nakedness, and aiming almost exclusively at recording distinctive personal characteristics, but rarely attempting to describe any trait of which he had no ocular demonstration or direct verbal testimony. Aubrey set out on the right road, but did not go very far along it. Much more successful was the excursion into biography of Anthony à Wood, who dealt in his 'Athenæ Oxonienses' with all writers educated at Oxford. His industry was unbounded, and if he at times permitted his personal predilections, religious and political, to govern his estimates of men, the quaint language in which he garbed his censure or his praise will easily gain him pardon from any lover of biographic literature. But the most notable advance made in the seventeenth century in the direction of national biography was that by Thomas Fuller, who, in 'The Worthies of England,' first published in 1662, compiled, in a somewhat playful and garrulous vein, an ample register of the achievements of Englishmen of all classes and all ages.

In the eighteenth century the system of compressing all knowledge into encyclopædias, which was first devised in France, and had for its first product Bayle's 'Dictionary Historical and Critical,' suggested to biographers in England new methods of work. Under the influence of the encyclopædic movement a genuine attempt at national biography was at length made in this

country. The venture was entitled 'Biographia Britannica, or the Lives of the most Eminent Persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland from the earliest ages down to the present Times: collected from the best authorities, both printed and manuscript, and digested in the manner of Mr. Bayle's "Historical and Critical Dictionary."' The first volume appeared in 1747, the seventh and last sixteen years later. The work has grave defects, but they should be treated with the merciful consideration to which the shortcomings of all pioneers are entitled. In selection of names the 'Biographia Britannica' was somewhat capricious. The length of lives was ill-proportioned; neither patriotic nor class bias was always held in check, and the writers had an uncomfortable habit of packing away their most valuable information in footnotes of inordinate length and printed in indistinct type. Yet that work, unlike some of its successors, achieved the distinction of reaching the letter Z, and consequently still commands the respect of intelligent persons. Eleven years later Dr. Johnson was invited to prepare a second edition. But Dr. Johnson had had one experience in dictionary-making, and he, not unnaturally, declined to have a second. The task was undertaken by another, by Dr. Kippis, and in 1793 there appeared the fifth and last volume of the second edition of the 'Biographia Britannica.' But though the work had reached its last volume, its final pages had only arrived at the beginning of the letter F. At the article on Sir John Falstolf this undertaking stopped, to remain for ever a magnificent fragment, a melancholy wreck, a fearful example.

' Checks and disasters

Grow in the veins of actions highest reared.'

Nevertheless, one or two attempts were made in the next ninety years to offer to the English-speaking peoples a collective record of their ancestors' achievements. In 1814 Alexander Chalmers completed in thirty-two volumes his 'Biographical Dictionary,' a very respectable compilation, though freely drawn from the 'Biographia Britannica' and the 'Gentleman's Magazine'—a periodical which supplied month by month for many years useful and complete obituary notices. Some thirty years later the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, under a committee of which Lord Brougham was chairman and Lord Spencer (father of the present Earl) was vice-chairman, designed a dictionary of biography which was to combine national with universal biography on an



ambitious scale. But the letter A was only completed in seven volumes, and you will, therefore, not be surprised to learn that that venture went no further. A very modest attempt in the same direction followed in Rose's 'Biographical Dictionary,' but here the first three letters of the alphabet absorbed six volumes, and the remaining twenty-three letters were compressed into another six. The disrespect thus shown to a large and deserving number of letters of the alphabet exposed the undertaking to very damaging criticism. There followed a pause in the efforts at collective biography in this country. A new 'Biographia Britannica' was long contemplated by the eminent publishing firm of Albemarle Street, but that design was not destined for fulfilment. After the middle of the century, Germany, Austria, and Belgium each set on foot a register of national biography under the auspices of State-aided literary academies. At length a new and very strenuous endeavour was made to supply the defect in our own literature—made under the auspices of no State-aided literary academies, but by the independent and enlightened exertions of one great English publisher. It does not become me to say much of this last endeavour in national biography, with which I am very closely identified. 'The Dictionary of National Biography,' which was begun some thirteen years ago under Mr. Leslie Stephen's editorship, is now nearing completion under my own. Even if 'The Dictionary of National Biography' does not practise at all points those counsels of perfection which I have addressed to you to-night, if it contains errors, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free; yet those who are acquainted with it will admit that it has accomplished much, that we who have co-operated in its production have vastly improved upon our predecessors, and finally that it is none the less efficient and none the less worthy of its mighty theme because, while it seeks to do the State some service, it is the outcome of private enterprise and the handiwork of private citizens.

SIDNEY LEE.

### *LIFE IN A FAMILISTÈRE.*

THERE is something peculiarly aggressive about the ugliness of the Familistère at Laeken: whoever designed it had evidently a grudge against his kind. It is a huge quadrangular building, which might pass for a factory, or a prison, were it not for its colour—a red the very thought of which makes one's eyes ache. Nor is there even a touch of green, a few creepers, or a tree, to relieve its glare; for the great courtyard is covered with asphalt and has a brick wall around it. There is, it is true, a beautiful lawn well within sight, for the royal palace is only a good stone's throw away. When, as often happens, the 'Marseillaise' is played at the Familistère, every note can be heard quite distinctly in King Leopold's state dining-room. In spite of its æsthetic defects, however, this Laeken institution is a very interesting place, for in it a curious experiment is being tried. Some sixty families live there together, and form one of those co-operative households of which we hear so much in this our day. It is organised on the same lines as the great Familistère at Guise, and may be regarded as a fair specimen of these institutions—institutions in which, if certain prophets are to be relied upon, we shall all have to live some day. Thus the conditions of life in force there have a somewhat personal interest for each one of us.

The members of the Laeken Familistère certainly enjoy many privileges. Their house is thoroughly well built, the apartments are large, with plenty of air and light, and the hygienic arrangements are simply perfect. There are beautiful bath rooms with an unstinted supply of hot and cold water for all who care to use them, and a common laundry which is provided with many cunning devices for washing clothes with the least possible amount of trouble. The corridors, stairs, and all parts of the house that are common property, are kept in order by the Committee of Management; thus the inmates have only their private rooms to attend to, and everything that can be done is done to help them to keep even these clean. These people have all the necessaries of life at their very door, too, for attached to the Familistère are stores in which food and raiment—everything, in fact, one ought to desire—are to be bought, and at some 25 per cent. under market

prices. If they wish to see a doctor, all they have to do is to drop a card into a little box that hangs before their door. Two doctors—rivals, not partners—visit the institution every day, and deal out advice, medicine, and sympathy to all who care to have them. Then the residents can insure against illness and death upon specially advantageous terms, and can make a provision for their old age more easily than other men. Such of them as have a taste for gardening have land allotted to them within a few minutes' walk of their homes.

Mothers of families owe quite a special debt of gratitude to those responsible for the arrangements of the Familistère, for there is neither bound nor limit to the trouble that is taken to lighten the burdens they bear. Not only do the Committee of Management help them in their housework at every turn, save them their trudge to the market, and provide them with doctors to whom, in season and out of season, they can appeal for advice, but they relieve them virtually of all care with regard to their children. The Familistère has its own crèche, where babies may be deposited almost as soon as they are born; it has, too, schools of all grades, from those for infants to those for boys and girls of fourteen. Here, if the children must submit to more than their fair share of lecturing on civic duties and such like things, they have their compensations; or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that their parents have them in their stead. For instance, the quadrangle around which the house is built has been covered in with glass for their benefit, and into this place they can be turned out to play no matter how much rain may be falling. Thus their mothers need never have them in their rooms, unless they wish it, excepting to eat and to sleep.

Nor is it only with regard to the comforts they enjoy that the inmates of the Familistère are highly favoured individuals; financially they have many advantages over their fellows. The rent they pay for their rooms is less by at least one-third than that they would have to give for similar accommodation in the outside world. Their gardens cost them only two francs for every 120 square yards of land they have; and their daily consultation with their doctor some six francs each more. For all the conveniences of their home—for their bath-rooms, laundry, stores, &c.—they do not pay a single sou. The schools, too, and the crèche are entirely free, and this although in Belgium the State charges fees for the education it gives. The economic arrangements of

the Familistère are, in fact, quite a marvel in their way; those who live there receive so much and pay so little, and yet the place is entirely self-supporting. Well may the men who organised the institution be proud of their work; by their co-operation scheme the saving effected in the cost of living is enormous.

As we wander about the place and note the signs of general prosperity, the cleanliness and order that prevail there, we begin to lose our dread of the coming of that day when, *nolens volens*, we too must take up our abode in some such institution. Why, if the arrangement in force there could but become general, we should obtain such good value for our money that we should all be twice as wealthy as we are now. Twice as wealthy—yes, but . . . Life in a Familistère has its disadvantages.

When any one applies for admission to the Laeken Institution a copy of the 'Règles, Conseils et Mesures d'Ordre domestique du Familistère' is presented to him; and, should his petition be granted, he is required thenceforth to order his life according to the rules laid down therein. This little book is of interest if for nothing but the insight it gives us into life in a co-operative household. The directors of the institution inform us that their 'règles de conduite n'ont, du reste, rien que de très utile à la personne même qui les met en pratique; c'est en toute chose les premiers devoirs et les premiers égards que des gens bien élevés se doivent à eux-mêmes et doivent aux autres.' And this is the simple truth; there is not a single rule given to which any properly constituted mind could possibly take exception. But then, unfortunately, properly constituted minds are in a minority in this world.

The document begins by setting forth the duties one owes to one's self; because 'bien se conduire envers soi-même est la première préparation à bien se conduire envers les autres.' 'Every resident in the Familistère ought to have a sense of his own personal dignity.' This first enunciation would probably be allowed to pass without cavilling, even by the captious, were it not for a certain corollary attached to it, which seems to imply that we had better make a holocaust of dressing-gowns, slippers, &c., before we set out for the Familistère. A man must give proof of his dignity, we are told, 'par la bonne tenue de sa personne et le soin de ses vêtements.' The second injunction is certainly harder than the first. 'Every member of the Association must be animated by a love of order *en tout et partout*.' As

for the third, it savours of a counsel of perfection. 'Kindliness, politeness, and courtesy must characterise the manners of all the residents in the Familistère.' After that it is but a small thing to be informed that, 'in our conversation we must avoid all rough and coarse expressions, and make use only of such as are polished and kind.' There is one observation, however, which might possibly ruffle the temper of the unduly susceptible. Each of us 'doit s'efforcer de réformer ses mauvaises habitudes de langage.' Even on Sundays and holidays, it seems, in the new era, we shall not be allowed to take our ease and do what we like. Instructions are given that such days are to be devoted 'à d'honnêtes distractions, à de raisonnables plaisirs, et à l'amélioration intellectuelle et morale de chacun.'

If the inmates of the Laeken Familistère do not dwell together in unity, the fault certainly does not lie with those who have undertaken to arrange for them their lives. In this little book full directions are given as to how they are to behave to each other upon all occasions. In the first place, they are enjoined to cultivate feelings of mutual benevolence and respect. They must be always on the alert to render services to others; they are warned, though, that it would perhaps be well if they were also on the alert to prevent others from taking too much advantage of their good nature. They must regard it as a special duty to make the lives of their fellow tenants as comfortable and happy as possible; and for this reason they must never speak ill of them, or do anything to annoy them. Then follows a regulation which, as far as an outsider can judge, must certainly lead to embarrassing complications. Should one inmate see another doing what is wrong, he must straightway report the fact to the directors; because 'voir le mal et ne pas chercher à l'empêcher, c'est commettre le mal à son tour.' This is all very well, of course; still, it seems a little hard to be called upon to act as an amateur detective, even for the good of humanity.

Special instructions are given to fathers and mothers with regard to the way they must comport themselves. They are reminded that their great object in life is, or ought to be, to set a good example to their children. This they must do by 'leur bonne tenue, leur mise propre et décente, leurs bonnes paroles, et leurs bonnes actions.' As for the children themselves, rules and regulations by the dozen are drawn up for them. They must not run up and down stairs, slide down bannisters, strike lights, run

aces, throw stones, rob birds' nests, walk on grass, shout, shriek, whistle, or do any single one of those things which by nature they are specially bent on doing. They are never to forget that 'chacun ne doit se permettre que ce que les autres peuvent répéter sans nuire à l'ordre et à la tranquillité générale.' In fact, the luckless little mites may curl themselves up in a corner, and go to sleep, and that is about all they may do. One injunction addressed to them is quite enough, even if it stood alone, to make every boy in the place the sworn enemy of the authorities. 'Les garçons, dans leurs jeux, ne doivent jamais tourmenter les filles, dont généralement les habitudes sont douces et paisibles.'

It is not, however, until we come to the regulations with regard to the way the common dwelling is to be treated that we realise to the full what living in a Familistère would mean. The peculiarity of this part of the book is that a high moral reason is assigned for every injunction it contains. For instance, we must keep our rooms clean, not because we hate dirt, but because 'la propreté du logement est un devoir, car la malpropreté engendre de mauvaises odeurs et . . . des maladies dans la famille peuvent en être la conséquence. La maladie causée par la saleté est contagieuse ; elle peut s'étendre aux voisins. La malpropreté est donc une mauvaise action, puisqu'elle nuit à nous-mêmes et aux autres.' Washing and scrubbing being thus a moral duty, we are, of course, not left to our own devices in the doing of them ; on the contrary, minute instructions are given to us upon these, as upon all other points. A significant hint is dropped that a clean window and door and nice white curtains go a long way towards making the directors think that a room is in proper order. Not that they would have any scruple about walking inside to verify the fact, if the fancy took them. We are expressly told that we may, if we choose, decorate our rooms with flowers. We may not, however, throw anything out of the window, not even a scrap of paper ; for to do so would be to risk injuring our neighbour, into whose room it might fly. Nor is this by any means the only thing we may not do ; prohibitions, indeed, seem to be very much the order of the day in the Familistère. We may not injure the paint, write on the walls, or kick the doors. We are forbidden to give shelter to a dog, cat, rabbit, or guinea pig ; because, as we are loftily informed, 'animals are not made to live in rooms.' Besides, they might incommode our neighbours.

The residents in the Familistère are expected to buy all they

require at their own stores. There are, however, it seems, persons—women, of course—who, ‘sous l’empire de considérations individuelles ou de vues étroites tout-à-fait étrangères à l’œuvre d’association dont elles bénéficient, vont faire leurs achats au dehors!’ So lacking are they in the sentiment of solidarity, which ought to unite the members of the association, that, when they find the stores have no material of the colour they desire—only magenta, perhaps, whereas they have set their hearts on green—they go elsewhere for their dresses. This is, of course, high treason, and so they are told in no measured terms.

Applicants for admission to the Familistère are warned—herein the directors give proof alike of humanity and wisdom—that they will not find it easy to live up to the high standard of conduct which is maintained in that institution. They are told, indeed, that it will require persistent efforts on their part to break themselves off from their former bad habits, and conduct themselves according to the lines laid down for their benefit by the directors. Still, they are encouraged to hope that, if they but struggle on manfully, they may in time develop into worthy members of the Association; and the assurance is given them that, so long as they are doing their best, the directors will deal gently with them—will lead them by the hand, as it were, helping and advising them, and trying to make the rough places of their path smooth. This treatment is, of course, reserved exclusively for the tractable inmates—for such as sin through ignorance. ‘Quant à ceux qui, par mépris des considérations qui précèdent, se feraient un malin plaisir des contraventions au bon ordre de l’association, il y aura pour eux l’amende d’abord et le congé ensuite, l’association ne devant conserver dans son sein que les personnes désireuses de coopérer au bonheur de tout le monde.’

This little book of rules and regulations is, it must be confessed, somewhat depressing reading. As one ponders on its contents the conviction creeps into one’s mind that life in the veriest little hovel would be better worth living than in the best organised of Familistères.

## THROUGH THE GATE OF TEARS.

Give us—ah ! give us—but Yesterday !

IN the old days, when the *Mahanaddy* was making her reputation, she had her tragedy. And Dr. Mark Ruthine has not forgotten it, nor forgiven himself yet. Doctors, like the rest of us, are apt to make a hideous mistake or two which resemble the stream anchors of a big steamer warping out into the Hooghly. We leave them behind, but we do not let go of them. They make a distinct difference to the course of our journey down the stream. Sometimes they hold us back; occasionally they swing us into the middle of the current, where there is no shoal. Like the stream anchors, they are always there, behind us, for our good.

Some few of the *Mahanaddy* passengers have remarked that Mark Ruthine invariably locks his cabin-door whenever he leaves the little den that serves him for surgery and home. This is the outward sign of an inward unforgotten sore.

This, by the way, is not a moral tale. Virtue does not triumph, nor will vice be crushed. It is the mere record of a few mistakes, culminating in Mark Ruthine's blunder—a little note on human nature without vice in it; for there is little vice in human nature if one takes the trouble to sift that which masquerades as such.

It was, therefore, in old days, long ago, on an outward voyage to Madras, that Miss Norah Hood was placed under the care of the Captain, hedged safely round by an engagement to an old playmate, and shipped off to the land where the Anglo-Saxon dabbles in tragedy.

Norah is fortunately not a common name. Mark Ruthine's countenance—a still one—changes ever so slightly whenever he hears the name or sees it in print. Another outward sign, and, as such, naturally small.

When the Captain was introduced by a tall and refined old clergyman to Miss Norah Hood, he found himself shaking hands with a grave young person of unassertive beauty. Hers was the loveliness of the violet, which is apt to pall in this modern day—to aggravate, and to suggest wanton waste. For feminine loveliness is on the wane—marred, like many other good things, by over-education. Norah Hood was a typical country parson's daughter,



who knew the right and did it, ignored the wrong and refused to believe in it.

The Captain was busy with his *Mahanaddy*. He looked over his shoulder, and, seeing Mark Ruthine, called him by a glance.

'This is my doctor,' he said to the scholarly parson. 'He will be happy to see that Miss Hood is comfortably settled among us. I am naturally rather a busy man until we leave the Start Light behind us.'

So Mark Ruthine hovered about, and discreetly looked the other way when the moment of parting came. He suspected, shrewdly enough, that Norah was the eldest of a large family—one less to feed and clothe. An old story. As the great ship glided gently away from the Quay—in those days the *Mahanaddy* loaded at Southampton—he went and stood beside Norah Hood. Not that he had anything to say to her; but his calling of novelist, his experience of doctor, taught him that a silent support is what women sometimes want. They deal so largely in words that a few unexplained deeds sometimes refresh them.

He stood there until the tall, slim form in the rusty black coat was no longer discernible. Then he made a little movement and spoke.

'Have you been to your cabin?' he asked. 'Do you know where it is?'

'I have not seen it,' she answered composedly. 'The number of my berth is seventy-seven.'

There was a singular lack of fluster. It was impossible to divine that she had never trod the deck of a big steamer before—that her walk in life had been limited to the confines of a tiny, remote parish in the eastern counties. Ruthine glanced at her. He saw that she was quite self-possessed, with something more complete than the self-possession of good breeding. It was quite obvious that this woman—for Norah Hood was leaving girlhood behind—had led a narrow, busy life. She had obviously lost the habit of attaching much importance to her own feelings, her own immediate fate or passing desires, because more pressing matters had so long absorbed her. There was a faint suggestion of that self-neglect, almost amounting to self-contempt, which characterises the manner of overburdened motherhood. This would account for her apparent ignorance of the fact that she was beautiful.

As he led the way down below Ruthine glanced at her again.

He had an easy excuse for so doing on the brass-bound stairs where landsmen feet may slip. He was, above all things, a novelist, although he wrote under another and a greater name and those around him knew him not. He looked more at human minds than human bodies, and he was never weary of telling his friends that he was a poor doctor. He concluded—indeed, her father had almost told him—that she was going out to be married. But he needed not to be told that she was going to marry a man whom she did not love. He found that out for himself in a flash of his quiet grey eyes. An expert less skilful than himself could see that Norah Hood did not know what love was. Some women are thus—some few, God help them! go through life in the same ignorance.

He took her down to her cabin—a small one, which she was fortunate enough to have to herself. He told her the hours of the meals, the habits of the ship, and the customs of the ocean. He had a grave way with him, this doctor, and could put on a fatherly manner when the moment needed it. Norah listened with a gravity equal to his own. She listened, moreover, with an intelligence which he noted.

‘If you will come,’ he said, ‘on deck again, I will introduce you to a very kind friend of mine—Mrs. Stellasis. You have heard of John Stellasis?’

‘No,’ answered Norah, rather indifferently.

‘You will some day—all the world will. Stellasis is one of our great men in India. Mrs. Stellasis is a great lady.’

—This was a prophecy.

They went on deck, and Mark Ruthine effected the introduction. He stayed beside them for a few moments, and did not leave them until they were deeply engrossed in a conversation respecting babies in general, and in particular a small specimen which Mrs. Stellasis had lately received.

An Indian-going steamer is rather like a big box of toys. She goes bumping down Channel, rolling through the Bay, and, by the time that Gibraltar is left behind, she has shaken her passengers into their places.

Norah Hood shook down very quietly into the neighbourhood of Mrs. Stellasis, who liked her and began to understand her. Mrs. Stellasis—a good woman and a mother—pitied Norah Hood with an increasing pity; for as the quiet Mediterranean days wore to a close she had established without doubt the fact that

the engagement to the old playmate was a sordid contract entered into in all innocence by a girl worthy of a better fate. But Mrs. Stellasis hoped for the best. She thought of the 'specimen' slumbering in a berth six sizes too large for it, and reflected that Norah Hood might snatch considerable happiness out of the contract after all.

'Do you know anything of the old playmate?' Mrs. Stellasis asked Dr. Ruthine suddenly one afternoon in the Red Sea.

Mark Ruthine looked into the pleasant face and saw a back to the question—many backs, extending away into a perspective of feminine speculation.

'No,' he answered slowly.

They lapsed into a little silence. And then they both looked up, and saw Norah Hood walking slowly backwards and forwards with Manly Fenn of the Guides.

After all, it was only natural that these two young persons should drift together. They were both so 'quiet and stupid.' Neither had much to say to the world, and they both alike heard what the world had to say with that somewhat judicial calm which knocks down feeble wit.

There was no sparkle about either of them, and the world is given to preferring bad champagne to good burgundy because of the sparkle. The world therefore left Manly Fenn alone; and Manly Fenn, well pleased, went about his own business. It has been decreed that men who go about their own business very carefully, find that it is a larger affair than they at first took it to be. Manly Fenn had never been aware until quite lately that those things which he took to be his own affairs were in reality the business of an Empire. The Empire found it out before Manly Fenn—found it out, indeed, when its faithful servant was hiring himself out as assistant-herdsman to a large farmer on the Beloochistan frontier.

And Major Fenn had to buy a new uniform, had to interview many high-placed persons, and had, finally, to present himself before his Gracious Sovereign, who hooked a little cross into the padding of his tunic—all of which matters were extremely disagreeable to Manly Fenn.

Finally, the Devil—as the Captain bluffly affirmed—brought it to pass that he, Manly Fenn, should take passage in the *Mahanaddy* on the voyage with which we have to do.

It was very sudden, and many thorough things are so. It

happened somewhere in the Red Sea, and Mrs. Stellasis was probably the first to sniff danger in the breeze. That was why she asked Mark Ruthine if he knew anything about the old playmate to whom Norah Hood was engaged. That was why Mark Ruthine looked for the back of the question; for he was almost as expert as a woman among the humanities.

Somewhere between Ismailia and the Gate of Tears, Love came on board the *Mahanaddy*—a sorry pilot—and took charge of Manly Fenn and the girl who was going out to marry her old playmate.

It was a serious matter from the first—like a fever that takes a man of middle age who has never been ill before.

There was a consultation of the authorities—Mrs. Stellasis, namely, and the Captain, and Mark Ruthine.

The Captain disgraced himself early in the proceedings.

‘Perhaps it is only a flirtation,’ he said.

Whereupon Mrs. Stellasis laughed scornfully, and the mariner collapsed. Moreover, the consultation resulted in nothing, although Stellasis himself joined it, looking grave and thoughtful behind his great grey moustache.

‘Known Manly Fenn for ten years,’ he said; ‘but I am afraid of him still. I cannot speak to him. Can you not say something to the girl?’

But Mrs. Stellasis shook her head with determination. That was the worst of it—they were not the sort of persons to whom one can say such things. The Captain was technically responsible, but he had proved himself utterly incompetent. ‘No,’ said Mrs. Stellasis finally. There was nothing to be done but hope for the best. Of course, Mrs. Stellasis was without conscience—quite without justice. It is to be feared that nearly all women are. She was all for Manly Fenn and dead against the old playmate, whom she intuitively described as ‘that stupid.’

In the meantime all the ship knew it. In some ways the two culprits were singularly innocent. It is possible that they did not know that the world is never content unless it is elbow-deep in its neighbour’s pie—that their affairs were the talk of the *Mahanaddy*. It is also possible that they knew and did not care.

The good steamer pounded out of the Gate of Tears and struck a bee-line across the Arabian Sea. The passengers settled down to await the sequel which would be delivered to them at Madras.

Norah Hood and Fenn were together from morning till night. They seemed to ignore the sequel, which made it all the more exciting for the lookers-on. Norah still saw a good deal of Mrs. Stellasis. She still took a great interest in the 'specimen,' whose small ailments received her careful attention. With Mark Ruthine she was almost familiar, in her quiet way. She came to his little surgery to get such minute potions as the 'specimen' might require. She even got to know the bottles, and mixed the drugs herself while he laughingly watched her. She had dispensed for a village population at home, and knew a little medicine.

Ruthine encouraged her to come, gave her the freedom of his medicine chests, and all the while he watched her. She interested him. There were so many things which he could not reconcile.

In some ways she was quite a different woman. This love which had come to her suddenly—rather late in her life—had made a strange being of her. She was still gentle, and rather prim and quite self-possessed. She looked Ruthine in the face, and knew that he knew all about her; but she was not in the least discomposed. She was astonishingly daring. She defied him and the whole world—gently.

The little Dutch lighthouse at Galle was duly sighted, and the *Mahanaddy* was in the Bay of Bengal. The last dinner was duly consumed, and the usual speech made by the usual self-assertive old Civilian. And, for the last time, the *Mahanaddy* passengers said good-night to each other, seeking their cabins with a pleasant sense of anticipation. The next day would bring the sequel.

A stewardess awoke Mark Ruthine up before it was light. He followed the woman to number seventy-seven cabin. There he found Norah Hood, dressed, lying quietly on her berth—dead.

A bottle—one of his bottles from the medicine-chest—stood on the table beside her.

## PHOTOGRAPHING THE UNSEEN.

WHEN in future years the historian, looking back across the long vista of time that can alone enable him to see things in their true proportions, sits down to write the story of the present century, what will he consider to be its most salient feature?

Bloody wars and far-reaching political upheavals and revolutions will be inscribed upon its calendar, vast and epoch-making changes in philosophic and religious thought will have taken place during its period, but above all or any of these will rise pre-eminent the enormous strides of applied science and the immense advance in mechanical invention and discovery.

What the invention of gunpowder did to some small extent for the mediæval period and the art of printing for the Renaissance, the steam engine, the railway, electricity, and chemistry have done in much larger measure for our own time, with the result that during the century now drawing to a close the whole conditions of human life have been more completely altered than during any previous period in the history of mankind.

We may some of us doubt at times whether scientific and mechanical progress in reality makes entirely for happiness; whether to live in a primitive state of archaic simplicity, with few wants and few cares, is not preferable to modern high-pressure existence with its ever-increasing strain on mind and body. Whether we wish it or not, however, things will onward. The tide of scientific progress shows as yet no signs of turning. Indeed, new discoveries and inventions multiply with increasing rapidity every year, and certainly the time seems still far distant when, as some have feared, there will be nothing more left to learn within the compass of man's limited understanding. Indeed, it seems reasonable to suppose that long before this *impasse* is reached, the race itself will have come to that final end that is the apparent destiny of all forms of serial life upon this planet.

Since the inventions of the telephone, phonograph, and microphone, no discovery of modern times has attracted so much popular attention as the new photographic process that during the past few weeks has been associated with the name of Professor Röntgen, of Wurtzburg. In this, as in almost every other dis-

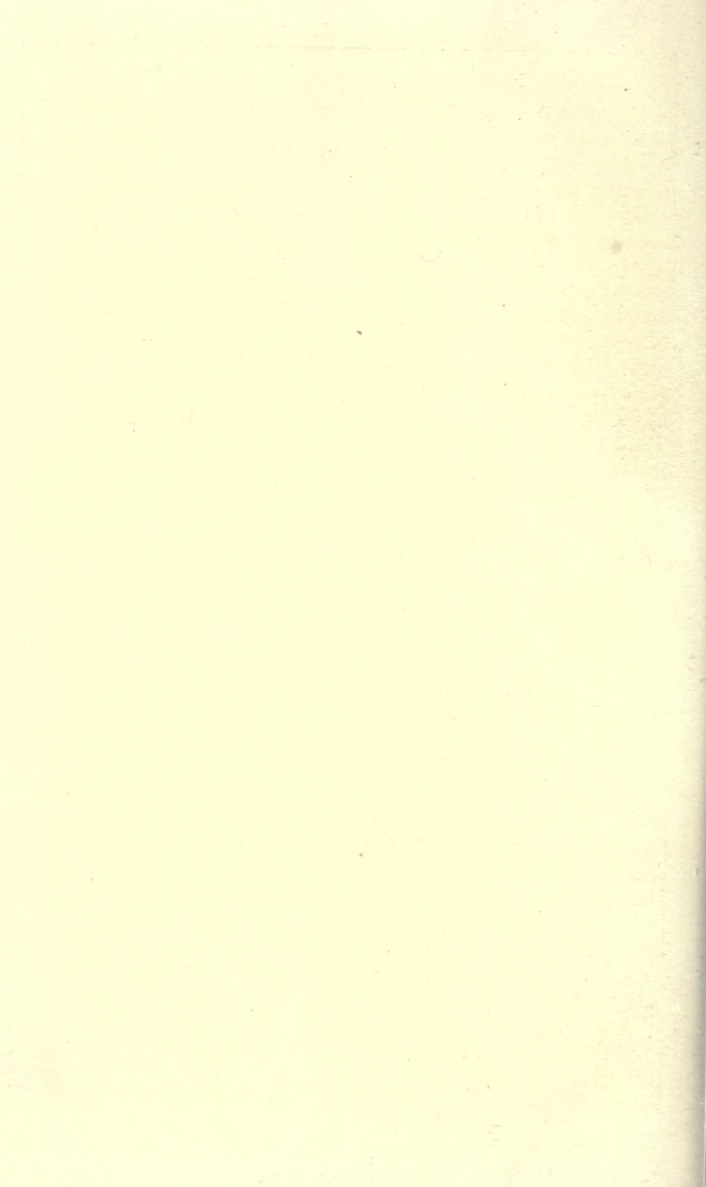


Swiftype

SHADOW PHOTOGRAPH OF HUMAN HAND,

TAKEN BY A. A. C. SWINTON.

Exposed for six minutes.





covery of importance, the final result has been due to a long course of laborious experiments carried out through many years by different investigators. Professor Röntgen, by his remarkable discovery that it is possible to photograph the bones of living men and women, has, if we may use the analogy, placed a completing finial upon a marvellous edifice, the foundations of which were laid long ago by Faraday and Clerk-Maxwell, in whose building Crookes and Hittorf have played a conspicuous part, and the completion of which would perhaps never have taken place but for the epoch-making investigations of Hertz, Lodge, and Lenard.

As is well known, all space is believed to be filled with an attenuated material known to scientists as the luminiferous ether, and all forms of light are supposed to be due to extremely minute waves in this material. Just as sound is known to be a wave motion of the air, which, reaching the human ear, causes the tympanum to vibrate and to communicate definite sensations to the brain, similarly the waves of the ether that we know as light, whether they proceed from the sun, from the most distant stars, or from a domestic candle, when they reach the human eye, and are concentrated by the lens upon the optic nerve, produce some subtle effect upon the latter which is communicated to the brain and causes the sensation of sight. As in the case of the waves of the sea, where we may have ocean rollers of great size, whose rise and fall is slow, and smaller waves, and also mere ripples whose period of vibration is much more rapid, so in the case of sound we have long and slow vibrations which give the impression of deep notes, and short and rapid vibrations which impress our brains as shrill notes. Similarly, again, with light, comparatively long and slow vibrations of the ether are translated by our optic nerves and brains into what we know as red light, shorter and more rapidly vibrating waves into green light, and waves shorter and still more rapid into violet light. It has, however, been long known to scientists that the human optic nerve takes cognisance of only a very small portion of the waves that exist in the ether.

On the one hand, there are waves much longer than those which produce red light—waves known as those of radiant heat, which our eyes cannot see, but which we can feel as heat with other nerves of our bodies; while there are longer waves still which can only be taken account of by means of special appliances. So, again, there are exceedingly short waves—waves whose length

can only be measured by millionths of an inch, and whose period of vibration in billionths of a second ; waves known as ultra violet waves, which human beings cannot see, but which appear to be visible to some of the smaller insects, and which are capable of producing strong chemical effects and of acting on photographic plates.

In addition, it has been long known that many substances—for instance, ebonite—which are quite opaque to ordinary light, are exceedingly transparent to longer waves such as those of radiant heat, while glass, which is, of course, exceedingly transparent to light, is very opaque not only to the heat rays, but also to the very short dark waves of the ultra violet. Indeed, the relative transparency and opacity of substances varies enormously with radiations of different descriptions, and the experiments of Hertz and Lodge with very long waves have shown the surprising fact that with such waves stone walls are practically as transparent as air, so that it has been even mooted, as a possibility of the future, that by means of a radiant beam consisting of these waves we may eventually be able to send signals through the solid earth, from one side of the globe to the other, without the necessity of a telegraphic wire.

Photography of the invisible is no new discovery. Years ago Abney showed that it was possible to photograph by means of heat rays that are invisible to the eye. He photographed a kettle full of boiling water by its own heat radiations in a perfectly dark room. Similarly, photographs have been taken by many experimenters by means of the invisible dark ultra violet rays, which as a matter of fact have a more powerful action upon the ordinary photographic plate than the yellow rays, which most strongly affect the optic nerve. Again, it has been found possible on numerous occasions to photograph objects that were so dimly illuminated that the eye could form no impression of them, but which by the cumulative effect of long exposure produced an image on the photographic film. Notably this has been accomplished in the case of stellar photography, where by attaching a photographic camera to a telescope, and giving prolonged exposure, astronomers have been able to show the existence of myriads of stars, which, owing to their enormous distance, must for ever remain totally invisible to the human eye.

To come more closely to the remarkable results recently obtained by Professor Röntgen, it is necessary to diverge from the

science of optics to that of electricity. It was long ago discovered by Crookes that when a discharge of high tension electricity was caused to pass through the interior of a glass bulb or tube, from which, by means of a special pump, so much of the air had been removed that less than one-millionth of the original atmospheric contents remained, that very remarkable phenomena became apparent. It was found that opposite the metal terminal or electrode, by means of which the source of the negative electricity was connected to the tube, the glass walls of the tube become luminescent. Further, if certain substances—some of the mineral sulphides, the diamond, the ruby, for instance—were introduced into the tube, and placed opposite the negative electrode, these substances become brilliantly illuminated. More than two years ago it was discovered by Lenard that by fitting the tube with an aluminium window placed opposite the negative electrode, it was possible to produce these phosphorescent effects outside the tube, and that the radiations that proceeded through the aluminium window were capable of affecting photographic plates, although pieces of cardboard and other opaque substances were placed in their path. Lenard, in fact, experimentally demonstrated by photographic results a fact that had previously been shown in other ways by Hertz, namely, that the radiations from the negative electrode of a Crookes tube, radiations which in some respects are very similar to what we know as light, would pass through many substances which to ordinary light are an insuperable barrier.

Recently Professor Röntgen, working on the lines indicated by Lenard, but on a much larger scale, has been able, by means of these Crookes radiations, to obtain photographs of a kind that very naturally have created much public interest, showing as they do enormous possible applications not only in surgery and in medicine, but also in many other directions. He has photographed the contents of closed wooden boxes through the wood—inches in thickness—of which the boxes were constructed; he has produced pictures of the coins inside purses through the opaque leather; of surgical instruments through the walls of their cases. Most important of all, he has obtained photographs of the living human hand and of other portions of the body, which show clearly the exact outlines of the bones and some of the organs, and have indicated the precise position of bullets, pieces of glass, and other extraneous objects which were

entirely embedded in the flesh. It is true that the photographs give merely the shadows of the objects; but they already do so with a clearness and precision which is quite remarkable, considering the time that has been available for working out the process in its details.

An ordinary lamp will cast the shadow of the hand upon a photographic plate against which the hand is held, and by development of the plate an image of the hand can be produced, and fixed. Similarly, the rays from a Crookes tube substituted for the lamp will throw the shadow of the hand upon the plate; only as to these rays the flesh is comparatively transparent and the bones opaque, the shadow thrown by the flesh will not be so dense as that cast by the bones, and upon developing the photograph a distinct image of the bones will be found surrounded by a fainter image of the flesh.

No doubt this process of photography by mere shadow is rude compared with ordinary photographic methods, in which an image of the object of which a picture is desired is thrown upon the plate by means of a lens. Unfortunately, however, at any rate for the moment, the shadow method is the only one applicable to the newly discovered rays, as one of the most curious idiosyncrasies of the latter is their refusal to pass through glass.

Further, so far as present experiments go, the new rays do not appear to be capable of being refracted at all; and, of course, unless they are refrangible, the use of lenses is altogether out of the question. Though, however, the attempts at refraction have up to the present failed, this may still be found possible, and eventually we may, perhaps, have the curious combination of a photographic camera constructed of glass, with the lens made, say, of pitch, ebonite, or aluminium.

There are men gifted with such elevation of mind as to feel that knowledge for knowledge sake is a sufficient object for pursuit, who are content with the extension of knowledge and the satisfaction that it brings, without immediately desiring precise information as to the practical results that are likely to follow from any new discovery. The general public, however, are not to be expected to take this higher view, and in the present instance, as in the case of all similar discoveries that have gone before, the popular cry is *cui bono*. In fact, it is idle to deny that to the average man the fairy tales of science are very un-

satisfying, unless along with them is recorded some material advantages that are likely to ensue.

Happily, in the case of the discovery now under review, it is not difficult to point out some practical results of considerable importance. To the surgeon and the doctor especially the new discovery opens up a vista of dazzling possibilities. Already it enables us to see inside the living human body in a manner that has never been possible before. Already the diseases and malformations of the bones, dislocations and fractures, can be studied with accuracy; foreign bodies deeply embedded in the flesh can be located; calcareous deposits in the internal organs can be determined. Nor is it likely that this will be all. With the improvements and refinements that are sure rapidly to follow now that so many skilled experimentalists are devoting their time to the subject, it is scarcely possible to doubt that before long the process will be perfected to the degree necessary to obtain knowledge upon many diseases of the interior organs without injuring or even incommoding the patient, and this with an accuracy that could previously only be obtained in *post-mortem* autopsy. Probing bullet wounds will thus become obsolete, needles and pins and other foreign substances will be located at once, a splintered arm-bone or a broken ankle will be shown immediately, so that the surgeon will be enabled at once to form an opinion as to whether amputation is or is not necessary. It may be found possible even to note the extent of an enlargement of the liver, or a stoppage of the digestive apparatus, or even to ascertain the progress of lung disease or of interior tumour. Nor should it be forgotten how much may be learned concerning the normal processes which go on in the interior of the body if the motions of the internal organs can be watched, even in an indistinct manner. Further, the discovery should be of immense advantage to students, and generally in the teaching of surgery and medicine. A great surgeon with his sympathetic finger-tips seems often to see with his hands, but this comes only by long practice, and in special cases. Nor need these advantages apply only to the human frame; they are equally applicable to veterinary surgery and throughout the animal kingdom. In botany, moreover, it may be possible to investigate the interior, not only of living plants, but also of their seeds; in engineering, to discover incipient flaws and blow-holes in metallic castings and forgings, upon the soundness of which the safety of hundreds may depend.

Again, in physics and general scientific research it is almost impossible to over-estimate the value that this new method of introspection may attain. Indeed it would be rash for anyone to predict that a discovery of this importance can be limited to the applications that it is possible to see for it at the present moment. However, perhaps the most interesting possibilities of all are in relation to the insight that the discovery has already given and may still further give into the mechanism of the universe and the real nature of things. The basis of all science is the accumulation of facts, and during the century now drawing to a close, scientific facts have been accumulated at a rate, in number and of importance, quite unknown in all the previous history of the world. The next century may probably see some great and far-reaching generalisation which may extend our knowledge as to the actualities of the material universe in a way that we can at present but dimly realise. Meanwhile we may content ourselves with the certainty that the further our knowledge of the forces of nature is extended the more it will be possible to apply these forces to the use and convenience of man.

A. A. C. SWINTON.

## THE WAY TO THE NORTH POLE.

ARCTIC men are agreed that there are only three routes by which the North Pole can be reached.

First, there is the Spitzbergen route, by which Sir E. Parry made the attempt in 1827. He succeeded in reaching North Latitude  $82^{\circ} 45'$ , but was obliged to leave his ship 172 miles further south, and to go on in a boat. He was, however, unable to get any further in consequence of finding thin ice and open water ahead, while he encountered a strong current which swept him back to the south during the day faster than his men could drag the boat northward during the night.

Those who uphold this route—and Dr. Nansen is one of them—ground their belief on the idea that this is a current coming down from the Arctic Basin. But it so happens that a specimen of this water has been submitted to a learned German analyst, who found that it was *not composed of Arctic water at all*, but was Atlantic water.

Now how, we ask, could Atlantic water be flowing as a southerly current to the north of Spitzbergen? In one way only. It must have been a portion of the drift-current of the Gulf Stream, which comes up as an under-current from the Atlantic between Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen, and which had been deflected from its course by some vast and continuous coast-line, and compelled by the configuration of that land to return southward along the known east coast of Greenland. It is therefore almost certain that Greenland extends to the eastward in one continuous line from the Cape Bismarck of the German Expedition of 1870 right along to the northward of Spitzbergen, and that the land seen in the distance by the Austrian Expedition of 1872-4, and called by them Oscar Land and Peterman Land, is really the eastern extremity of Greenland; Mr. Jackson, when he returns, will assuredly report that this is the case. But if so, it is an impossibility to approach the Pole in a ship by the Spitzbergen sea, or to return from the Pole that way, as Dr. Nansen thinks he will do.

The next route to be considered is that by way of Smith Sound. For many years the only knowledge we had of these regions was

derived from four American Expeditions—the two Grinnell Expeditions, especially the second one under Dr. Kane, that of Dr. Hayes in 1861, and the most extraordinary voyage that was ever made, viz. that of Captain Hall in the *Polaris* in 1871–3.

It used to be the fashion not to believe the reports of these American Expeditions. For instance, when Dr. Kane reported that one of his men, Morton, had reached N. lat.  $81^{\circ} 22'$ , and was there stopped by open water, that he saw the land on the western side running far up to the north, and that the most distant point of land he could see was a lofty mountain which he named Mount Parry, the whole story was ridiculed. Yet afterwards Dr. Hayes found Mount Parry just about where it was reported to be; and though he did not find open water, that is not wonderful, because he was there some months earlier in the year, and we now know that the passage leading to the North Pole by way of Smith Sound is open one year and closely packed with impenetrable ice another year, even in the same month.

Captain Hall, in the *Polaris*, met with an exactly opposite experience to that of Dr. Kane in both his Expeditions and Dr. Hayes in a later one—for we are told by the survivors of that Expedition that the *Polaris* steamed right up Smith Sound, Kane Basin, Kennedy Channel, Hall Basin, and Robeson Channel, without the slightest impediment, to the highest Northern Latitude ever reached by a ship, viz.  $82^{\circ} 16' N.$ , where he was checked by the ice, but that there was a water sky to the northward. From this point she was drifted southward with the ice for about fifty miles, where she was temporarily released, and, steaming eastward, she found a small harbour in N. Lat.  $81^{\circ} 38'$ , W. Longitude  $61^{\circ} 44'$ , which was named 'Thank God Bay.' There Captain Hall died, and no further effort was made to go North; but when the vessel was liberated in the following summer she was allowed to drift down Smith Sound and out into Baffin's Bay. And here occurred the most extraordinary experience of Arctic travel. The ship was nipped by the ice, and was in danger of instant destruction. Boats and provisions were therefore got out upon the ice. The nip, however, proved less severe than was expected, and the ship righted; but, by some most unaccountable accident, a portion of the crew, consisting of nineteen individuals, were separated from the ship, and never saw her again, for they were drifted upon a floe of ice from N. Lat.  $78^{\circ} 23'$  for no less than 196 days, during which they underwent the greatest possible privations, and



eventually were picked up off the coast of Labrador, having drifted upon the ice floe for 1,500 miles.

The story told by the *Polaris* party of their most northern wintering point, Thank God Bay, was that 'the climate was much milder than it was further south, and that in the month of June the land surrounding Thank God Bay was free from snow, a creeping herbage covered the ground, on which numerous herds of musk oxen found pasture, and rabbits and lemmings abounded; the wild flowers were brilliant, and large flocks of birds came northward in the summer.'

In 1875 Captain Nares never succeeded in getting his foremost ship as far north as the *Polaris* had been, though it is true that a party from the *Alert* went on northward over the ice in sledges, and exceeded the highest latitude reached by the *Polaris*—indeed, broke the record, as far as the Pole itself is concerned.

The great objection to the Smith Sound route lies in the fact that there is a constant southerly-flowing current, and nothing but a steam-ship, with plenty of coal, could hope to push on against that current; while sometimes (as in 1875) the open water of the *Polaris* is the Palæocrystic Sea of Sir G. Nares' experience. There is, however, hardly a doubt that, in a particularly open summer, the North Pole could be reached by way of Smith Sound, but the difficulties are extremely great.

Dr. Nansen has gone out proposing to overcome these difficulties by utilising, instead of fighting against, the currents which flow down south from the Arctic basin, and he was theoretically correct in supposing it possible to reach the Pole by way of the New Siberian Islands, for without doubt there is a constant current, as will be proved by what follows, flowing from the vicinity of the New Siberian Islands right across the North Pole, and going out into the North Pacific Ocean by way of Behring Straits and into the North Atlantic by way of Smith Sound.

Let anyone consult the Admiralty Chart of the North Polar Sea, and observe the position of the mouths of the great Siberian rivers, the Obi, the Yenissei, the Lena, the Indigirka, the Kolyma, and others, and then reflect that all of these rivers are pouring their waters into the Arctic Basin, tending, of course, to run straight out into that ocean—in other words, converging on the Pole—and thence running on in the resultant line of their forces, and he will at once see why there *must* be a northerly-flowing current from the Siberian coast to the Pole and a southerly-flow-

ing current from the Pole onwards. To this let it be added that the portion of the warm Gulf Stream which has not been intercepted by Greenland also flows on into the Arctic Basin, between Nova Zembla and Peterman Land, and joins the forces of its warm waters to those of all the Siberian rivers, producing the northerly current to the Pole, and helping to keep something like open water in the Arctic Basin.

Some people ridicule the idea of a warm Atlantic current entering the Polar Basin at such a high temperature as to affect in any way the waters of the Arctic Basin; but do these people know that in the Gulf of Mexico there exists beneath the Gulf Stream a cold current which has come down from the Arctic seas, and has arrived there only  $3^{\circ}$  above the ordinary freezing-point, and therefore has only lost some  $7^{\circ}$  of cold on its long journey southward, the freezing-point of salt water being below  $28^{\circ}$ ?

Maury, in his 'Physical Geography of the Sea,' records the fact: 'At the very bottom of the Gulf Stream, when its surface temperature was  $80^{\circ}$ , the deep-sea thermometer of the Coast Survey has recorded a temperature as low as  $35^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit.'

Why, then, should not the water of the Gulf Stream, leaving the Torrid Zone at a temperature of  $85^{\circ}$ , reach the Polar Sea by the same kind of submarine current at a temperature of say  $50^{\circ}$ , or even higher, and thus help in creating, at all events for some distance, open water towards the Pole? The place where we should naturally look for such open water would be in about the position Dr. Nansen wished to enter the ice. It has already been said that all the water within the Polar basin flows out either through Smith Sound or through Behring Straits. Dr. Nansen himself thought there was a surface current running into the Arctic Basin through Behring Straits, but there is only one instance known of this being the case, and that was when H.M.S. *Plover* drifted for a certain distance inwards. The surface current has always been found to be an outward one, and numbers of ships have been drifted out of Behring Straits by it. There is, however, an under-current running inwards, and that probably accounts for the *Plover's* drift.

Besides these two outlets there are no others by which any water can run out of the Arctic Basin; but of course all water finding its way south through the Parry Islands, by way of Barrow Straits and Lancaster Sound, or by way of Jones's Sound, must be taken to be the same outlet as Smith Sound, since all Arctic Basin

water in these directions flows alike into Baffin's Bay and down Davis Straits into the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1820-24 both Baron Wrangel and Lieutenant Anjou visited the northernmost island of the New Siberian group, Kotelnoi Island, and from thence the latter officer made a desperate attempt to push northward towards the Pole. This young officer is named in preference to others simply because he succeeded in getting nearer to the Pole in this direction than any other explorer; but, on the other hand, the weakness of his expedition consisted in the fact that he was travelling over the winter ice in sledges from the Siberian coast without so much as a boat, and therefore his experience would of necessity be of the most unfavourable kind, for what he wanted to find was firm ice running well up to the Pole and supplying a good road for a sledge. But, as a matter of fact, Anjou, who started in a sledge from Cape Anissii, the northernmost point of Kotelnoi Island, upon the 140th meridian, was only able to proceed thirty-two miles in a north-westerly direction, and then ten miles more due north, when he was stopped by thin ice, only two inches thick, and was made aware of open water to the northward by clouds of vapour rising from the sea and what is known to Arctic men as a 'water sky.' Moreover, this has invariably been the experience of all those who have tried to get to the Pole from this direction.

Only let Dr. Nansen get his ship safely to the point reached by Anjou, and meet with a similar experience, and the North Pole must be reached. Dr. Nansen will, however, stand a better chance if it is found that he did not go on so far as the New Siberian Islands, but struck north about off Taimoor Point, on the 104th meridian, because the distance to be travelled would be shorter and the drift of the current more direct to the Pole. But here comes in the special danger for Dr. Nansen, for he imagined that he would find a southerly current bringing him out by way of the east coast of Greenland, whereas Greenland will be found, as has been shown, to extend from Hall Land right on to Peterman Land, rendering this impossible, while he will be trying to force his ship away from the entrance to Smith Sound, his only possible exit from the Pole, if he reaches it.

There is another reason why we know that, at all events for a part of the year, there is open water communication from the vicinity of the New Siberian Islands right across the Pole, and beyond it, too. The well-authenticated position of drift wood

supplies this proof, and I will, therefore, give a very strong instance. An Arctic traveller on visiting the northern shore of Prince Patrick's Island, one of the Parry Islands, just to the north of Melville Island, reported that he found the trunk of a larch tree, with the bark hardly scratched, thrown up on that island. Now, the nearest place from which that larch tree could have been drifted is the River Lena, which flows out into the Arctic Basin to the westward of the New Siberian Islands, or else from the Indigirka, whose mouth is to the eastward of those islands. In this case that larch tree went out with the river water a little to the east or a little to the west of the New Siberian Islands, and drifted almost over the North Pole, until it was cast up on the northern shores of Prince Patrick's Island. It is absolutely impossible that this larch could have come from any other place than from some one of the rivers lying between the Kara Sea and the River Indigirka, and it matters not, therefore, from which of them it came, for the route taken must have been the same, viz. almost across the North Pole. If it had come from any point to the east of the Indigirka it must have been intercepted by Kellet Land and carried out into the North Pacific by Behring Straits.

It is quite clear that, during parts of the year, and in favourable summers, there is practically an open water passage, so that a ship could be drifted by the Arctic currents from the region of the New Siberian Islands right across the North Pole, and then, by careful handling, be carried into the entrance of Robeson Channel, and so be drifted down Smith Sound, as the *Polaris* was.

Dr. Nansen, when in England, spoke of certain relics of the ill-fated *Jeannette* which, as we know, were found on an ice floe at or near Julianes-haab, a little to the westward of Cape Farewell, which is the southernmost point of Greenland; and he assumed that these things must have been carried from the spot where the *Jeannette* went down by way of the east coast of Greenland, but from what has gone before, this has been shown not to be possible. Here it will be said—Then how did those *Jeannette* relics get to Julianes-haab? The answer is very plain. They came down out of the Arctic Basin by way of Smith Sound, or possibly Jones's Sound, and drifted over the North Pole in doing so. Dr. Nansen himself gave the position of the *Jeannette* at various times. He said that she was beset in the ice on September 6, 1879, off Herald Island, in Lat.  $71^{\circ} 30' N.$ , Long.  $175^{\circ} W.$ , and that, after drifting about for nearly two years in a north-westerly direction,

she finally went down on June 13, 1881, to the northward of the New Siberian Islands, in about Lat.  $77^{\circ} 15' N.$ , Long.  $155^{\circ} E.$ , so that the *Jeannette* was actually trying to force herself towards the North Pole by the help of the northerly-flowing currents set up by the Siberian rivers, and she had gone a considerable distance towards it when she was crushed in the ice and sank. From that spot the relics of the *Jeannette* must have drifted over the North Pole and gone down into Baffin's Bay, probably through Smith Sound, from whence they were driven across towards the coast of Greenland nearly as far as Cape Farewell, at which point they would meet the southerly-flowing current coming down from the other side of Greenland, and in the swirl of impinging currents they might easily be deposited just where they were found, viz. at Julianes-haab.

I am quite aware that the current, at least the main part of it, coming down Smith Sound flows, as a rule, more over on the other side of Baffin's Bay, and that the survivors of the *Polaris* were drifted down on the huge ice floe and eventually rescued off the coast of Labrador; but also there is the southerly-flowing current, which comes down through Barrow Strait and Lancaster Sound, which strikes the Smith Sound current almost at right angles, and it is highly probable that in this way light articles floating on small ice floes on the surface would be driven right across Baffin's Bay, and so be carried down the Greenland coast to the spot where the *Jeannette* relics were found. Thus it will be seen that even the drift of the *Jeannette* relics, in the course I have imagined them to have taken, establishes the feasibility of Dr. Nansen's ship *Fram* being drifted from the neighbourhood of the New Siberian Islands and across the North Pole. Arrived at the Pole, the difficulty would be to direct the drift of the ship somewhat to the westward of north, as the compass would then be pointing, so as to clear Grant Land and enter Robeson Channel, when all difficulty would be over and the problem of the century solved.

With good luck there is no reason why the *Fram* should not eventually get through to the Pole, and especially if sufficient coal has been saved, so as to take advantage of steam power, for only a few days, should open water be found a little to the northward of the New Siberian Islands. The great danger will, of course, be in possibly having to winter in the pack, and of the ship being nipped by the ice; but it is more than likely that at and about the North Terrestrial Pole there are numbers of islands, where

shelter might be found, and even food obtained ; for all travellers alike, and especially up Smith Sound, have told of flights of birds going north in search of more genial climes than were to be found further away from the Pole, and I for one believe that instinct did not mislead these birds.

If the *Fram* is forced to the northward from about the point already named she may have wintered at the North Pole, and in the next summer have been able to make for the mouth of Robeson Channel. On the other hand, she may have been nipped in the ice before getting near the Pole. Let us suppose that this took place in about the same latitude as a similar accident happened to the *Jeannette*. This latter vessel was, if my memory serves me, no other than Sir Allen Young's *Pandora*, which had been purchased by the proprietor of the 'New York Herald' ; and if so, she was not particularly well qualified to resist an ice nip. The *Fram*, however, is perhaps the strongest ship ever built for Arctic work, and might be expected to resist the nip which destroyed the *Jeannette*. It sometimes happens that a vessel will slip up, and so avoid the nip, resting safely, as the *Fram* would in this case do, on the ice floe. She would then have to winter in the pack, and possibly have to spend more than one winter there ; but whenever the ice began to move she would be gradually drifted with it towards the Pole. Assuming that she avoided being nipped, and that she was not released from the ice in the following summer, which might happen to be a very inclement one, it might easily take her two or three years in drifting as far as the Pole itself. She, however, carries provisions for five or six years, and certainly, if she is ever to perform her intended journey, she ought to do it in less than that time.

But now let us suppose that the worst comes to the worst—that the *Fram* herself shares the fate of the *Jeannette* in somewhere about the same latitude, but about as far to the west as the *Jeannette* was to the east of the New Siberian Islands, for this is about where Dr. Nansen expected to take the ice. Then his plan was to hoist out two 29 ft. boats, very large and very heavy, to house them in on the ice and live in them, so that when the ice broke up in the next summer he might have one more chance of safety. If an accident had happened to his ship, and he became entirely dependent upon his boats, there would be no possibility of returning the same way he came, unless he was able with only twelve men to drag one of these heavy boats back over

the ice to Kotelnoi Island, where he would have to remain until help came or the party died of starvation. Assuming that the same thing happened to the *Fram*, but much nearer the Pole, say after one or two years' drift, then it would be absolutely impossible to retrace his steps to Kotelnoi Island, and he would be compelled to push on with his boats in the struggle for dear life. He would, however, very soon find it necessary to abandon one of the boats, and to transfer his crew and provisions to the other one, and in her make his last desperate attempt to reach the Pole.

In this case much would depend upon the whole of his crew, only twelve in number, having been saved from the wreck of his ship, and upon his having been able to provision the boats for at least two years; and it must be remembered this cannot always be done when an Arctic ship suddenly experiences a nip. This, more often than not, happens when it is not at all expected, so that if the crew are on board the ship at the time the nip happens it is all they can do to get out on the ice in safety; and unless all precautions have been previously taken, boats got out on the ice ready loaded with water, stores, warm clothing and provisions, they would find themselves adrift on an ice floe, cut off from the ship or any means of independent locomotion. It need hardly be said that if Dr. Nansen's party ever found themselves in such a position their rescue would be absolutely impossible. Their one and only chance would then be that they might involuntarily be drifted on a floe towards the mouth of Robeson Channel, where they might find provisions left by the *Alert*. If, however, the floe took a more westerly course, it would soon form a portion of Sir G. Nares' Palæocrystic Sea, where vast masses of ice are heaped up in the shallow water approaching Grant Land; while if it took a course to the eastward of Robeson Channel it would be driven upon the northern shores of Greenland. I am aware that this is the exact spot to which Dr. Nansen hoped to be drifted, under the erroneous impression that there is a water passage down the east side of Greenland. I hope Dr. Nansen has since altered his mind on this point, for it is quite a possibility that he was very fortunate in getting through to the Pole in his first season, and that afterwards he was able to direct the course of his ship, and deliberately steered to the eastward of Hall Land and the entrance of Robeson Channel, and there found himself utterly unable either to proceed or to return. In this case the Jackson expedition will very likely come upon him not very far from

Lieutenant Lockwood's furthest point, for when Mr. Jackson finds that Peterman Land is only the eastern part of Greenland he is sure to push on north, and when he comes to the Arctic Basin to endeavour to follow up the coast to the point reached from the opposite direction by Lockwood, and that is Dr. Nansen's chance of safety if he is able to follow his own ideas.

I think I have the right to express a strong opinion upon the geography of this particular region, because in 1875, before the *Alert* and *Discovery* started, I delivered lectures at various places predicting what must be found a little higher up Smith Sound than the furthest point which had then been reached, and I have the manuscript of those lectures now before me. I also paid a visit to the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty, and gave my reasons for believing that there was no continuous land running up to the Pole, as was then supposed to be the case, and upon the truth of which the Expedition had been planned, so as to reach the Pole by sledges hugging the land. And upon the return of the Expedition I again paid a visit to the Admiralty, and was shown the charts with the land on both sides of Robeson Channel laid down just as I had roughly drawn it in pencil at my first visit. I had arrived at a correct conclusion by a process of inductive reasoning founded upon the known results of previous Arctic discoveries; and I feel now quite as certain that Dr. Nansen will find himself mistaken in supposing there is a water passage from the Arctic Basin down the east side of Greenland into the Spitzbergen Sea; but, unfortunately, this is the key of his whole plan.

It is very easy to say after the event 'I told you so.' It is not always so easy to say beforehand, and especially as regards the geography of the Arctic regions, what of necessity must be found, and therefore he is the real friend of the present Expedition who can throw light upon any part of Dr. Nansen's plan, so as to help in his rescue if needed.

It must be borne in mind that this Expedition is unlike any other that has ever gone north. In every other case it has been possible to send a Relief Expedition, following in the explorers' track or by meeting them, through a knowledge of the exact route to be attempted; but in this case, after the Expedition has once left the New Siberian Islands no one can tell exactly in what direction to look for it.

With the sole exception of the first disaster I have imagined



as happening, viz. that the ship comes to grief within a reasonable distance of the New Siberian Islands, where a Relief Expedition might, and probably would, find the survivors on Kotelnoi Island, there is no possibility of sending help in their track. The only way of relief would be in hitting off the exact spot on the other side of the Pole to which the *Fram* had been carried, and this would depend, all going well, upon the final decision arrived at by Dr. Nansen as to the course he shall steer, if he can control that point, after leaving the Pole.

It does not appear that any sledges were taken, unless these were added at the last minute, and this seems a weak point in the Expedition; not, however, that they could be used at all if the explorers get through in their ship, or in a boat, and it is evident that Dr. Nansen intended to risk everything on being able to do this.

At the same time it would have been wise to have taken two or three sledges in case any land journey should have to be attempted, or in case Dr. Nansen should find himself beset within reach of the *Alert's* last wintering place, where provisions would be found and from whence he might be rescued.

After all has been said, Dr. Nansen and his crew started with the best chance of reaching the Pole which any Arctic explorers have ever had, because they are going on the right lines; and yet, for all that, theirs is the most hazardous of all, because of the impossibility of retiring upon any base of operations.

*CLEG KELLY, ARAB OF THE CITY:*  
*HIS PROGRESS AND ADVENTURES.<sup>1</sup>*

BY S. R. CROCKETT,  
 AUTHOR OF 'THE STICKIT MINISTER,' 'THE RAIDERS,' ETC.

ADVENTURE LVI.

THE VOICES IN THE MARSH.

DURING the days that followed her homecoming Vara was happier than she had ever been. In the warm sunshine of family love and physical well-being the curves of her figure filled out. She seemed to shoot up all at once from the child into the woman. Her eyes lost their old frightened look. Her arms and shoulders hid their angles and became curved and dimpled. But Cleg waxed even more shy and awkward. But, nevertheless, he came every day, and if there was anything to be done about the house, or in the little grass parks, Cleg Kelly was there to do it. It was Cleg, for instance, who started the wonderful wild-flower industry. This was the secret which he had kept in store against the day when he should fall out with the General.

It was Cleg's idea that if only he could send large enough quantities of the commoner wild flowers to the market, there would soon be a trade in them which might, with proper attention, grow to very considerable dimensions.

Not that Cleg contemplated any great extensions at present. But he desired to make a beginning, so that he might not have to build up from the foundations, if anything were suddenly to happen which might cast him again upon the world.

So Cleg advertised in the Scottish city papers, that he was prepared to supply both blooms and entire plants of such ferns and wild flowers as grew in the neighbourhood of Netherby. He got Vara also to send similar advertisements to the *Exchange and Mart* and other papers. And in a little time he had developed as large a trade as could be carried on directly by parcel and limited orders. He found, for instance, a hill not far off which was entirely overgrown with the parsley-fern. And with this he

<sup>1</sup> Copyright 1895 in the United States of America by D. Appleton & Co.

made great deals in the fern market. For he was able to supply a dozen or a hundred plants for a very modest remittance, and that with merely the trouble of walking to the hill for them.

But he saw that the undertaking must have a surer basis than this haphazard ingathering of chance growths. And so Cleg set himself to plant out and cultivate the wild flowers in ground naturally suited for their growth. He had the wet morass at hand for the water-plants, the burnside for those which loved to be near, but not in, running water. There were shy nooks about the linn for ferns, and for the rest the fine light soil of Sandyknowes. He utilised ground which was not in use for any other purposes, fencing it round with wire, and setting Vara and Hugh to do the watering and caring for the plants, as they had done long ago around the old construction hut in Callendar's yard.

Hugh Boy went to school during the day at Netherby Academy, and was proving a great success. Cleg Kelly taught him how to box, and warned him at the same time not to fight. But Cleg added that if he needed to do it, it was better to do it once for all and be done with it. So these advantages assured Hugh an easy life of it at school.

Cleg had also been thinking much lately of developing the wild-flower business. He meant to establish an agency in each of the larger towns, and he had already written a letter to Cleaver's Boy offering him terms as his agent and advising him to look out for openings. For Cleg was proving himself above all things practical, and seemed destined to turn out as prosperous a business man as Bailie Holden.

The General often laughed at Cleg's devotion to his flowers and his children. Yet he liked to hear tidings of them. Sometimes, indeed, he reproved Cleg for bringing with him a floating atmosphere and suggestion of womankind. But Cleg always assured him that he had been careful to change his clothes.

Life at Barnbogle went on uneventfully. Daily the time locks clicked. Daily the General retired to his strange bedroom, coming forth again with the pupils of his eyes dilated and his face drawn with the drugs which he had inhaled and swallowed. Cleg cooked the bacon, brewed the tea, and made a couple of daily pilgrimages to the room of the three coffins. Then he came out again and shut the doors carefully behind him, and slept soundly at nights. Cleg had no spiritual fears and had outgrown his illusions—at least such of them as interfered with a pound a week.

But whenever he went into Netherby he found himself an object of great interest. For not even the peccadilloes of the ministers of Netherby, nor yet the unbecoming gaiety of their wives' attire, supplied so favourite a subject for gossip to the good folk of the town as the madness and the miserliness of General Theophilus Ruff.

The old men would tell over again those tales of the General driving his coach and six, with the lady by his side who was arrayed like the Queen of Sheba. Netherby had never had any doubt as to the fascinating moral character of this personage. And so Theophilus Ruff still carried the glory of his former sins about with him, even though he had dwelt for twenty years a hermit and a madman in his house of Barnbogle.

His fabulous wealth was everywhere a common topic. He received his rents in person, but none of it, so far as was known, was placed in the banks of the neighbourhood. The builders, the engineers, and the locksmiths from the city had, as we have seen, all told tales of the strong rooms they had been erecting and of the secret arrangements which had been made with a great firm in London for yet more complete safety.

'It's a perfect Guid's wonder that ye are no a' murdered in your beds, wi' thae millions of siller lyin' in the hoose,' said one of Cleg's most persistent inquisitors, after vainly trying to extract from Cleg whether he had ever seen the treasure with his own eyes.

'I wadna be in your shoon for a hundred pounds a week—na, no for a' the gowd in Barnbogle Hoose,' the respectable shop-keeper told him each time he came in. 'The General's servants never leave him. Na, they a' dee—and generally mighty suddenly at the tail o' the day. And naebody kens in what mainer they come by their ends. I'm thinking that when he gets tired o' them, he juist locks them up in yin o' his iron rooms and then—lets them bide there!'

But Cleg was not frightened, as the good grocer had hoped. He bought his red herrings, his bacon, and his eggs; and he carried them peacefully back to the brick building in the rear of the vast blind wall of Barnbogle House, to be ready when the General should come again from his room.

'A pound a week was never easier earned,' said practical and unimaginative Cleg.

Vara felt that this time of bliss was too sweet to last. Yet,

with the fatalism of those bred up in the midst of misery, she was content to bask carelessly in the sunshine of present prosperity. She was like a bird taking its fill of the warmth and delight of summer, without a thought of blustering winter winds and the shrewd pinch of nipping skies.

But one night, when the year was already drawing to its end, and November was expiring in a clear silver-grey rime of frost, Vara was locking up the outhouses at Sandyknowes in the gloaming. She had already been at the byre, and had given the cows their last bit of fodder, and a pat each on the flank as she passed—a pat so remote from the sentient and operative end of the animal that it seemed almost as ridiculous as caressing the porch of a church in order to please the parson.

Nevertheless, Vara never omitted the ceremony on any consideration. Yet this particular evening all the time she was foddering the cattle, Vara had a strange consciousness that she heard voices somewhere over towards the marsh. The crisp air of coming frost sharpened her hearing, and as the stars pricked themselves out, the whole night rang like a bell with unknown and far-away sounds.

Voices Vara certainly did hear. But she thought that it might be only a lad and lass on their way to the dancing-school, or a herd talking aloud to his dog for company as he went homeward. Yet the sounds did not resemble any of those with which Vara had been recently acquainted. Some awful dread, inherited from a former and a more terrible existence, returned upon her.

Her breath came hard and quick. She grew first hot and then cold, as she stole down by the barn-end to listen. She was nearer to the voices there. The murmur of them came more instant and terrible up from the swamp above which Sandyknowes sat on its hill. Vara stole on tiptoe nearer and nearer. The old hut in the hollow was a deserted cot-house of the General's—a mere but-and-ben—which Muckle Alick had been accustomed to use for storing old railway sleepers in. For these are the winter fuel of men who work upon the railway.

Presently Vara saw its white gable-end staring out at her through the bare branches of the underbrush. The angry voices became louder and more threatening. A ray of light stole through a chink in the boarded-up window. Stealthily Vara went on tiptoe round the gable till she could put her eye to the chink. A cloth had been hung up over the window, past one corner of which Vara

could just see a fire flickering in the grateless fireplace of the deserted cottage.

But her heart sank within her at the words she heard, which rang like the very trump of doom in her ears: 'Timothy Kelly,' cried a voice which Vara well knew—even that of her mother—'I tell ye I will have no murder done! And on your own son! Shame on ye! It is enough to bring a judgment on us all just to talk about it. I tell ye we can get the stuff out of the house o' the loony General without the like of that.'

Then the piping voice of the weasel-faced Tim Kelly answered, 'Tis little that ye know, Sal Kavannah, you that never were at the taking of a farthing's worth in your life, except off boosy softies in the street. I tell ye, woman, that if Cleg Kelly were to come in my road when I am getting out the cargo, I'd spit him like a rat!'

'But, maybes,' said the other voice, which thrilled Vara the most, 'maybes, if ye was to speak peaceable-like to the lad ye might get him to stand in with us.'

'Sorra a fear of him,' replied Tim; 'Clig Kelly might have been like a lump of paving-stone, for all the kindness he ever showed to his kin. Aye, and after all that I have done for the boy!'

'Childer! poison them!' cried Sal Kavannah, 'tis little you have had to suffer with your childer, Timothy Kelly! It's me that knows to the roots of my heart. But wait till we have this stuff lifted and safe in Mistress Roy's tea-kettle. Then we'll bring sweating sorrow on them that's the proud ones this day.'

'Set a match to the house this very night, and burn it about their ears,' said Tim Kelly. 'Say the word and I'll do the job for you, and that willin', Sal.'

'I declare my heart's broke entirely with ungrateful children,' said Sal Kavannah; 'but when once we get clear away with the old General's jewels, we will have time and to spare to bring them to their senses.'

Vara listened, now with fire glowing hot in her heart, and the next moment she was again cold as a stone. She had her ear close down against the bottom of the window-sill, and thus for a time she stood, the thought that her enemy had found her out once more, overwhelming all other thoughts.

But presently the knowledge of Cleg Kelly's instant and terrible danger came to her. Cleg was in sole charge of the great house

of Barnbogle with all its wonderful treasures. The master of it was reported to be away. But, so strange and unaccountable were his comings and goings, that no one knew whether General Theophilus Ruff was really in the neighbourhood or not.

At all events, any way that Vara thought about it, there was little doubt that Cleg was in imminent peril of his life. For if he refused to give up the treasures of the General, his father would certainly kill him. And if he were frightened or tortured into telling, then no one would believe anything else than that he had been sent by his father, to worm himself into the confidence of the mad General and so open the house to the robber.

Vara meditated what she should do. Could she get to the house of Barnbogle before Tim Kelly, she might be able to put Cleg on his guard. But a curious something, more disabling than fear, kept her chained to the spot.

‘The thing is easy as throat-slitting,’ said Tim emphatically. ‘I tell you the lad has the keys. For I know he can let himself out and in at his pleasure. Now, he shall give up the keys willingly, or I know a way to make him. If the mad ould General comes in the road, I have that in my pocket which will settle him dead for life. But I hear he’s off again on his thundering rounds, restless devil that he is!’

‘But how,’ said Sal Kavannah, ‘is the like o’ me to hold the boy? He will be as strong as a young bullock by now.’

‘He’ll be wake—wake as pump-water—when I get him in them hands,’ whispered Timothy Kelly, so that the listener barely heard him.

But Vara could see his narrow, weasel face thrust forward and hear the hateful jar in his voice. ‘God’s truth!’ he said, ‘do I not owe him wan? See them holes?’ he cried more loudly, his hate mastering him, ‘pockmarks ye could lose sixpence in. ’Twas the whelp did that to me! Ah! a fine man was Tim Kelly before that sorra came into the world.’

‘Vara, Vara!’ cried suddenly a shrill voice behind the listening girl, as she stood with her brow down on the window-sill. Her heart leaped with wild terror. For it was the voice of little Gavin, come out to seek her. And she feared that he would suddenly appear at the door of the house on the bog. He had a curious faculty for following his sister and finding her. Ever since she came back from Loch Spellanderie he had not cared to let her out of his sight.

'Vara! Vara!' the shrill childish voice came again. She could hear Gavin coming nearer, pushing his way through the crackling copsewood. The wrangling voices within stilled themselves. The tell-tale light went out at the crack in the board, and Vara knew that the wild beasts inside would be after her in a moment.

If she could only silence Gavin, she thought. She rose to her feet and dashed towards him.

'Vara, Vara!' rose the child's voice, clear on the frost-bitten air; 'where are ye, Vara?'

She could hear him beating gleefully with a stick on a wire fence which ran down into the marsh, so that the very hills gave back the clear humming sound. The wire was Gavin's telegraph, and he pleased himself with the thought that he could always communicate with Vara by means of it. The girl ran towards him, leaping over the frozen ditches, and speeding through the briars, heedless of how she might hurt herself. She came on Gavin at the edge of the wood, beating on the wire with his stick and shouting boldly, 'Vara, Vara, come forth!' as he had heard the Netherby minister do in church.

'Hush, hush, Gavin!' she cried anxiously, holding out her arms to him, 'for God's sake, hush!'

And, in an agony of apprehension, she lifted him and strained him to her breast. There came the sound of footsteps running through the wood, and Vara dragged Gavin back into the shelter of the alders which grew thick and rank in the marsh at the end of the fence. She covered Gavin's mouth with her shawl as the flying footsteps clattered nearer.

Presently the dark figure of Tim Kelly ran past them, with his head set very far forward, scenting from side to side like a beast of prey hunting upon a hot trail. He held a knife point downwards in his hand. Vara stood still while the terrifying vision passed. Tim Kelly was running towards the house of Barnbogle. She could hear another—and heavier—foot following. And before she had time to move, lo! Sal Kavannah moved into the grey-litten space, and stood still within ten yards of her children.

'The Awfu' Woman!' came from Gavin's lips, even through the folds of the shawl. All terrifying things were summed up for him in that phrase he had learned from his brother Hugh. Something seemed to tell Sal Kavannah that she was near her children. She stood for what seemed an eternity, stark and



staring, rooted to the spot, only turning her head slowly from side to side and straining her ears to hear the crack of a twig or the rustle of a leaf.

Vara prayed as she had never done before. Gavin's eyes were fixed in his head with terror. The end of the world had indeed come. 'The Awfu' Woman' was back again, and in a moment the quiet and safety of Sandyknowes had ended for them.

But Vara stood the test. And Gavin had no words which were not shut within him by the soul-terrifying proximity of Boy Hugh's 'Awfu' Woman.' So silently did they stand that Sal Kavannah heard nothing. And with her ears still on the stretch she moved slowly away, following Tim Kelly in the direction of Barnbogle.

Then was Vara's heart fairly torn in twain. Should she go first to Mirren Douglas and Boy Hugh? Or should she strike across through the dark woods towards Barnbogle? Then, like sweet music, there fell on her ears the loud hearty accents of the voice of Mistress Fraser.

'Weel, Mirren, an' hoo's a' wi' ye the nicht? Hearty, thank ye! I hae brocht my guidman an' Gibby, oor auldest callant, ower by to hearten ye up. Gibby is a brave bullock-baned hullion, no bonny ony mair than the daddy o' him—but that like Tam Fraser, that he couldna deny him even if he was willin'. And that is a guid thing for a decent woman's reputation!'

Vara could not catch Mirren Douglas's reply, but she could hear Mistress Fraser's next words. For that voluble lady always spoke as if it were all important that the next two parishes should have a chance of benefiting by her wisdom.

'Hoots, no! Gie yoursel' nae thocht aboot the lassie. She has Gavin wi' her, and I'se warrant she'll be keepin' her bit trysts, just as you and me had in the days that's lang bygane. Come your ways in, Gibby. Dinna stand hingin' a leg there!'

Sandyknowes was therefore safe so long as the Frasers remained. The way was clear for Vara to run through the woods to warn Cleg. So, plucking Gavin to her, she lifted him in her arms and ran towards Barnbogle as hard as she could. But the wild beast and the 'Awfu' Woman' had a long start of her.

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## ADVENTURE LVII.

## FIGHTING THE BEASTS.

GENERAL THEOPHILUS RUFF was at home. He had, in fact, never been away. That very morning his lawyer had visited Barnbogle, and had stayed all day in the little brick addition, with two of his clerks within call in the kitchen behind, writing and witnessing deeds. The General sent Cleg into Netherby in the forenoon upon half-a-dozen errands, and in the afternoon he told him that he was free to do what he wished with his time. Whereupon Cleg went and got a pail of whitewash to brighten up the byre and stables of Sandyknowes, a job which he had been promising himself as a treat for a long time.

After the General had dismissed the solicitor and his two clerks to go back to the town of Drumnith, he withdrew himself into his room and occupied himself with the arrangement and docketing of multitudinous papers. When Cleg came back he made his supper by himself in the brick addition, and was just sitting down with the paper-covered threepenny novel which represented literature to him, when the door opened and the General came in with a roll of papers in his hand. His hair stood nearly straight up, and his eyes were blood-shot and starting from his head. A great change had come over him since the morning.

‘Cleg,’ he said abruptly, ‘you are going to lose your place.’

Cleg stood on his feet respectfully. He was not much astonished. He had been waiting for an announcement like this, ever since he found what manner of man his impulsive master was. His first thought was that he would be able largely to increase the flower business.

‘Verra weel, sir,’ said Cleg, glancing straight at the General, who stood commandingly in the doorway, looking, in spite of his disarray, imposing enough in his undress uniform; ‘verra weel, sir. Ye hae been kind to me.’

‘Ah,’ said the General, ‘I mean ye are going to lose your master, not that he wishes you to leave your place. I have a long journey to depart upon. I am going upon active service in another world. Three times yestreen I heard the black dog summon me below the window.’

‘That maun hae been Tam Fraser’s collie,’ said Cleg promptly,

'nesty brute that he is. I'll put a chairge o' number five in his tail the next time he comes yowlin' and stravagin' aboot here!'

'No,' said the General, without paying much attention, 'it was the Death Dog, which only appears when one of my race is about to die. My hours of life are numbered, or at least I believe they are, which is exactly the same thing. You will find that you are not left with the empty hand, Cleg, my man. See that ye use it as wisely as ye have used my money. For I have proved you an honest lad, and that to the hilt—never roguing your master of a pennyworth, high or low, indoor or out, and saving of the Danish butter when you fried the fish.'

'Thank ye,' said Cleg, 'I am no o' high family, ye see. Nae dowgs come aboot when the Kellies dee that I ken o', but if your yin bothers ye I'll shoot him. Gin Rab Wullson the polissman hears tell o' it, he'll be at us to tak' oot a leesence for him.'

The General held out his hand.

'Good-bye,' he said, 'it is likely that I'll be waiting for you on the waterside when you land. I have a tryst to-day with the old Ferryman. The Black Dog has looked my way. I hear the lapping of the water against the boat's sides, and I have coined my gold for drachmas to pay my passage.'

'Guid nicht, sir,' answered Cleg, briskly, 'will ye hae herrin' or bacon to your breakfast the morn's mornin'?''

Cleg was accustomed to the General's megrims, and did not anticipate anything special from this solemn harangue.

'Nae fears, sir,' he said, encouragingly, 'you tak' your comfortable sleep, the black collie will never trouble ye. I'll leave the outer door on the jar, an' faith! I'll hae a shot at him if he come youchin' aboot this hoose.'

'Come up, Cleg,' said Theophilus Ruff, as he stood by the door, 'come up in a quarter of an hour, and I'll take my pipe as usual.'

'Aye, General,' said Cleg, 'I'll be up. Did ye say herrin'?''

The General went out without answering, and Cleg turned unconcernedly to his immediate business of scouring the pans and setting the kitchen to rights. He was naturally neat-handed, and by this time no work, indoors or out, came wrong to him.

He was whistling cheerily and burnishing a tin skillet when a slight noise at the outer door startled him. He dropped the can, and it rolled with a clatter under the dresser.

'That dowg o' Fraser's!' he said to himself. 'I'll "Black Dog" him!'

But before he could rise he felt his arms pinioned from behind, and ere he could make any effective resistance he was thrown upon his back on the floor. Cleg struggled gallantly, and it might have proved successfully. But the face which looked hatefully into his, took from him in a moment all power of resistance.

It was his father's face, livid with hate and vile determination. Tim Kelly coolly directed Sal Kavannah to sit upon the lad's feet, while he himself trussed up his hands and arms as if he had been a fowl ready for the market. Cleg suffered all this without showing the least concern. He had no hope of pity. But he steeled himself to be silent and faithful to his benefactor.

His father shut the kitchen door. Then he looked carefully round the brick house, and seemed infinitely relieved to find the door into the house unlocked, as the General had left it when he went out for Cleg to follow.

Presently Tim Kelly came back and kneeled by his son's side.

'Now, young serpent,' he said, 'the reckoning day has come at long and last 'twixt you and me! You have got to tell me where the old chap keeps his keys, and that mighty sharp—or I will see the colour of your blood, sorrowful son o' mine though you be!'

But Cleg maintained a steady silence. Whereupon his father set his fingers to his throat.

'I know a way to make you speak,' he said. 'Sal, take him by the feet and throw him over that bed.'

Sal Kavannah did as she was bid, and between them they threw Cleg across his own bed with his head hanging down on the other side.

'Don't ye be thinking,' said his father, bending over him, 'that because I had the ill luck to be father to the likes o' you, that will do ye any good.'

Cleg still held his peace, biting speech down with a proud masterful heart. He was resolved that, even if he killed him, his father should not draw a single word out of him.

At that moment a loud clang sounded through the archway which led into the dark house of Barnbogle. Cleg's eyes went in spite of him toward the door. He knew that in a moment more the General would appear in the doorway. And he feared that his father would kill him with the revolver which, when on business errands, he always carried attached to his waist by a leather strap.

Cleg started up as far as he could for his bonds and his father's fierce clutch upon his throat.

'General,' he cried, 'run back to the strong room—back as fast as you can to the strong room!'

Then Cleg heard with gratitude the sound of retreating footsteps outside in the passage.

Timothy Kelly rose from his knees with an oath. He felt that he had been tricked. His revolver was in his hand, and he pointed it at his son's forehead. His forefinger hooked itself on the trigger. Cleg Kelly instinctively shut his eyes not to see the flash. But Sal Kavannah jerked up her companion's arm.

'You waste time, man,' she said, 'through the door after the old fellow!'

Tim Kelly lifted the slant-headed bar of iron which he had brought with him to be inserted, if need were, under the sashes of the windows. And as he ran out of the kitchen he struck his son heavily over the head with this, leaving him lying in his blood upon the bed.

Through the long, vaulted passages the villain ran, with his accomplice in crime close upon his heels. The door which divided the little brick building from the main house of Barnbogle closed after them. Something like a tall fitting white-robed figure seemed to keep a little way before them. They followed till it vanished through the open door of the strong room. In a moment both Tim Kelly and Sal Kavannah darted in after it, and immediately with a clang which resounded through the whole house, the door closed upon pursuers and pursued. Then, through the silence which ensued, piercing even the thick walls of the old mansion, ringing all over the country-side, came three loud screams of heart-sickening terror. And after that for a space again there fell silence upon the strange house of Barnbogle, with its mad master and its devilish visitants like wild predatory beasts of the night. But Cleg Kelly heard nothing. For the blow from his father's arm had left him, as it proved, wounded and nigh unto death.

Vara we left panting along the road upon her quest of mercy, listening fearfully for the feet of the pursuer. She dared not leave Gavin behind her, but toiled under his load all the way—now stumbling in the darkness and now falling headlong. The lad cried bitterly, but Vara persevered, for she had the vision of Cleg

before her, helpless in the hands of the cruel enemies who were also hers.

When she came to the main door of the house of Barnbogle she found it barred and locked, while the gloomy front loomed above with the windows like still blacker gashes on its front. However, she remembered Cleg's description, and, taking Gavin by the hand, she ran as swiftly as she could through the dense coppice round to the little brick addition.

She had just reached the closed door when the three shrieks of terrible distress pealed out upon the night silences.

But Vara nerved herself, and, lifting the latch, pushed the kitchen door open. There across the bed, within three feet of her, lay Cleg, bound, bleeding, and insensible. Vara set down Gavin, sprang towards Cleg, and took him up in her arms. Hastily she unloosed him from his bonds, and dashed water upon his face. But his head fell heavily and loosely forward, and it was with a terrible sinking of the heart that the thought flashed upon her that her friend was already dead. The house continued to resound with cries of fear, demoniac laughter, screams of ultimate agony. At any moment the fiends who made them, might burst upon her. Yet she could not leave Cleg to the mercy of the merciless.

With eager hands she tore the sheet from the bed, and, wrapping him in it, she lifted him in her arms and staggered into the night. Gavin came after her, speechless with fear, clutching tightly the skirts of her dress.

So, fainting and staggering, Vara bore Cleg across the marsh and up to the little house of Sandyknowes. She was just able to put Cleg Kelly into the arms of Mirren Douglas and sink fainting on the floor.

When she came to herself Tam Fraser and the doctor from Netherby were bending over her.

'What was the maitter—wha hurt the laddie?' asked Tam Fraser.

'The House! The terrible House!' was all that Vara could say.

Cleg Kelly was not dead. The doctor reported him to be suffering from a severe concussion of the brain, which might probably prevent a return to consciousness for some days.

A band of men hastily equipped themselves and set out for the house of Barnbogle. They stole up to the door of the kitchen. It stood open, as Vara had left it. The light streamed out upon

the green foliage and the trampled grass. But inside there was only silence and all around a wild scene of confusion. The skillet which Cleg had been burnishing lay upon the hearthstone. There was blood upon the stones of the floor where he had been thrown down, and again on the bed from which Vara had lifted him. But about all the house there was only silence.

The blacksmith of the nearest village brought a forehammer, and with great difficulty he and his apprentice broke a way into the house itself through one of the barred upper windows. But the whole mansion within was entirely in order. The iron fronts of the safes in the hall had not been tampered with. The red iron door of the strong room in the rock underground was close and firm—far beyond the art of Netherby smiths to burst open.

It was considered, therefore, that the General must be from home, on one of his ever-recurring journeys, and that his servant Cleg had been attacked by the ruffians who had run off at the sound of the alarm raised by Vara.

Yet it was thought somewhat strange that, as the men came back through the empty house, they should find an iron crowbar, stained with blood, lying at the top of the steps which led to the strong room.

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### ADVENTURE LVIII.

#### WITHIN THE RED DOOR.

CLEG hovered long between life and death. The Netherby doctor made his rounds twice a day in the direction of Sandyknowes in order to watch the case. Vara and Mirren Douglas waited unweariedly upon him. It seemed so strange a thing to them to see their lightsome, alert Cleg thus lie senseless, speechless, turning his head only a little from side to side occasionally, and keeping his eyes fixed steadfastly upon the ceiling.

After the first night of stupor Cleg slept heavily and constantly for nearly ten days, without being able either to speak or so much as tell his own name.

The Netherby doctor raised each of the patient's eyelids when he came, but the pupil remained dull. Every day the doctor would say, 'Do not be alarmed. This is a well-marked stage of the trouble, though no doubt it is in this case somewhat unduly prolonged.'

And so it proved, for Cleg did not come to himself until twelve days after the night when Vara found him lying in the brick addition, with the lamp lighted and signs of hideous outrage all about him on the floor. A watch had been kept all the time by the county authorities upon Barnbogle House, and every possible attempt had been made to communicate with the owner. All places which he was known to visit had been watched.

The steamers on the Caledonian Canal, the ferries to the Island of Arran, the passenger boats to Orkney and Shetland had been carefully examined. But so far it was all in vain. No one answering to the description of General Theophilus Ruff could anywhere be found. Yet there was nothing remarkable in this. For the mad General had been in the habit of going off suddenly on tours by himself, by rail and steamboat, without consulting any one. Upon his travels by sea he had been distinguished by his habit of taking the officers under his protection, and offering them advice upon the subject of their profession, especially as to the proper way to handle a ship—advice which, strangely enough, was not always received in good part.

But the mad soldier could nowhere be found. His lawyers continued the search in other directions. They came to Netherby, and made very particular inquiries as to the doings of Cleg during the day which had ended so disastrously. Now it chanced that even while Cleg himself lay unconscious upon the bed at Sandyknowes, every hour of his day could be accounted for; that is, up to the moment when he had gone home to prepare supper for his master. The General had ordered a new fence of barbed wire to be erected by the side of the railway, and Cleg had been out all the forenoon superintending its erection, after having been sent to Netherby by the General. He had been engaged in whitewashing the office-houses at Sandyknowes in the afternoon.

So close was the inquiry that the chief of the Netherby police asked more than once of the detective employed by General Ruff's lawyers if he had any cause for suspicion against the young man Kelly.

'None whatever,' said the detective, 'so far as I know. But I understand that important testamentary dispositions will affect the young man—that is, if he gets better and the General does not turn up.'

Cleg did get better, but not suddenly or indeed speedily.



One morning, when the doctor came from Netherby, Cleg of his own accord twitched an eyelid up and glanced at him.

‘Doctor Sidey!’ he said feebly, ‘have I been ill?’

Without answering, the doctor took his hand, and bent over him.

His breathing was weak and irregular, but still perceptibly stronger.

‘He’ll do!’ said Doctor Sidey of Netherby to Mirren Douglas, ‘but, mind you, he is to be asked no questions till I can ask them myself.’

So for nearly a week more Cleg lay in the dusky room, with the bees humming drowsily outside the wall on sunny days, and the sounds of the little farmyard of Sandyknowes coming to him, softened by distance. Vara looked in many times a day, as she passed the window to bring home the cows, or was going with a can to the well. And always at sight of her Cleg smiled happily.

Or Mirren came in from the kitchen, drying her hands on her apron, and Cleg smiled again. Then Vara brought him his low diet of milk and cornflour. But she did not speak to him. He looked at her in a manner so pathetic in its weakness that Mirren Douglas had often, perforce, to go into a corner and dry her eyes with her apron.

‘He used to be so strong and cheery!’ she said, as if explaining the matter to the world in general.

Then Vara would briskly leave the room to bid Boy Hugh hush his noisy calls to the chickens outside. Whereat Cleg Kelly would shake his head; but whether because Vara had left the room, or because he liked the simple, cheerful sounds of the yard coming into his chamber, Mirren Douglas did not know.

It was a clear morning, about seven o’clock, when Cleg came fully to himself. The trees upon the slope opposite stood black and hard against a pale green mid-winter sky. Cleg watched the light grow clearer behind them as a chill wind from the south swayed the branches away from him. He had a delicious sense of reposefulness and physical well-being. But this was suddenly crossed and obliterated by the thought which came to him that he had lost his place. How long had he been lying here? He could not remember. His master—where was he? That hideous vision of his old life which swept over him like a very eruption of devildom—was it a dream or a reality?

‘The doctor! the doctor!’ cried Cleg, ‘send for him quickly. I have something I must tell him.’

And Vara sped obediently away, putting forth all the strength in her lithe young limbs to bring Doctor Sidey to Cleg Kelly as quickly as possible.

When he came in he looked at Cleg quickly.

‘Worse?’ he queried, half to the patient and half to Mirren Douglas, who stood by with folded hands.

‘No,’ said Cleg, ‘not worse, doctor. But I have something to tell you which cannot wait.’

The doctor motioned Vara and Mirren out of the room. And then, in hurried breathless sentences, Cleg told the doctor of all that had taken place on the night of the attack. He still thought that it had been just the night before, and the doctor did not undeceive him.

‘And the robbers are still in the house wi’ my maister,’ Cleg asserted. ‘I think he is shut up in the strong room. If he doesna come oot soon the room must be forced. But he never stays in it more than a night at a time, so he is sure to come oot in the mornin’.’

‘What did you say?’ cried the doctor, surprised out of himself. ‘General Ruff in the strong room—two robbers with him in the house! Why, it is plainly impossible—it is three weeks on Tuesday since you were hurt.’

‘The General was in the house when I was attacked,’ repeated Cleg. ‘I heard him go into the strong room and shut the door.’

The doctor went into Netherby and telegraphed to the General’s lawyers, who lived in the larger town of Drumnith. The two heads of the firm arrived by the next train, and, as a result of a conference with the doctor and Cleg, an urgent message was sent to the great firm of safe and strong-room makers who had engineered the safety appliances, to come and open the room in which lay the most hidden treasures of General Theophilus Ruff.

In response to this urgent application three skilled mechanics came down that same night, and by five in the morning they stood ready to break in the door. The foreman of Messrs. Cox & Roskell’s declared that no power existed by which, in the absence of the keys and the knowledge of the time and word combinations, the lock could be opened without violence.

But the lawyers promptly decided that at all hazards the room must be reached. So, very philosophically, the foreman

proceeded to demolish the work of his own hands and brain—the preparation and fitting of which had cost him so many weeks.

He inserted two dynamite cartridges on either side of the red iron door, boring holes for their reception in the rock itself, so that the frame might be started bodily from its bed. Then he placed other two under the step which led to the room. There were present only the three artisans, the two lawyers from Drum-nith of the firm of Hewitson & Graham, together with Doctor Sidey, who had constituted himself Cleg's representative, and had insisted either on having the regular police called in or upon being present himself.

These six men stood far back from the house while the dynamite was exploded. The foreman timed the fuse with his watch. Presently there came a little jar of the earth, as if a railway train were passing underneath. But the great bulk of the building stood firm. The lawyers and the doctor were eager to run forward. But the foreman held them back till the fumes had had time to clear out of the narrow stone passages and to dissipate themselves through the glassless windows.

Then they went below, each carrying a lantern. The doctor had in his pocket also a case of surgical instruments and the strongest restoratives known to his art.

When they arrived in the passage they found the mighty iron door fallen outward, frame and all. It lay with the time lock and the letter attachment still in their places, leaving a black cavernous opening, into which the light of the bull's-eye lanterns refused to penetrate.

The foreman stooped as he came up.

'It's not a pennypiece the worse,' he said, examining the fallen door with professional solicitude.

But the doctor pushed him aside and entered. As he shed the light of his lantern around he gasped like a man in extremity, for surely a stranger or a more terrible sight the eyes of man had never looked upon.

Two dark forms, those of a man and a woman, were upon the floor, the man prone on his face with his hands stretched out before him, the woman crouched far back in the corner with her mouth wide open and her eyes starting from her head with absolute and ghastly terror. Yet both eyes and mouth were obviously those of a corpse. In the centre of the room were three coffins laid upon narrow tables, the same that Cleg had so often seen.

But now they were all three open, and in each reclined a figure arrayed in white, with the head raised on a level with the coffin lid.

In the coffin in the centre lay General Theophilus Ruff, with an expression of absolute triumph on his face. He appeared to lean forward a little towards the woman in the corner, and his dead wide open eyes were fixed upon her. An empty opium box lay by his side. A revolver lay across his knees, evidently fallen from his right hand, which hung over the coffin edge. His Oriental pipe stood on the floor, and the amber mouthpiece was still between his lips.

But the other two coffins contained the strangest part of the contents of this room of horrors. To the right of the General lay the perfectly preserved body of a woman, whose regular features and delicate skin had only been slightly marred at the nostrils by the process of embalming. She was dressed in white, and her hands were crossed upon her bosom. A man, young and noble-looking, lay in the same position in the other coffin upon the General's left.

But the most wonderful thing was that the necks of both the man and the woman were bound about with a red cord drawn very tight, midway between the chin and the shoulder. Upon the breast of the man on the left were written in red the words :

‘FALSE FRIEND.’

And on the breast of the fair woman upon the right the words :

‘FALSE LOVE.’

A row of tall candlesticks stood round the coffins, six on either side. The great ceremonial candles which they had once contained, had burned down to the sockets and guttered over the tops. The floor was strewn with the contents of drawers and papers, and with dainty articles of female attire. A small glove of dainty French make lay at the doctor's feet.

He lifted it and put it into his pocket mechanically, before turning his attention to the bodies in this iron charnel-house. They were, of course, all long since dead. The weasel-faced man on the floor had a bullet through the centre of his forehead. The woman in the corner, on the other hand, was wholly untouched by any wound. But, from the expression on her face, she must have died in the most instant and mortal terror.

When the first wild astonishment of the searchers had abated a

little, the lawyers ordered the men from Messrs. Cox & Roskell's to open the various receptacles in the strong room. Strangely enough, nothing whatever was found in them, excepting some articles of jewellery and a packet of letters in a woman's hand, which the lawyers took possession of. The three confidential artificers from London remained in charge till measures should be taken to clear out the strong room.

The doctor examined Cleg with care and tact, for it was to him that the lawyers looked for the explanation of the mystery. But first they provided the mechanics with very substantial reasons for secrecy, if they would give their services to prevent a scandal in these very remarkable family circumstances. The men, accustomed to secrecy, and recognising the future and personal application of the lawyers' logic, readily promised.

So far as the doctor could make out, this was what had happened. Cleg told the truth fully, but he made no discovery of the relationship in which he stood to the man who had so murderously attacked him. Nor yet did he say anything of his knowledge of Sal Kavannah's identity. After a little study and piecing of evidence, however, the process of events seemed fairly clear.

When Cleg first sent his warning cry through the house, the General had doubtless been engaged in arranging for his expected departure out of the life which had brought so little happiness to him. For, like an Oriental, he knew, or supposed that he knew, the exact moment of his death—though, as we now know, his first impression had proved erroneous.

For some unknown purpose he had left the strong room and hastened through the passages till he had heard the hideous uproar in the kitchen. Whereupon he had promptly retreated to the strong room, in all probability to get his revolver. While there a mad idea had crossed his mind to receive his visitors in his coffin. At any rate, upon entering he left the red door open behind him. A few moments later Tim Kelly came rushing in hot upon the trail, followed by the woman Kavannah. His hands were wet and red with his son's blood. His heart was ripe for murder. And this was the sight which met him—a room with open coffins in a row and three dead folk laid upon them, six great candles burning upon either side—all the horrors of a tomb in the place where he had counted to lay his hand upon uncounted treasure.

Then, while Timothy Kelly and Sal Kavannah stood a moment

looking with fearful eyes on the tall ceremonial candles, which must have been specially ghastly to them on account of their race, the strong door swung noiselessly to upon its hinges. For the water balance had filled up, and they found themselves trapped.

What happened after this was not so clear. Probably the robber was proceeding in his desperation to rifle the open depositories of the letters and gear, which the searchers found strewed up and down the floor, when Theophilus Ruff sat up suddenly in the centre coffin, with his revolver in his hand, just as Cleg had seen him the first time he entered the chamber of death. Whether the ruffian had first attacked the madman, or whether he had simply been shot down where he stood, will never be known. But certain it is that he died instantly, and that the horror of the sight killed Sal Kavannah where she sat crouched low in the corner, as if trying to get as far as possible from the grisly horrors of the three coffins.

Then, having done his work, Theophilus Ruff calmly swallowed all that remained of his drugs, and slept himself into the land where vengeance is not, with the mouthpiece of his pipe in his mouth and his revolver upon his knees.

The heads of the embalmed bodies were turned so that they looked towards Theophilus Ruff as he sat in his coffin. For twenty years it is probable that he had gone to sleep every night with those dead faces looking at him.

The coffins were buried as privately as possible, the two embalmed bodies being laid within the private mausoleum at the foot of the garden. For in noble families a private burying-place is a great convenience in such emergencies. Here also Tim Kelly and Sal Kavannah took their places with nobler sinners, and no doubt they lie there still, mixing their vulgar earth with finer clay, and so will remain until the final resurrection of good and evil.

Doctor Sidey certified truthfully that the death of General Theophilus Ruff was due to an overdose of opium. And as there is no coroner's inquest in Scotland (another convenience), matters were easily arranged with the Procurator-Fiscal of the county—who was, in fact, a friend of the distinguished and discreet firm of Hewitson & Graham at Drumnith.

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## ADVENTURE LIX.

## THE BEECH HEDGE.

'AND the queer thing o' it a' is,' said Cleg, 'that there's no as muckle as a brass farthin's worth o' lyin' siller to be found.'

'Ye tak' it brave and cool, my man,' said Mistress Fraser. 'My certes, gin I had been left thirty thousand pound, and then could find nane o't, I wad be fair oot o' my mind wi' envy and spite. Save us a', man. Ye hae nae spunk in ye ava.'

'And what a wonderfu' thing is it,' said Mirren Douglas, 'that Maister Iverach, the young lad frae Edinburgh, gets a' the land and the hooes, but no a penny forbye!'

They were sitting—a large company for so small a place—in the little ben room of Sandyknowes, with the roses again looking in the window. For another spring had come, and a new year was already stretching itself awake from its winter swaddling bands.

'What was it that the lawyer man wrote about your bequest?' asked Mistress Fraser.

'But a' my lying money in the house o' Barnbogle and about the precincts thereof, to be the property of Cleg Kelly, my present body-servant, in regard of his faithful tendance and unselfishness during the past four years,' quoted Cleg, leaning his head back with the air of a languid prince. He was sitting on the great chest in which Mirren kept all the best of her napery and household linen.

'My certes, ye tak' it braw and canny,' repeated Mistress Fraser. 'What says Vara to a' this?'

Vara came out from the little inner room where she had been dressing for the afternoon.

'What says Vara?' said Mistress Fraser, looking a little curiously at the girl as she entered. Half-a-year of absolute freedom from care and anxiety in the clear air of Sandyknowes, had brought the fire to her eye and the rose to her cheek.

'I think,' she said, soberly, 'that Cleg will find the siller yet. Or, if he doesn't, he will be able to do without it.'

'It will make an awfu' difference to his plenishing when he comes to set up a hoose,' said the mother of eleven; 'there's nae-body in the world kens what it tak's to furnish a hoose, but them that has begun wi' naething and leaved through it!'

'Mr. Iverach is comin' frae Edinburgh the day,' said Cleg, 'to see aboot knockin' doon the auld hoose o' Barnbogle?'

'He's no willing to bide in it,' said Mirren Douglas. 'Lod, I dinna wonder. Wha could bide in a place wi' siccan a chamber o' horrors doon the cellar stairs as that was!'

Which showed that some one must have been telling tales.

'I'm to gang and meet him,' said Cleg. 'Vara, will ye come? Ye may chance to forgather wi' a friend that ye ken.'

Vara Kavannah nodded brightly, and glanced at the widow Douglas.

'If Mirren will gie a look to the bairns,' she said.

At that moment there was a noisy rush past the window, and certain ferocious yells came in at the door.

'Preserve me,' said Mistress Fraser, 'thae bairns are never hame frae the schule already. Faith, I maun awa' hame, or my evil loons and limmers will no leave a bite o' bread uneaten, or a dish o' last year's jam unsupped in a' my hoose!'

But as she rose to go her husband's form darkened the doorway.

'Tam Fraser,' she cried, 'what are ye doing there? Are ye no awa' at Auld Graham's funeral? A lawyer deid! The deil will dee next.'

'I hae nae blacks guid enough to gang in,' said Tam Fraser; 'ye spend a' my leevin' on thae bairns o' yours.'

'Hoot man,' retorted his wife, 'gang as ye are, an' tak' your character on your back, and ye'll be black eneuch for ony funeral.'

Tam Fraser stood a moment prospecting in his mind for a suitable reply.

'Meg,' he said at last, 'dinna learn to be ill-tongued. It doesna become ye. D'ye ken I was juist thinking as I cam' in that ye grow younger every year. Ye are looking fell bonny the day!'

'Faith,' said his wife sharply, 'I am vexed I canna return the compliment. Ye are lookin' juist like a crawbogle, and that's a Guid's truth.'

'Aweel, guidwife,' said Tam, seeing a chance now to get in his counter, 'if ye had only been ceevil eneuch, ye might e'en hae telled a lee as weel as mysel!'

And with this he betook himself over the dyke, leaving his wife for once without a shot in her locker.

Vara had gone quietly at Cleg's bidding and put on her hat. This demurely sober lass had quite enough of beauty to make the



country lads hang a foot, and look after her with desire to speak as she passed by on her way to kirk and market.

Vara and Cleg walked quietly along down the avenue by the shortest road to the house of Barnbogle.

'Vara,' said Cleg, 'I think we will do very well this year with the floers and the bees—forbye the milk.'

'I am glad to hear it, for Mirren's sake,' answered Vara, without, however, letting her eyes rest on the lad.

'I selled baith my barrels o' milk and the ten pund o' butter forbye this morning, a' in the inside o' an hour,' said Cleg.

For during the last half year Cleg had been farming the produce of Mirren's little holding with notable success.

'Vara,' said Cleg, in a shy, hesitating manner, 'in a year or twa I might be able to tak' in the Springfield as weel. Do ye think that ye could'—(Cleg paused for a word dry enough to express his meaning)—'come ower by and help me to tak' care o't? I hae aye likit ye, Vara, ye ken.'

'I dinna ken, I'm sure, Cleg,' said Vara soberly; 'there's the bairns, ye ken, Hugh and Gavin.'

'Bring them too, of course,' said Cleg. 'I never thocht o' onything else.'

'But then there's Mirren, and she wad fair break her heart,' protested Vara.

'Bring her too!' said Cleg practically.

He had thought the whole subject over. They were now coming near the old house of Barnbogle, which its new owner had doomed to destruction. Cleg glanced up at the tall grey mass of it.

'I'm some dootfu' that we will never touch that siller,' he said.

'Then,' said Vara firmly, 'we can work for mair. If we dinna get it, it's a sign that we are better wantin' it.'

She glanced at the youth by her side as she spoke.

'Vara,' said Cleg quickly, 'ye are awesome bonny when ye speak like that.'

Perhaps he remembered Tam Fraser, for he said no more.

Vara walked on with her eyes still demurely on the ground. They were just where the high path looks down on the corner of the ancient orchard.

'Vara,' said Cleg, 'what's your hurry for a minute? There's—there's a terrible bonny view frae hereabouts.'

Cleg, the uninstructed, was plunging into deep waters. Vara

turned towards the garden beneath at his word. There were three people to be seen in it. First there was a young woman in a bright summer dress, with a young man who walked very close beside her. Over a thick wall of beech, which went half across the orchard, an older man was standing meditatively with his hands clasped behind his back. He was apparently engaged in trying how much tobacco smoke he could put upon the market in a given time, for he was almost completely lost from sight in a blue haze.

The young people walked up and down, now in view of their meditative elder and now hidden from him by the hedge. And as Cleg and Vara watched, they noticed a wonderful circumstance. As often as the young man and his companion were behind the young beech hedge, his arm stole round the waist of the summer dress. But so soon as they emerged upon the gravel path, lo! they were again walking demurely at least a yard apart.

The strangest thing about it all was, that the young woman appeared to be entirely unconscious of the circumstance.

‘That’s an awesome nice view,’ said Cleg, when the pair beneath had done this four or five times. And such is the fatal force of example that he put his own arm about Vara’s waist each time the young man in the orchard below showed him how. And yet stranger than all, Vara also appeared to be entirely unconscious of the fact.

This went on till the pair beneath were at their tenth promenade—the elderly man over the beech hedge was still studying intently an overgrown bed of rhubarb—when, at the innermost corner, the young lady in the summer dress paused to pluck a spray of honeysuckle. The youth’s arm was about her waist at the moment. Perhaps it was that she had become conscious of it for the first time, or perhaps because it cinctured the summer dress a little more tightly than the circumstances absolutely demanded. However this may be, certain it is that the girl turned her head a little back over her shoulder, perhaps to reproach the young man, to request him to remove his property, and in the future to keep it from trespassing on his neighbour’s premises. Cleg and Vara could not tell from the distance. But at any rate the young man and the young woman stood thus a long moment, she looking up with her head turned a little back and he looking intently down into her eyes. Then their lips drew together, and, softly, as if they sighed, rested a moment upon each other.

‘It’s an *awesome* nice view,’ said Cleg, with conviction and emphasis. And forthwith did likewise.

The old man with his hands behind his back had a little while before ceased his meditations upon the rhubarb leaves, and had walked quietly all unperceived to the corner of the beech hedge. Here he stood looking down towards the corner of the orchard where the summer dress was plainly in view. Then he raised his eyes to the road above, where stood Vara and Cleg Kelly. His pipe fell from his mouth with astonishment, but he did not stop to pick it up. He turned and stole hastily away on tiptoe.

Then he too, sighed, and that more than once, as soon as he had got out of the orchard into the garden.

‘It’s just thirty years since—last July,’ he said.

And Mr. Robert Greg Tennant remained longer in meditation than ever, this time upon a spindling rose which was drooping for want of water.

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## ADVENTURE LX.

### CLEG’S TREASURE-TROVE COMES TO HIM.

PRESENTLY Cleg and Vara walked down, and when they came into the garden they found Miss Celie Tennant in animated conversation with her father. She was clinging very close to his arm, as though she never could be induced upon any pretext to leave it for a moment. The old man was smiling somewhat grimly. And Vara thought what a little hypocrite Celie was. The Junior Partner was much interested in a curious pattern of coloured stones, which the General had arranged with his own hand about a toy fountain. Five more innocent and unconcerned people it would have been impossible to meet with in broad Scotland.

But when Cleg Kelly was introduced to Mr. Robert Greg Tennant, he was astonished to notice an unmistakable air of knowledge in that gentleman’s face. Indeed, something that was not far from a wink wrinkled his cheek. The original Cleg rose triumphant—and he winked back.

Then Mr. Greg Tennant put his hands into his pockets, and strolled off whistling a refrain which was popular at that remote date—

I saw Esau kissing Kate,  
And he saw I saw Esau!

Cleg went away with the Junior Partner to take another look at the whole house, which was now wholly dismantled and about to

be pulled down to the foundations. The Junior Partner, who was henceforward to be a sleeping partner only, intended to build a mansion on another part of the property, so that all memory of the horrors which had been contained within the Red Door was to be blotted out.

‘And the sooner the better, sir,’ said Mr. Tennant, grimly. He had just joined them.

‘When I have money enough!’ stammered the Junior Partner, not sure of his meaning.

He looked about him. Cleg was still exploring far ahead in the ruined tower, from the windows of which the frames and bars had been already removed.

‘I was going to speak to you, sir,’ said the Junior Partner, ‘but the fact is, sir, till to-day I have had no permission and no right.’

The elder man clapped the younger upon the back.

‘All right,’ he said heartily, ‘I have been behind beech hedges myself in my time. But I must say,’ he went on, ‘that I generally kept a better watch upon the old man!’

The Junior Partner blushed red as a rose—a peony rose.

‘And if that is your meaning,’ continued Mr. Tennant, ‘why, get the house built. I daresay there’s tocher enough to go with my little lass to pay for the stone and lime.’

At this moment a whirlwind of primrose-coloured summer lawn, twinkling black stockings, and silver-buckled shoes fell upon the two of them, and reduced the Junior Partner to a state of smiling, vacuous inanity.

‘Come, come quick!’ Celie Tennant cried, with the most charming impetuosity, seizing them each by a hand, and dragging them forward towards the brick kitchen. ‘We have found it—at least Vara has! There’s millions of gold—all new sovereigns and things. And I’m to be bridesmaid!’

What the Junior Partner made out of this no one can tell. For at the time he was certainly not in the full possession of his senses. But Mr. Tennant was well used to his impetuous daughter’s stormy moods, and understood that something which had been lost was at last found.

Celie imperiously swept them along with her into the little brick building.

‘Not so fast, you small pocket hurricane!’ cried her father, breathlessly. ‘At my time of life I really cannot rush along like an American trotter!’

They entered the kitchen. Vara was standing at the table at which Cleg used to cut the bacon for the General's breakfast and his own. She was calmly opening tin after tin of Chicago corned beef, cans of which stood in rows round the walls. Each was full to the brim of bright newly-minted sovereigns.

'It is Cleg's money,' cried Celie wildly, 'and I found it all myself—or, at least, Vara did, which is the same thing. There were just two tins one at each end full of real, common, nasty beef for eating, and the rest are all sovereigns. And I'm to be bridesmaid.'

And though a Sunday school teacher of long standing and infinite gravity, the little lady danced a certain reckless breakdown which she had learned in the Knuckledusters' Club from Cleaver's Boy.

'Well, Miss Quicksilver, you had better go and tell him!' said her father; 'he is in the tower yonder.'

Mr. Donald Iverach was starting out of the door to do it himself. But Celie seized him tragically. 'Father—Donald—how can you?' she cried, more in sorrow than in anger at their stupidity and ignorance. 'Of course, let *her* go!'

And Vara went out of the door to seek for Cleg.

'Oh I wish it was me!' Celie said wistfully and ungrammatically, stamping her foot. 'It's so splendidly romantic! Donald, why didn't you make it turn out so, that I could have come and said to you, "I have a secret. Hush! You are heir to a hidden treasure!" You never do anything really nice for me!'

'Why, because the old man didn't leave it to me,' said the Junior Partner.

'And a good job for you, too, you great goose,' cried Celie, daringly, 'for if he had I should certainly have made love to Cleg, and we would have set up a market garden together. I am sure I should have liked that very much.'

And at that time Vara was telling Cleg in the tower that his treasure had come to him at last.

And Cleg was sure of it.

#### LETTER INCLOSED.

*(Being a fragment from the postscript of a note, dated some years later, from Mrs. Donald Iverach to the Girl over the Wall—who has been her dearest friend ever since her engagement was announced.)*

'And the funny thing is that, after all, they *have* a market

garden! I've just been to see them, and they live in the loveliest little house down near the sea. And Cleg says that he is going to make their little Donald (called after my Incumbrance, the old Dear) a market gardener—"Fruits in their Seasons," and that kind of thing, you know. And I think it's so sensible of them. For, of course, they could never have gone into society, though she is certainly most charmingly behaved. But Cleg likes to go bare-foot about the garden still, and you know that is not quite usual. Gavin is at the Academy and is dux of his class. He is what is called a "gyte," which is a title of honour there.

'And what do you think? Cleaver's Boy is married, and they have got a baby also—not so lovely as its father was, but the sweetest thing! He is foreman now, and Janet never even thinks of telling a fib, even to afternoon callers. Don't you think that's rather much? Oh, I forgot! Her uncle came in while I was there, and said to Mirren Douglas—that's the little widow, you know, who lives with Cleg and Vara—"I saw Hugh Kavannah walking to-day on Princes Street with little Miss Briggs!" But I don't think there can be anything in it, do you? For, after all, she's a lady, and he is only a student. Of course, when we were girls—but then this is so different.

'Kit Kennedy has just been matriculated or rusticated or something. Everybody is very pleased. He is going in for agriculture, and tells Cleg when to sow his strawberry seed.

'And the man who used to be Netherby carrier has come to take their stuff to market—so nice for him. And the baby is the prettiest you ever saw. But you should see mine. *He* is a darling, if you like. He has four teeth, and I am quite sure he tries to say Papa!—though Donald laughs, and says it is only wind in his little —. That was Donald who came and joggled my elbow. He is a HORROR!

'And just think, Cleg Kelly has built, and Donald has furnished, the most wonderful Club in the South Back of the Canongate. It was opened last week. Bailie Holden—who is now Lord Provost, and a very good one—opened it. But Cleg made the best speech. "Mind, you chaps," he said—and they were all as quiet as mice when he was speaking—"mind, you chaps, if I hear o' ony yin o' ye making a disturbance, or as muckle as spittin' on the floor—weel, ye ken me!"'

THE END.

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*CLARISSA FURIOSA.*

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER XIII.

RAOUL DE MALGLAIVE.

SOMETIMES, as everybody is aware, great events take place and complete changes are brought about within a few months; sometimes nothing particular happens during a much longer period. At any rate, there are years, and even successive years, when the ceaseless work of time is carried on so imperceptibly that middle-aged people are apt to doubt whether it is being carried on at all. Young people, of course, can hardly add so large a number as three to the tale of their years without consciousness of having taken vast strides towards the grave; but Sir Robert and Lady Luttrell, sitting side by side on the terrace of the Château de Grancy, one mild spring afternoon, neither looked nor felt much older than when we saw them last on Guy's wedding-day three years before. Their history, like that of the country which one of them had been doing his best to serve, had been agreeably uneventful, and if Sir Robert had intermittent worries now, he had had intermittent worries then also. As a matter of fact, his financial situation had altered considerably for the worse; but he only thought about his financial situation when he could not help it.

'So,' said he, handing back to his wife a letter which she had given him to read, 'they will be in England again almost as soon as we are. Dear me! it seems only the other day that they left.'

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States of America, 1896, by W. E. Norris.

Lady Luttrell sighed. 'Yes; and yet they may have had time to become unrecognisable. Not Guy—he sounds just the same, and I am sure he will be just the same; but sometimes I am a little frightened about Clarissa.'

'Frightened about her or frightened of her?' Sir Robert asked.

'Both, perhaps. She is so self-willed and, in many ways, so different from the rest of the world! Her letters tell me nothing; but she is more communicative with Madeline, and she seems to have put ideas about marriage into the child's head which I am not at all sure that I like. And now that she has 5,000*l.* a year of her own to do what she pleases with——'

'Ah! that is serious, no doubt. I was delighted when Dent told me that her fortune reached that figure; still, when one remembers that very ill-advised measure the Married Women's Property Act, and when one thinks of what an extremely annoying thing it would be for Guy to lose 5,000*l.* a year, one understands your alarm. But I gather that they are perfectly good friends now. That silly quarrel, a year or two ago, about some officer's wife to whom Guy was supposed to have been too attentive—as if he wasn't sure to be attentive to every woman who crossed his path!—has quite blown over, has it not?'

'Oh, yes, that has quite blown over,' Lady Luttrell answered. 'Clarissa was altogether in the wrong, and I dare say she is ashamed now of having talked about anything so ridiculous as a separation. I certainly shall not allude to it when we meet. But what I heard of her from dear Lady Brook, who was a most kind friend to her while Sir George was Governor of the island, makes me a little uneasy. I should not so much mind her being irreligious——'

'You wouldn't, eh?'

'No; because heretics, after all, have no real religion to lose, and there is more hope of bringing an unbeliever than a self-satisfied Anglican, like Paul, to the only true faith. But these notions which she seems to have taken up about the rights or wrongs—I can't remember which it is—of women may get her and all of us into trouble, I am afraid.'

'I don't see why they should. You won't accuse her of differing from the rest of the world in that respect, anyhow. It is quite the custom nowadays to entertain such notions—and nobody is a penny the worse. Human nature remains what it always has



been and always will be; social necessities continue, and will always continue, to demand very much the same code of laws. Why shouldn't Clarissa amuse herself, like the others, by talking nonsense? I dare say it keeps her out of worse mischief. Added to which, I take it that Guy has no objection.'

Lady Luttrell was not so sure of that. It did not seem to her certain that Guy's patience—which she believed to have been sorely tried—would hold out for ever, and what she knew of her son led her to fear that he would hesitate less than his duty to his family required him to do about sacrificing 5,000*l.* a year. What could not be denied or doubted was that Captain Luttrell and his wife had failed to hit it off together. It was all very well to say that they were good friends; but would they remain friends now that they were about to return to England and that the fortune of one of them would perforce render the position of the other, as captain in a line regiment, somewhat anomalous? Clarissa, in short, was mistress of the situation, and it was, in Lady Luttrell's opinion, a most undesirable thing that so young a woman should be mistress of any situation.

'I wish the poor dear little boy had not died!' she sighed. 'It was so dreadfully sad, their losing him just after his birth!'

'Well, yes; but not so sad as if he had lived for a year or two,' said Sir Robert, 'and one may anticipate that there will be another boy—or other boys. Meanwhile, there is Netta, whom you ought to be longing to embrace.'

'Of course I am longing to embrace her, dear child! Still she isn't quite the same thing as a grandson. For obvious reasons, not quite the same thing to us, and not quite the same thing to her parents, for reasons which I am sure you wouldn't understand.'

'I am afraid I hardly follow you, my dear,' answered Sir Robert, with a slight shrug of his shoulders.

It did not, in truth, occur to him that, given certain circumstances, a woman will sacrifice herself for the sake of a son, but not for that of a daughter. He knew that Guy's chance of ever taking up his residence at Hacombe Luttrell was but a slender one; he did not know—as his wife did—that Clarissa had more than once given expression to subversive views respecting the sanctity of the marriage tie, and he was less eager than he might have been under happier conditions to see a healthy grandson progressing towards maturity. For the rest, he hated few things

so much as contemplation of the future, and he changed the subject by inquiring :

‘What has become of Madeline?’

‘I thought you knew,’ answered Lady Luttrell, ‘that she had gone out riding with a large party of them—M. de Larrouy, young de Malglaive, and I forget who else.’

‘And no chaperon?’

‘I believe there is a nominal chaperon, though her name does not come back to me at this moment. But, as far as the management of horses is concerned, Madeline can take better care of herself than anybody else could take of her.’

‘That may be; but I should have thought that a girl with eyes like hers—not to mention her nose, mouth and chin—might have required a little supervision in matters not connected with the management of horses.’

Lady Luttrell made an eloquent gesture. ‘What would you have? I cannot keep her under lock and key; I cannot get upon the back of a horse myself; and, supposing the worst to come to the worst, Raoul de Malglaive is rich, or will be. I really don’t think that we risk very much by allowing the child to enjoy herself in the way that gives her the most enjoyment.’

‘It is the very deuce,’ observed Sir Robert musingly, ‘to have a Roman Catholic daughter! There are so few Englishmen of means and position who belong to what you call the only true faith. Yet there are some, and I wonder that you haven’t begun to fix your gaze upon them. Surely young de Malglaive does not realise your conception of a brilliant *parti*!’

‘Oh, I only mentioned him because, as far as I can remember, there is nobody else who could possibly be dangerous. And he is not really dangerous at all. From what his mother tells me, he has been, and still is, a *viveur*; he will not marry for a good many years to come, and when he does, he will marry somebody of her selection. As for Madeline, she is imbued with Clarissa’s ideas—which, they say, are the modern ideas. They are ridiculous, if you like; but they will at least preserve her from dreaming of falling in love with a dissolute Frenchman.’

‘I am delighted to hear it,’ answered Sir Robert. ‘Come, *mamie*, let us go indoors to our tea, and be thankful that we were born such a long time ago. We may have been fools in our youth, but I cannot think that we were ever quite so idiotic as the young men and women of to-day.’

One of the young women of to-day, in the person of the beautiful Miss Luttrell, was at that moment cantering over the *côteaux* near the village of Jurançon in the company of a young man who differed less from his progenitors than she did from hers. Raoul de Malglaive, during the comparatively brief space of time which has been mentioned, had developed from a raw boy into a terribly experienced and rather melancholy man of the world. In the matter of refined vice no surprises remained possible for him, nor much excitement; he had seen and learnt what almost all young Frenchmen and not a few young Englishmen of his rank see and learn; he had acquired a reputation of which he was not particularly proud and with which, oddly enough, his strict old mother was not precisely dissatisfied. By her way of thinking, a de Malglaive owed it to himself and his ancestors to earn a reputation of some kind, and every de Malglaive whom she could remember had left the record of a stormy youth behind him. It was the family tradition to bid adieu to youth and storms at the proper season, and she had no doubt that Raoul would prove faithful to it ere long by suing for the hand of the suitable young lady whom she already had in her mind's eye. But amongst the suitable young ladies (for there were several of them) Miss Madeline Luttrell was not included. Beauty, Madame de Malglaive may have thought, is a questionable advantage in a wife; fortune is not to be despised, and foreign blood is likely to prove a serious drawback. If poor dear Antoinette Luttrell—of whose pecuniary circumstances her old friend was quite well informed—was contemplating anything of that sort, disappointment awaited her: an Anglo-French alliance did not commend itself favourably to Madame de Malglaive.

Her son, however, dutiful though he was, and something of a fatalist into the bargain, was not to be trusted quite so implicitly, not to say disdainfully, as this imperious lady trusted him. The recent renewal of his intimacy with Madeline, whom he remembered as a mere child, and whose striking beauty astonished him almost as much as the ease and freedom of her conversational style, had brought to him a multitude of sensations so complicated and unprecedented in his experience that he was half afraid to analyse them. That she had been living and growing while he had been similarly occupied in Paris and elsewhere was a matter of course, no doubt; but it is always a little surprising to those who have grown up to find that their contemporaries have not

remained at a standstill during their absence. And so, riding alongside of her in the waning light of that still afternoon—the remainder of the company being some hundred yards or so ahead—it came naturally enough to him to remark, with a faint sigh:

‘You are not what you used to be, mademoiselle.’

The observation was directly provoked by something that she had just said about her sister-in-law, but the thoughts which gave rise to it had a somewhat wider significance.

‘None of us, except M. de Larrouy, are what we used to be,’ answered the girl, laughing. ‘M. de Larrouy, I am sure, will still be leading cotillons when I am purchasing spectacles and thinking about marrying my daughters; but other people have to change with the times. You yourself, for example—you are no longer the shy young man who was so grateful to poor Clarissa for dancing with him, are you?’

Raoul, with a slight smile, admitted that he had ceased to suffer from *mauvaise honte*. ‘But why do you call Mrs. Luttrell “poor” Clarissa?’ he inquired.

‘Have I not been telling you all this time? She is to be pitied; she is altogether in the right; she is not happy, and I can see by her letters, though she never says it in so many words, that Guy is to blame for her unhappiness. When she comes home we shall hear more, perhaps; but I suppose the truth is that Guy is like other men.’

‘You would prefer him to differ from other men, then?’ said Raoul interrogatively.

He understood what she meant; but it seemed to him so strange that a young lady should converse upon such subjects, and the mingled candour and ignorance with which she had already alluded to them had such a queer sort of fascination for him that he affected bewilderment for the sake of leading her on.

‘It is not a question of what I should prefer,’ she answered. ‘When I last saw my brother I was still in the schoolroom, and I confess that at that time he realised my ideal of what a man ought to be. I am not sure that he would realise it now, and I am quite sure that he does not realise Clarissa’s ideal. Did you ever hear our English proverb, “What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander”? Clarissa has taken that as her motto.’

‘It is a device which may lead her into numerous combats,’ M. de Malglaive remarked, with his grave smile.

‘It is not the thought of combats that is likely to alarm her.

Also, in our language, "fight" rhymes with "right." You, of course, are on the side of the men—you may even have excellent reasons for being on their side—but you will admit that the two sexes are not treated with equal justice. Why should you be allowed to do, and perhaps admired for doing, what is considered utterly disgraceful in us?’

The audacity of the question was atoned for by the manner of its utterance. This young girl, with her violet eyes, her dark hair, her creamy complexion and her perfectly modelled figure, was so lovely that she had a right to say what she pleased, and if her speeches sometimes sounded rather startling to French ears, the innocence and good faith with which they were made were obvious. That, however, did not make it any easier to reply to them, and M. de Malglaive was fain to fall back upon timeworn generalities. Men were men; women were angelic or diabolic as the case might be; he feared that if Mrs. Luttrell proposed to inaugurate a social revolution, she would incur some unpleasant experiences, without attaining her object.

‘It is true that I do not know how much or how little she may have to complain of.’

‘Nor do I,’ Madeline confessed; ‘but I know—because she is always telling me so in her letters—that she thinks there ought to be no difference between men and women, and that there would not be any difference if men had not made laws for their own advantage. The Divine law, she says, is the same for all.’

‘But I understood that she had discarded Divine authority.’

‘Not altogether. She has discarded Christianity, I am afraid; but other people, who continue to call themselves Christians, may have done that, perhaps, without having had the honesty to say so.’

Raoul de Malglaive, who presumed that this allusion was meant for him, rode on for fifty yards or so in silence.

‘My mother says,’ he remarked at length, ‘that it is possible to be a very good Christian and yet to neglect the practice of religion. It might be more honest to tell her that I have doubts about the miracles of Lourdes; but that would make her very unhappy, and, when all is said, how do I know that she is mistaken? Will you take me for a profound hypocrite if you see me kneeling by her side before the Grotto to-morrow?’

The girl turned her head a little to scrutinise her questioner. He was very handsome, and he sat his fidgety chestnut mare well.

His clear olive complexion, his large, soft brown eyes, and his somewhat sad cast of countenance did not seem to belong either to a hypocrite or to a debauchee; yet, if certain informants of hers were to be believed, he had assuredly proved himself no saint.

'You will please your mother by kneeling down, and you cannot do much harm to yourself or anybody else,' she answered. 'You might even profit by being in that attitude to ask for what I am sure you must want.'

'Oh, if I were to ask for what I wanted, and if, by a miracle, I were to get it,' returned the young man, laughing, 'a very costly *ex voto* would soon be added to the collection of the Blessed Virgin. But you mean,' he continued, becoming grave again, 'that what I want is faith. Happy those who possess it! You are of that number, are you not, mademoiselle?'

He put the question with a certain subdued eagerness, for he had all a Frenchman's horror of free-thinking women, and he was proportionately relieved to hear her reply tranquilly:

'I do not even know what doubt means. It seems to me that if I ceased to be a Catholic, I should cease to be myself.'

Raoul's sigh was expressive rather of satisfaction than of regret. He was half inclined to beg that, since she had that happy certitude, she would remember one who was less fortunate in her prayers, when she saved him from the risk of appearing ridiculous, which, in common with the majority of his compeers, he dreaded beyond everything, by asking:

'But what is it that you want so much?'

He could not possibly tell her; he had only just begun to tell himself, and he shrank from even hinting at a secret of which he felt sure that she had not the faintest suspicion. The advent of M. de Larrouy, who came trotting back to meet the couple, relieved him, however, from the necessity of making any reply.

M. de Larrouy, brisk and energetic as of yore, had instructions to give relating to the expedition to Lourdes which he had organised for the following day, and in which a large number of persons less pious than Madame de Malglaive were to take part. Some would go by rail; some by road, in a '*breack à quatre chevaux*;' a few had expressed their intention of riding the whole way. But, as the distance there and back would be little less than fifty miles, so much fatigue and so early a start could not be recommended to Miss Luttrell. 'Our young friend here, whose

cavalry training has accustomed him to live in the saddle, can please himself.'

Raoul observed that he was at home for a holiday, and that he was not desirous of riding his only horse to a standstill. The break would suit him very well, and he ventured to recommend it to Miss Luttrell, as preferable to a hot, dusty railway carriage.

'As you like, *mon garçon*,' the cheery little Vicomte replied: 'there will be room for everybody.'

Then he went on to explain the programme for the day—the breakfast, which he had taken care to order in advance, the visit to the famous grotto and the church, the subsequent *promenade dans les environs*, the return by moonlight, after a rather early dinner. 'It will be ravishing!' he declared; and Raoul was quite inclined to hope that it would.

Soon the Château de Grancy was reached, and Raoul, taking leave of Miss Luttrell, and of the other ladies and gentlemen, to whom he had not spoken much during the ride, turned his horse's head towards his mother's abode, which was situated about a quarter of a mile away. He did not hurry himself, having many things to think about—especially things which Madeline Luttrell had surprised him by saying in the course of the afternoon. Had she really meant what she said? Had she known in the least what she was talking about? The first question might, perhaps, be answered in the affirmative; the second, no doubt, in the negative. Yet, fantastic though her sister-in-law's ideas appeared to be, he so far agreed with them that he would have given a good deal to obliterate the last three years of his life. When one is in love for the first time—such was his condition, and he knew it—one would fain be able to offer what one hopes to receive. But that could not be. It was pleasanter to remember, amongst other speeches which Miss Luttrell had made, that she had once inadvertently called him 'Raoul,' as she had been wont to do in the days of their childhood, and that she had coloured ever so slightly after that little slip of the tongue. By way of acknowledgment, he murmured 'Madeline' more than once under his breath before he rode into the great echoing stable-yard, where a groom was awaiting him.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE PILGRIMS.

LONG ago—so long ago that the existing generation has had time to forget all about him and the social conditions with which he dealt—a charming French poet wrote ‘Les Confessions d’un *Enfant du Siècle*.’ The century which was then in its youth has now reached extreme old age, Alfred de Musset and his contemporaries are clean out of date, and their mantle, such as it was, has fallen upon persons at whom it is not yet permitted to smile; but now, as then, a Frenchman who dreads ridicule (and there is nothing on earth that a Frenchman dreads so much) is bound to belong to his epoch. He must of course be very wicked, but he must no longer be romantic; above all, he must clear himself of any suspicion of being *naïf*. His sins are to be committed coldly and deliberately; he must believe in nothing, beyond the somewhat obvious fact that it is pleasant to gratify the demands of the senses. The day is possibly coming when somebody will discover that what is really difficult, and therefore entitled to admiration, is self-control, and that courage—the one virtue which still continues to hold its own—can scarcely exist without it; but that desirable era does not at present show symptoms of dawning.

Raoul de Malglaive had so far justified his claim and ambition to be accounted a *fin-de-siècle* young man that during his few years of military service in Paris and its vicinity he had spent a youth of the kind commonly described as stormy. The so-called storms had left him calm (to the enhancement, of course, of his reputation); but he had seen and experienced almost everything that there is to see or experience—aided considerably, no doubt, by his handsome face and by his ability to throw away a good deal of money. What he had never experienced until a filial visit to Pau brought him once more into relations with Madeline Luttrell was that love which, let us hope, comes to every decent man once in his life, and which, amongst the other sufferings which it is sure to entail, is apt to make him ask himself mournfully whether he is a decent man at all. It is not necessary to enter into details respecting Raoul’s acquaintance with the feminine variety of human nature: if he held no very high opinion of women in general, the fault was scarcely his; nor had



he ever doubted that there were a few rare women—his mother, for example—of whom the world was not worthy. Only he had always been under the impression that they must, in the nature of things, be ignorant of that circumstance, and that was why some remarks of Madeline Luttrell's had brought home to him a painful and disquieting conviction of his personal unworthiness. Entertaining the views that she professed to entertain, was she not more than likely to turn away in disdain and disgust from one whose record was so very far from being immaculate as his?

Madame de Malglaive, who was pretty well informed as to that record and who never made any allusion to it, would have been capable of reassuring him if, by an impossibility, he had applied to her for consolation. She was a hard, stern, strict old woman, with a very soft place in her heart for the son whose extravagant tastes she had gladly pinched herself to gratify; she thoroughly understood the temperament which he had inherited; she knew, or thought she knew, that youth must have its fling, and she had no fears for the future. As regarded her own sex, she would have declared confidently that every woman prefers a man who has a few sins to repent of, and she was a firm believer in the old saying that a reformed rake makes the best husband. However, it by no means entered into her plans to bring about a project of marriage between her son and Miss Luttrell, the latter being, as she had long ago ascertained, absolutely without *dot* or prospect of any.

When Raoul entered her large, ill-furnished, dimly lighted *salon* just before the dinner hour, and when, with the old-fashioned respect which she liked him to observe, he had kissed her hand, she had a few disparaging remarks to make about the Luttrell family, to whose villa, it appeared, she had paid a visit that afternoon.

‘Riddled with debts, I am told, and living, as they have always lived, far beyond their income. That poor Sir Robert will be almost ruined when he goes out of office, I believe, and Heaven knows whether anything remains of Antoinette's fortune! Add to that the inconceivable folly of their son, who, after marrying a rich woman, is bent, it seems, upon providing her with an excuse for divorcing him! It is impossible to feel any sympathy with people who manage their affairs so badly.’

Later in the evening she spoke in terms scarcely less contemptuous of Madeline.

‘The girl is pretty—even beautiful; but Antoinette will find that there will be very great difficulty in arranging an alliance for her. It is not only that her father is prepared to give her nothing, but one looks forward; one sees the whole family on straw; one says to oneself—I presume, at least, that all prudent parents, even in England, would say to themselves—“This will not do! Our son must not be exposed to the risk of having to provide for his wife’s relations!”’

‘In England,’ Raoul remarked, ‘alliances are not arranged as they are with us. Marriage there is an affair of inclination.’

‘So they pretend; but, having seen many English people here and having observed their ways, I remain of opinion that Miss Luttrell is in danger of ending her career as an old maid. For her sake, as well as for her mother’s, I trust that I may be mistaken. *En somme!*—the question is one with which we can be in no way concerned.’

The last words seemed to be spoken with intention; but Raoul was not sure that they were so, nor was he inclined to pursue the subject further. His love for his mother had always been largely seasoned with fear; he suspected that she had already decided in her own mind who his future wife was to be, and he saw no use in entering upon argument and possible strife while it still remained so very doubtful whether Madeline would have anything to say to him. He himself had a tolerably strong will, and, like most persons whose will is strong, he was averse to stating what he meant to do before he was in a position to do it.

Madame de Malglaive was much pleased to hear that her son proposed to join in the expedition to Lourdes, which, so far as she was concerned, partook a little of the nature of a pilgrimage. Many and many a time had she visited the hallowed scene of the apparitions, praying fervently for boons which had not always been granted, and she was never unwilling to return to the charge. It mattered little to her whether her companions were believers, like herself, or whether—as the greater part of them would probably be on the present occasion—they were mere sightseers. She had not even had the curiosity to inquire of whom the party was to be composed; all she knew was that she was to journey by rail with the Luttrells and a few other elderly friends, and all she was anxious to know was whether Raoul would arrive in time to walk with her to the Grotto before the midday *déjeuner*.

He assured her that he would not fail to give her that satisfaction, adding, with something like a pang of remorse at his heart when he saw her hard face become bright and tender, 'As for that, I will place myself on my knees beside you, *ma mère*. It can do me no harm; perhaps—who knows?—it may even do me some good.'

'It is for you that I shall pray, my son,' the old woman murmured.

But indeed he did not require to be told that she would do so, and it made him sorry to think that her supplications would be thrown away. She was very good and very forbearing with him upon the subject of religion, which she seldom or never made a subject of discussion. Her hope, as well as her belief, was that he would be converted in due time, just as she hoped and believed that he would end by marrying in accordance with her wishes and abandoning certain habits which ought to be abandoned at a certain age. She did not realise how grave his case was, or that, notwithstanding his youth, he had already arrived at the point of wishing with all his heart to believe in accepted dogmas and being altogether incapable of the feat.

But of course it was neither of his mother nor of the difficulty of dispensing with the reasoning faculties that Raoul was thinking when he found himself, the next morning, seated opposite to Madeline Luttrell in the '*breack à quatre chevaux*' provided by M. de Larrouy. The weather was perfection, with just enough of nip in the breeze which blew from the mountains to temper the heat of the sun; the cosmopolitan company was a merry one; Madeline, dressed in a well-fitting costume of creamy white serge, was looking lovely; the four good little horses trotted up hill and down at a pace which might have suggested to their owners that, with such treatment, they would not be good little horses much longer, and Raoul's spirits, which had been somewhat depressed at starting, rose with each successive kilomètre. The conversation was perforce general; yet he managed every now and again to exchange words and looks with his opposite neighbour which did not relate to the general conversation. He could not help feeling that there was a sort of tacit understanding between them; he could not help hoping, though he kept saying to himself that there was as yet no shadow of an excuse for hope.

'I am going to the Grotto with you and Madame de Malglaive,' Madeline announced, when he helped her to descend, on arriving at their destination.

The travellers by rail were waiting for them in front of the hotel at the door of which the break had come to a standstill; it was rather late, and most of the party were hungry. M. de Larrouy had intimated that breakfast was the first event upon the programme; but Raoul had mentioned in an undertone that he was bound by a promise to his mother, and Miss Luttrell, it appeared, meant to witness his fulfilment of the same.

‘To see a sceptic asking for a miracle?’ Raoul inquired, smiling faintly.

‘I shall not see you at all; I shall be saying my own prayers. But I should think that, if anybody is in need of a miracle, it must be a sceptic. Ask for it, at least—that will be a first step. Did you never hear of the blind Protestant who came here and recovered his sight?’

He made no answer. He had not heard of that remarkable case; nor, if it had been ever so well authenticated, could he have hoped that his own mental vision would be dimmed thereby. There are patent, inexorable facts to which it would be very comfortable to be blind, but which cannot be ignored when once they have been looked in the face; and indeed it was no miracle that Raoul was disposed to crave of compassionate Heaven—although, when he thought of what he had been and of what Madeline Luttrell was, that seemed to be the most fitting name for it. He gave his arm to his mother (who, for the sake of claiming that support, sometimes pretended to be in need of it), and they walked together down the broad, gravelled promenade which skirts the Gave de Pau and leads to the wonder-working source. Only Lady Luttrell and her daughter followed them, everybody else having yielded to the paramount claims of appetite and the representations of M. de Larrouy.

‘So much the better!’ Madame de Malglaive said. ‘Now we shall be alone; for I do not count Antoinette and *la petite*, who will not have the bad taste to intrude upon us.’

Her confidence in the discretion of the two ladies named was not misplaced. They dropped upon their knees presently in front of the famous cave where a peasant child once saw visions which have brought so rich a harvest to others, and they did not turn their heads to look at Madame de Malglaive, who assumed a similar posture a few yards to the rear of them, or at Raoul, who knelt at his mother’s elbow. The young man watched these three worshippers with a yearning to be able to join in their devotions

which was the more pathetic because he was so terribly conscious of its absurdity. There was something that he wanted very much, something that he would fain have prayed for, something that, for all he knew to the contrary, the mysterious Creator of this planet, with its manifold intricacies and complications, might be pleased to give him, if properly approached; but how could he address his request to the alleged human mother of that Deity—symbolised here by a vulgar image and surrounded by the grateful offerings of those who had attributed their recovery from disease to her intercession? It might be true that she had interceded on behalf of those sufferers; it might be true that she had appeared to Bernadette Soubirons; it might even be true that she had made that astounding announcement, '*Je suis l'Immaculée Conception*'—the most improbable things may be true when once the domain of the supernatural has been entered, and it seems certain that the superstitious are both happier and better people than the incredulous. Only, as Raoul could by no means conquer his incredulity, there was nothing for him to do but to sigh and hold his peace.

As he knelt there, silent and sad, his eyes wandered hither and thither—from the Grotto, blackened by the smoke of thousands of tapers, to Lady Luttrell and her daughter, whose backs were turned towards him, to his mother, whose thin lips moved incessantly, and then to the hills and woods and mountains which had looked down for years upon the growth of this gigantic, touching illusion, and which would some day, no doubt, witness its decadence and extinction. 'But we shall all be dead by that time,' he thought, 'and it will not signify in the least to us or anybody else whether we have been disappointed or gratified by our short lives.'

But while our short lives last the difference between disappointment and gratification is of the utmost importance; and so it happened that a day of which he had expected no great things became one to be marked for ever with a white stone in the memory of this half-hearted philosopher. For whether the piety of his three companions was real or simulated (and he had no reason at all to doubt its reality), it was, in the case of one of them, discarded as lightly as an opera cloak when she had finished her prayers, and she entered into conversation with him on the way back to the hotel after a fashion which dispersed all the gloomy forebodings that had begun to possess his mind.

'Do you care about trotting round at M. de Larrouy's heels

and being shown the various objects of interest?' she asked incidentally. 'If you don't, we might perhaps give the expedition the slip and stroll down the banks of the river after breakfast. I never can enjoy myself in a crowd.'

She was given to making speeches of that kind—speeches which, coming from the mouth of a Frenchwoman, would have gone near to scandalising him, but which were so evidently uttered without *arrière pensée* by her that he was half-delighted, half-discouraged by them. A girl, whether English or French, does not extend such amiable invitations to a man whom she loves, he thought.

However, he was thankful to be granted the privilege of her undivided attention upon any terms, and, as matters fell out, that privilege was obtained easily enough.

The excellent *déjeuner* ordered by M. de Larrouy had reached its last course by the time that the four belated suppliants reached the hotel; Sir Robert Luttrell, accompanied by a Russian ex-diplomatist who was of the party, had already wandered out of doors with a cigar, and such members of the heterogeneous gathering as still lingered at table were being reminded by their active cicerone that there was not a great deal of time to be lost.

'But how late you come, my dear ladies!' he exclaimed, throwing up his hands, as our friends entered the room. 'I should be desolated to hurry you; but if we are to visit the church and the old town, and to drive a few miles up the valley towards Argelès, we must positively make haste! I thought that those who did not hold to joining in the drive would perform their devotions in the course of the afternoon.'

'I am sure that neither Madame de Malglaise nor I hold to being driven anywhere,' answered Lady Luttrell, 'and the younger people can catch you up at the church, if they want to catch you up. Please, go away, all of you; if you have left us something to eat, we shall console ourselves for being abandoned.'

The truth was that Lady Luttrell was free from fears respecting Raoul. He was not at all the sort of young man whom Madeline was likely to fancy, and even if she should fancy him, worse calamities might happen. He was well-born, well-to-do, and, as Sir Robert had said, there are so few eligible Catholics in England! Although, therefore, their meal was hurried through, and although the subsequent ascent to the Basilica was made with all possible speed, she did not keep a very vigilant eye upon her daughter, nor

was she much disquieted when, on rising from the *prie-dieu* chair which she had drawn up beside that of her old friend before the altar, she found that Raoul and Madeline had vanished.

'They will have followed the others,' she remarked. 'Come; let us look for a sunny corner somewhere where we can sit down and rest. I begin to find that excursions are a little fatiguing.'

Madame de Malglaive looked rather grim, but said nothing. She had the advantage of her former schoolfellow in knowing quite definitely what she wanted and what she did not want. She did not, for instance, want her son to marry a portionless foreigner, and she was comfortably convinced of her power to prevent him from doing so.

It may be that Raoul would have been uncomfortably convinced of the same thing, had he been able to flatter himself that he had surmounted the initial difficulty of winning Madeline's love; but, in spite of all the successes that he had had, he was not a vain man, and he was satisfied, for the time being, to know that the girl whom he adored was animated by friendly feelings towards him. It was she who had suggested in a whisper that they should not linger to examine the countless votive offerings in the Basilica, which neither of them saw for the first time; it was she who led the way out into the open air and down the colossal stairs to the banks of the river; beyond a doubt his society was pleasant to her, and to be aware of that was surely to be aware of a great stroke of good fortune.

At certain times of the year privacy is not to be had at Lourdes or its immediate neighbourhood; but the season of the great pilgrimages had not yet opened, and only some half-dozen motionless, mournful petitioners occupied the open space in front of the Grotto when Madeline and Raoul passed by on their way to the banks of the Gave. Presently they were as completely alone as if they had been on an island in the South Pacific, and Madeline, pausing upon a grassy bank which overlooked the stream, said:

'Suppose we sit down? This is what we should call in England a hot summer day.'

He assented, wondering a little at the matter-of-course way in which she treated a situation which for a young girl of his own nationality would have been totally impossible. He misunderstood neither it nor her; he knew—or, at all events, he had been assured—that the great liberty accorded to Anglo-Saxon maidens

is productive of no evil results ; yet Madeline Luttrell, who had a French mother, always talked to him in French, and this latter circumstance added a certain undefinable flavour of piquancy to the conversation that ensued.

‘ You look upon England as your country,’ he said interrogatively ; ‘ you do not often care to remember, perhaps, that you are half French ? ’

‘ On the contrary,’ she answered, ‘ I often think that I am more French than English, and that is just how my mother feels ; although in some ways she has become absolutely Britannic. We are subjects of the Queen, our lives are spent in England ; but it is to France that we come for our holidays, and it is in France that we are happiest. I suppose our hearts really belong to France.’

This was good hearing, and Raoul thought of gently insinuating that since Miss Luttrell had not yet espoused an Englishman, she might yet be destined to take up her permanent residence in the country of her heart ; but she did not allow him time to risk a possible indiscretion.

‘ Very soon our holiday for this year will be at an end,’ she remarked ; ‘ London is filling and Pau is putting up its shutters. And you ?—what will you do after everybody has gone away ? ’

‘ Oh, I shall return to the regiment ; what else is there for me to do ? ’ the young man replied. ‘ It is not too gay, life in the regiment,’ he added, with a sigh.

‘ Indeed ! I thought, from the reports that I have heard of your life, that it must be extremely gay.’

He answered with some earnestness that reports about other people’s lives were seldom or never true. For his own part, he detested the existence in which most of his brother-officers delighted. He had seen enough of it ; he would be glad to forget it ; there were only two things for which he really longed—active service, or else a quiet life on his own property in the Basses Pyrénées with—with some congenial companion.

‘ You may have both,’ she returned ; ‘ neither sounds so improbable as to demand miraculous intervention—which I think you said yesterday that you would have to ask for, if you asked at all. By the way, did you ask for anything at all this morning ? ’

He shook his head gravely. ‘ When I ask, mademoiselle, it will not be to the Blessed Virgin, who, I fear, would turn a deaf ear to me, that I shall address my prayers. In any case, they are not very likely to be heard.’



She threw a quick side-glance at him and changed the subject, without perceptible embarrassment. His meaning could hardly be doubtful to her; but it was evident that she did not wish him to say more, and he had not confidence enough in himself or his chances of success to insist.

They sat for the best part of an hour there above the hurrying stream, and their colloquy, which related chiefly to Raoul's military experiences and his desire to strike a blow for France in some remote quarter of the globe (since there seemed to be so little hope of a European conflagration), would scarcely have disquieted Madame de Malglaive, had she overheard it. It is true that, every now and again, a swift interchange of looks occurred which that quick-sighted lady might have deemed alarming, not to say reprehensible.

Sir Robert Luttrell, who chanced to be strolling that way, ruminating over the imminent dissolution of Parliament and the possible discomfiture of the Conservative party, was scarcely better pleased than Madame de Malglaive would have been when an abrupt turn in the path brought him face to face with his daughter and the young Frenchman.

'Hullo!' he exclaimed rather sharply; 'why aren't you driving with the rest of the party?'

'Because we thought it would be so much pleasanter to take a walk,' answered Madeline, rising leisurely to her feet. 'Won't you come with us?'

Sir Robert grunted. 'I think we had better get back to the hotel,' he answered. 'We are to dine in the middle of the afternoon, I believe.'

So the trio retraced their steps, and Raoul understood that there would be no more private converse with Miss Luttrell for him that day. He had not, perhaps, made a very brilliant use of his opportunity; but there was a humble little wild-flower in his pocket which she had been playing with and had dropped within his reach. He fancied that she must have seen him pick it up.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### MATERNAL AUTHORITY.

ON the following morning Raoul de Malglaive, with a cigarette between his lips, was wandering meditatively along the devious and somewhat carelessly kept paths which intersected his domain.

The property was his ; but he had never assumed the management of it, leaving that, as in the days of his childhood, to his mother, who was an excellent woman of business, and who was indeed at that very moment closeted with the family lawyer. At eleven o'clock precisely she would sit down to breakfast, and would then be joined by her son, such having been the custom of the house ever since Raoul could remember.

The young man's musings were less sad than his face, which wore its habitual expression of grave melancholy ; for, although he had had a tedious drive home on the preceding evening—owing to Miss Luttrell's parents having, for some unexplained reason, required her to return with them by train—the memory of that walk and talk by the banks of the rushing Gave still remained with him, and served as the foundation for a whole row of aërial castles. He could not help thinking that Madeline understood ; and if she had not encouraged him, she had at least not done the reverse. Unhappily, there was much connected with his recent history which she could not understand, or could understand only after a very vague fashion ; and that was why care and regret bore him company on that still, warm, brilliant morning. Unlike Guy Luttrell, who was of opinion that nothing is more simple than to pass a sponge over the records of the past ; unlike his own mother, whose belief in the whitewashing remedies prescribed by the Church knew no limits, he felt that a man is composed of what he has been just as much as of what he is, and that the man whom he had been could ever deserve to be Madeline's husband was impossible. Yet we all, in the course of our lives, obtain both good and bad things which we have not deserved, and it was, after all, in no despairing mood that Raoul re-entered the house to bestow his accustomed respectful salute upon the lady who ruled there.

Madame de Malglaise took her place at the table, laying down a sheaf of documents beside her plate. 'Now that these affairs are concluded,' she remarked, 'I can give myself the little change which I always find that I require at this time of year. I think of going to Saint-Jean de Luz to-morrow.'

She added, with her keen old eyes fixed upon her son's dismayed countenance, 'It is, of course, understood that I do not force you to accompany me.'

It was very well understood by him, and probably also by her, that he would be compelled to do so. He had only a few weeks

at his disposal; he knew that every day of those weeks was precious to the old woman whose speech was so seldom affectionate, but whose love for him had been evidenced by a generosity which had been ill requited, so far; to take her at her word and let her depart without him would be out of the question. He only ventured to ask whether there was any need for such precipitation.

‘I have already telegraphed to the hotel for rooms,’ Madame de Malglaiive answered inflexibly, ‘and, as you know, I never change my plans.’

‘Nor your opinions?’ suggested the young man, smiling faintly.

She shook her head. ‘It is true that I do not often change them; but then I do not form them hastily. If you could come with me to Saint-Jean de Luz—but I will not insist.’

Raoul rose and stood, with his hand resting upon the back of her high chair. ‘Do you know that you are asking a good deal of me, *ma mère*?’ said he, in a low voice.

She turned her head and looked up at him, all the hard lines disappearing from her brows and cheeks as she did so. But apparently she decided not to say what she had been going to say.

‘No, no,’ she answered brusquely, ‘I ask nothing. Saint-Jean de Luz is dull; Pau is perhaps amusing; you must not be the slave of my convenience. Nevertheless, it is becoming too hot here—the sea air is more healthy—it would be better—’

She paused abruptly, and Raoul, after a moment of silence, only said: ‘*C'est bien, ma mère*; I will accompany you.’

‘It will be better, my son; believe me, it will be better,’ the old lady returned.

That was all that passed between them; but there was no need for further words. If Madame de Malglaiive did not readily change her plans or her opinions, her son was of a somewhat similar temperament in that respect; but he had not as yet the right to say that he had formed the plan which she evidently meant to oppose; so he swallowed down his disappointment. A thoughtless son he had often been in the past, but he had never deliberately given his mother pain.

Madame de Malglaiive could not, and indeed did not, suppose that Raoul would be guilty of such a breach of good manners as to omit paying a visit of adieu at the Château de Grancy; yet she made no mention of her own intention to proceed thither,

which was carried out early in the afternoon. She happened to have heard that Sir Robert and Madeline were engaged to attend a large luncheon-party; so that she was not surprised to find Lady Luttrell at home and alone. That, in fact, was just what she had hoped for.

‘I come to embrace you before leaving,’ she announced at once. ‘We start for Saint-Jean de Luz to-morrow, and I fear that this house will be deserted before we return.’

It may have been something of a disappointment to her to note that her old friend’s ejaculations of regret did not partake of the nature of consternation. She was not an ill-natured woman; but she was persuaded that the Luttrells wanted to marry their daughter to her son, and she would not have been sorry, in declining the unspoken suggestion, to administer to its originators that rap over the knuckles which their cool presumption seemed to merit.

‘I am so sorry,’ Lady Luttrell remarked tranquilly, ‘that our stay at Pau is nearly at an end for this season; but my husband ought really to have returned to his duties before now, and I suppose, as you say, this house will very soon be closed again.’

Madame de Malglaise’s eyes wandered round the room. ‘It is a good house,’ said she—‘solidly built and standing in an advantageous position. What a pity that it should remain shut up for so many months together, and that it should suffer, as it must do, from the damp! Nevertheless, I consider that it is well worth the sum at which M. Cayaux values it, and I am glad to have been able to place my money upon such good security.’

Lady Luttrell was visibly disconcerted. She had found it necessary to raise a certain amount upon mortgage, and just before Madame de Malglaise’s arrival she had heard from her local man of business that her wishes had been complied with; but she was not anxious to advertise the circumstance that she was in pecuniary straits and she could not keep herself from exclaiming, ‘Cayaux is an imbecile!’

‘But, my dear Antoinette, why? He is my lawyer as well as yours; he has found an occasion of serving us both, and I think we may be very well satisfied with him. It is surely unnecessary for me to add that you may rely upon my absolute discretion. I am not in the habit of chattering either about my own private affairs or about those of my friends.’

That was true enough; and Lady Luttrell, regaining some-

thing of her usual good humour, remarked, with a slight shrug of the shoulders.

‘After all, we are in the same boat with our neighbours. Everybody is borrowing money in these days—everybody, that is, except a few lucky persons, like you, who can afford to lend it. You are very enviable—and very extraordinary!’ How in the world do you contrive to be so rich?’

‘I have thought it my duty to live within my income,’ answered Madame de Malglaive drily. ‘For the rest, I do not call myself rich; I shall be contented if, at my death, I can leave my son some moderate addition to his means, which are at present not too large for his needs. I hope also that in due time he will make a satisfactory marriage.’

‘Let us hope so,’ Lady Luttrell agreed. ‘I am not personally a great admirer of the French system of arranging marriages, which leaves the affections out of account; still one naturally wishes that one’s children should be well off, and one is naturally glad when—as I know will be the case with dear Madeline—eligible suitors present themselves in such numbers that it is a mere question of picking and choosing.’

‘Oh, your daughter is very pretty,’ Madame de Malglaive returned somewhat tartly. ‘I trust that you will not be disappointed, and that she will meet with some Englishman wealthy enough to be satisfied with prettiness. In France, as you know, such *partis* are scarcely to be discovered. And when do you expect your son and his charming wife?’

‘The date of my son’s arrival in England,’ answered Lady Luttrell, ‘is uncertain, because it must depend upon the number of times that the troopship which is bringing him may break down in the course of the voyage. His charming wife, who is travelling overland, with her little girl, will reach London, I believe, about the same time as we do. In fact, we are hastening our departure by a few days, so that we may be there to welcome her. I wish you were not hastening yours; for we might have been able to provide poor Raoul with something in the shape of entertainment, and I fear that he will not find his sojourn at Saint-Jean de Luz of a wild gaiety.’

The two old friends went on sparring until Madame de Malglaive rose to take her leave. She had rather hoped that Raoul would have appeared before then, and would have been constrained to leave with her; but, upon the whole, she saw no great danger

in his presenting himself later. Danger—if indeed there had ever been any—might now be regarded as a thing of the past.

Raoul had saddled his horse and had started for a solitary ride into the country. He proposed to pay his respects to the Luttrell family at the latest permissible hour, so as to give himself every chance of finding Madeline at home, and in the meantime the afternoon had to be killed somehow. But the sun was hot and the roads were dusty, and his self-communings were not of so cheerful a character that he cared to protract them. By four o'clock he was at home again, and shortly afterwards he was walking slowly towards the Boulevard du Midi—with some faint hope, perhaps, of encountering there the only person in Pau whom he desired to see. And, as luck would have it, he did, almost immediately after reaching the terraced garden beneath the old château, descry the approach of a little band of English people, headed by Sir Robert Luttrell and graced by the company of Sir Robert's daughter. They were talking and laughing, they appeared to be very merry together, and Raoul, whose constitutional shyness overtook him at odd times, notwithstanding the self-possession that he had acquired by three years' experience of the Parisian world, dropped his elbows upon the parapet and stared at the distant mountains, instead of stepping forward at once to accost Miss Luttrell. It seemed conceivable that she might not wish to be accosted.

But when she and her friends had advanced within speaking distance, and when Sir Robert had called out amiably enough, 'How are you, de Malglaive?' without stopping, she showed in the plainest and most satisfactory manner that there was no ground for such apprehensions. Unlike her father, she paused beside the young Frenchman, and, holding out her hand with a smile, said:

'What are you doing here all by yourself? Will you not come home with us and have a cup of tea? We have been down to the Plaine de Bilhères to watch the last lawn-tennis tournament of the season, and it is a great relief to meet somebody who neither knows anything about lawn-tennis nor cares whether the season is at an end or not.'

That description did not altogether apply to M. de Malglaive, as he presently explained. He accepted the invitation; the company resumed its march; the youth who had been walking with Miss Luttrell, and upon whom it may have dawned that he was in

danger of becoming *de trop*, moved on to join those in front of him; the moment seemed opportune for making a sad announcement which had to be made. Raoul's voice, quite as much as his words, testified to the sadness with which the conclusion of his season at Pau affected him; while Madeline, for her part, frankly exclaimed:

'What odious news! And I who have been planning I don't know how many rides and excursions which will have to be abandoned now! I suppose you must go, if your mother wants you to go with her; but—could she not be induced to wait just another little week? Is not this rather a sudden caprice of hers?'

Raoul shook his head gravely. 'She will not be induced,' he answered. 'Yes, it is sudden—I do not know whether it can be called precisely a caprice.'

He was not unwilling that Miss Luttrell should divine the name by which it ought to be called, and her quick, inquiring look, followed by a minute of silence, led him to believe that she understood what he could not tell her.

However that may have been, she said no more about the possibility of persuading Madame de Malglaive to reconsider her plans, but began to talk rather rapidly about the luncheon-party to which she had been taken by her father, and which, according to her account, had been excessively long and excessively dull.

'Almost all entertainments are long and dull,' she declared. 'I see an endless vista of entertainments before me in London, and I would give my ears to be able to escape them! As I was telling you the other day, it is to Pau that we come for our holidays, and now I shall have to begin looking forward to next winter. We shall not find you here then, I suppose?'

'You will assuredly find me here if I am alive,' the young man replied in his grave accents. 'But you, mademoiselle—is it so certain that you will return? Is it certain that you will still be Mademoiselle Luttrell next winter?'

She laughed. 'Nothing is certain; but I have my own humble convictions. Shall I tell you a secret? I do not think that I shall ever marry an Englishman.'

'Why do you say that?' he asked eagerly.

'Oh, not because I have formed a hopeless attachment for a foreigner,' she answered, still laughing; 'but I have heard things about English husbands—I have even seen a few things—which

do not exactly attract me. Moreover, as I should never be permitted to marry a Protestant, I am not likely to be tempted by a great many offers. I suspect that Pau has far better prospects of seeing me next winter than it has of seeing you.'

He reiterated his former assertion with much emphasis. Almost he was inclined to add something to it, fully alive though he was to the danger of precipitation, and convinced though he felt in his heart that, if his fondest hopes were ever to be realised, it would behove him to be patient as well as resolute. But before he could give utterance to a speech of which he might afterwards have repented, Sir Robert came marching back to say, in an unwontedly sharp tone of voice :

'Do you know what time it is, Madeline? We must put our best foot foremost, or the dinner bell will have rung before we get our tea.'

He only grunted on being informed that M. de Malglaive had kindly consented to form one of the tea-party, and he remained obstinately by his daughter's side during the remainder of the walk.

It would have been plain to Raoul that Sir Robert Luttrell did not covet him as a son-in-law, had he reached the point of troubling himself as to Sir Robert's possible wishes in the matter. But he was far from having arrived at that point; he was far from anticipating difficulties at which he would, in any case, have smiled if he had won Madeline's love; for the moment, it was enough for him to have been assured that she did not contemplate marrying an Englishman.

And that assurance, whatever it may have been worth, had to suffice. He spent some twenty minutes at the Château de Grancy in a crowded drawing-room; he took leave of Lady Luttrell and Sir Robert, both of whom appeared to receive the announcement of his impending desertion with fortitude; and when it came to Madeline's turn to speed the parting guest, all she had to say, as she smilingly extended her hand to him, was, 'Till next year, then!'

That, however, seemed to him to be a good deal, and he was by no means an unhappy man as he walked away. He ought, no doubt, to have struck while the iron was hot; but how was he, in his ignorance of British customs, to know that? Although he had achieved many conquests—and had achieved them, to tell the truth, as much by audacity as by anything else—he had not for one



moment thought of adopting so audacious a course as to ask Madeline Luttrell point-blank to be his wife. Marriage is a very serious matter, and if he had deemed the time to be ripe for a formal proposal, he would have felt it his duty in the first instance to approach Sir Robert—by whom he would assuredly have been sent to the right-about then and there.

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CHAPTER XVI.

CLARISSA'S RETURN.

'Now I really do hope,' said Sir Robert Luttrell to his wife, 'that we are not going to have trouble with that young fellow; but I am bound to say that it will be no thanks to you if we don't. I took the liberty of watching Madeline's face when she wished him good-bye, and the most unwelcome conclusions forced themselves upon me.'

Lady Luttrell raised her shoulders and her eyebrows. 'Since he has gone away and will never be heard of again! Besides, his mother was here this afternoon, and gave herself a great deal of trouble to make it quite clear to me that she was not ambitious of contracting a family alliance. She is rich, and I suppose she wants to be richer. You need not be in the least alarmed.'

'What you say is not so very reassuring,' rejoined Sir Robert testily. 'Your daughter's future, let me tell you, is not a matter to be trifled with. If Madame de Malglaiive is rich, I know who isn't, and there are a few unmarried Catholics in England to whom you ought to be devoting your whole attention. We cannot afford to have the girl refusing a good offer for the sake of some infernal alien whose mother is more prudent than you are.'

Sir Robert had become subject to fits of irritability. A general election was at hand, and it was doubtful whether the political party to which he belonged would be granted a fresh lease of power, while it was anything but certain that, even in that event, he would be invited to join the reconstructed ministry. He was conscious of lassitude and failing powers; conscious that younger men were slowly but surely pushing him up to the peerage which would be of no earthly use to him; conscious, above all, of the impossibility of making both ends meet without the aid of the official salary which he had so long enjoyed. Visions of letting Hacombe Luttrell and retiring to the Château de Grancy to

spend the remainder of his days in seclusion and economy had often suggested themselves to him of late. Only he did feel that Madeline ought to be settled in life first, and that there was no time to be lost. Guy, whose wife had already 5,000*l.* a year and would eventually have a great deal more, might be looked upon as provided for. Supposing, that was, that no danger existed of Guy's being such a very great fool as to quarrel with his wife.

'Why,' he asked presently, in the somewhat querulous accents with which those about him had but recently grown familiar, 'are not Guy and Clarissa coming home together? What was the sense of his taking a passage in a troopship?'

Lady Luttrell did not know, and therefore could not say. She had suspicions; but it would have been foolish, as well as useless, to impart these to her husband. If there had been conjugal dissensions—and she had been given to understand by Lady Brook and others that such was the case—they must be smoothed over. Of course they would admit of being smoothed over; conjugal dissensions always do when there is a child; and Clarissa, unmanageable though she appeared to be, would surely recognise her obvious duty after it had been firmly, but affectionately, pointed out to her. So Sir Robert was begged to go and dress for dinner and not to worry himself.

Heaven knows that he had never been much given to worrying himself. In every trouble of a life which had included what most people would consider a fair proportion of serious troubles he had been sustained by a comfortable conviction that 'it would be all right;' and although it had not always been all right, he had lived on with scarcely diminished equanimity. Now he was getting old and nervous; yet habit still enabled him to cast away his cares at a moment's notice, and Raoul de Malglaive, having been removed from his sight, soon ceased to vex his memory. He had not (for his sight was sufficiently acute) misinterpreted the look that he had seen in his daughter's eyes when she bade that young man farewell; but he did not believe that any great harm had been done, because he did not wish to believe it, and for the same reason he dismissed from his mind the unpleasant idea that his son, after espousing an heiress, could so far play the idiot as to live apart from her.

A day or two later he left for London to attend a Cabinet Council—Sir Robert generally contrived to have some good excuse for performing his journeys without encumbrances—and at the

end of a week he was followed by Lady Luttrell, Madeline, and the remainder of the somewhat unwieldy establishment. Lady Luttrell's ideas of economy fell short of the heroic measure of dispensing with saloon-carriages, and that, no doubt, was why she failed to notice any of her fellow-passengers from Paris until she had stepped on board the Channel boat. But no sooner had she crossed the gangway than she became aware of a tall lady, with a quantity of fair, rather untidy hair, who was scrutinising her doubtfully through a double eyeglass and who held by the hand a little pale-faced girl of somewhat similar features and colouring. Lady Luttrell plunged at her with a cry of affectionate recognition.

'Dearest Clarissa!—how extraordinary that we should meet like this! We thought we should be several days in advance of you; but of course you will find everything ready for your reception in Grosvenor Place. And is this my darling little Netta? Dear child! She looks rather white; but English air will soon bring the roses to her cheeks. Come and sit down and tell me all about it. Is it going to be rough, do you think? Shall we be sick?'

Clarissa responded to the caresses bestowed upon her with a good grace, but without effusion. She had altered a little in appearance and a good deal in manner. She was attended by two servants, to whom she gave her orders in a quiet, authoritative tone; she was perfectly self-possessed and had the air of being slightly preoccupied, though anxious to do and say what was polite.

'I am afraid it will be rather rough,' she said, in answer to one of her mother-in-law's queries; 'but that makes no difference to Netta or me; we are both such good sailors. It is so kind of you to wish us to stay with you; but of course I must go first to my uncle, who is quite alone, now that poor Aunt Susan is dead.'

'Yes, indeed!—her death was a great blow to him, and—to us all,' said Lady Luttrell, who had not seen the late Mrs. Dent half-a-dozen times in her life and had a very indistinct recollection of the deceased lady. 'But you must come to us when you end your visit to him.'

'Oh, I think not, many thanks,' Clarissa answered. 'I shall have to begin looking out at once for a furnished house—or perhaps an unfurnished one. One wants to get settled as soon as possible.'

Lady Luttrell looked puzzled; it was indispensable that she should look a little more puzzled than she felt. 'Does Guy think of leaving the service?' she inquired. 'He is such a bad correspondent that one never knows what his plans are; but I understood that he was coming home to join the *dépôt*, and the *dépôt* is at Kendal, is it not?'

Clarissa was gazing abstractedly through her glasses at the pier-heads, between which the steamer was passing. 'I beg your pardon,' said she. 'The *dépôt*?—oh, yes, I think it is at Kendal, or some such place.'

She either did not see or did not choose to see the notes of interrogation and exclamation addressed to her by Lady Luttrell's eyes; she turned her head to look at the white caps outside, which were chasing one another merrily before a brisk westerly breeze, and then—

'Have you a private cabin?' she asked. 'If not, please make use of mine; I so very much prefer to stay out on deck.'

Lady Luttrell had a private cabin, and several profound curtsies on the part of the steamer led her to seek its seclusion with ignominious haste. Madeline, who had not sailed the stormy seas outside Hacombe Bay for nothing, remained with her sister-in-law, and the latter at once took her by the hand, exclaiming in an altogether different tone of voice, 'How good it is to see you again!'

The friendship which had subsisted between these two young women before one of them had become a young woman had suffered no diminution through absence. They had corresponded regularly, and if Madeline did not know quite all that there was to know about Clarissa, she knew a good deal more than other people did. But such information as she possessed was not, it seemed, to be added to on that occasion; for Clarissa would answer no questions.

'I am not interesting,' she declared; 'my story has been told—don't all stories end with a marriage?—whereas yours is still hidden in the mists of the future. Do you know, Madeline, that you are perfectly beautiful? But of course you know it, and I shall not make you vain by telling you so. How many others have told you so?—or is there only one other worth mentioning? That is what I want to hear.'

Now, Raoul de Malglaise had certainly never addressed so impertinent a remark to Miss Luttrell, so that there was no

occasion to mention him; nor indeed had the girl had so many admirers but that she could emerge without embarrassment from the rather searching cross-examination to which she was forthwith subjected. Yet, long before the *Victoria* had ceased executing capers and had been brought up alongside of the Admiralty Pier at Dover, Clarissa had divined that there was somebody who had succeeded in touching her sister-in-law's heart, and that he was a Frenchman.

'I do not trust foreigners,' she remarked judicially (as though she had had an exhaustive experience of them and their habits), 'and I am afraid there are very few Englishmen who can be trusted either. If there are any, they should perhaps be found within the fold of your Church, which is said to be strict in certain respects. But I hope, Madeline, you will never marry anybody until you know thoroughly well who and what he is. It is better a thousand times to live and die single than to take the leap in the dark which most girls take.'

'Are you speaking of yourself?' Madeline ventured to inquire.

'Oh, no; I am only one of a multitude, living and dead. For centuries it has gone on—this abominable injustice of upholding one law for women and another for men; but now at last people's consciences are beginning to be stirred. The whole system must be changed—and will be changed.'

She would, no doubt, have been good enough to explain what the system was and who was going to change it, if her attention had not been drawn off by her little girl, who plucked at her skirts to point to the white cliffs of England, and who wanted to know whether 'Father' would be waiting for them on the pier.

'Father' was not, and could not be, there; but Mr. Dent was, and Lady Luttrell, emerging from her cabin, pallid and dishevelled, was grateful for the forethought which had prompted that excellent man to secure a reserved carriage on her behalf. He did not himself enter it, having retained another compartment for Clarissa, whom he had travelled down from London to meet; but he made himself very useful in fetching cups of tea, and he declared that he was only too glad to be permitted to act as a substitute for Sir Robert.

'I was to tell you from the right honourable gentleman,' said he, 'that he is chained by the leg to the Treasury bench, and that in all probability you will have to eat your dinner without him to-night. As for me, I have obtained leave of absence on the

plea of urgent private affairs. It isn't every day, you see, that one's nearest relations arrive from the other side of the world.'

'No, indeed!—and dear Clarissa is looking so well, isn't she?' murmured Lady Luttrell, settling herself among her cushions. 'We quite hoped that she would take up her quarters with us; but she thought you had the first claim, and, as I tell her, she must come to Grosvenor Place as soon as you are tired of her. At the present moment I don't feel capable of enjoying *anybody's* society. We have had a perfectly frightful passage, and I have died a hundred deaths since we left Calais!'

Lady Luttrell, who, in the intervals of sea-sickness, had dwelt with serious uneasiness upon sundry remarks which her daughter-in-law had let fall, was greatly relieved by Mr. Dent's friendly language and attentions. If there had been anything really amiss, he must have known of it and must have shown that he felt the situation to be an awkward one, she thought.

But in truth he knew no more, or only a very little more, than she did. Some surmises he had, indeed, formed from the tone of his niece's recent letters and from the circumstance that she had decided to travel home apart from her husband; but it was, of course, natural enough that, since she could afford to travel comfortably, she should object to such accommodation as is obtainable by ladies on board a troopship, and it was possible that Guy had found himself unable to accompany her. For the rest, he was not much disposed to put questions. He was thankful that the silence and loneliness of his big empty house were about to be broken in upon for a season; he was charmed with the child, who made friends with him at once, and he knew very well that when a woman has anything to relate, she needs no pressure or encouragement to induce her to relate it.

The journey to London, therefore, through the pleasant county of Kent—just then bright with the incipient verdure of a fresh year—was accomplished without any allusion to such topics as Clarissa had broached upon the deck of the Channel boat. Netta, staring out of the window at scenes altogether novel to her, almost monopolised the conversation, and if her remarks were not always intelligible to Mr. Dent, he pretended that they were, while his replies appeared to be found satisfactory. Some reference also had to be made to Mrs. Dent's last illness and death, as to which Clarissa expressed herself sympathetically. She had scarcely known her aunt; he could not expect her to say more than she

did, and was grateful to her for saying as much. But what seemed a trifle ominous was that, although she talked a good deal about Ceylon, her husband's name never once passed her lips.

It was not until the evening, after an affectionate leave had been taken of the Luttrells, and Portland Place had been reached, and the uncle and niece were sitting together over their dessert in the dining-room, that Clarissa cleared her voice and said, with a certain air of determination :

'Now, Uncle Tom, I think I ought to tell you what my plans are.'

'I shall be very glad to hear them,' answered Mr. Dent.

'Well, that is as may be; but at any rate it is necessary for you to hear them, and I am sure that when you have heard all, you will admit that they are not unreasonable.'

Mr. Dent took his chin between his finger and thumb and gazed at her fixedly, with a slight smile upon his lips. 'I trust,' said he, 'that your confidence will not be misplaced, my dear. However, please go on; I am listening.'

*(To be continued.)*

*FLORIDA IN WINTER.*

PEOPLE do not seem to go to Florida nowadays to grow oranges, and glide into affluence gradually while caressed by the southern sun. It is, in fact, too gradual a glide, especially if you start with pips, which require seven years before they give you oranges. Besides, it is not such smooth sailing at that. Now and then comes a biting frost, with its sequel of 'Væ victis.' For my part, I love a frosty morning in Florida, with its rich, smoky red eastern sky, against which the green of the trees has so strong and incongruous an effect. But there is too much swearing afterwards for the peace of mind of a virtuous and sympathetic person. Nice little groves in full bearing may, it is said, be picked up cheap after one of these calamitous nights. It is, however, much like buying shares in a bank that has just closed its doors.

Only the most patient, hardened, and impecunious of emigrants can stand orange-growing in Florida. True, they are lured on by the prospect of market-gardening in the meantime. Early strawberries, new potatoes, and so forth sell well in the north. But so many other parts of the western hemisphere are at the same game, and the commission agents are so sharp, that profits never seem to come nigh expectation. And all the time the newcomers are blackening under the Florida sun, enjoying little fevers (quite harmless, they are told), settling down as best they may to the society of the voluble mosquitoes, and realising only too solidly that there are disappointments and privations enough to be suffered even in this belauded land of perpetual sunshine. The pursuit of a competence is, in fact, no easier in Florida than elsewhere.

On the other side of the Atlantic they have latterly come to call the State the American Riviera. This is a much more sensible view to take of the peninsula. It is a spot to run down to by parlour car, or by one of the luxurious coast steamers from Boston and New York. Once in Jacksonville, there are grandiose hotels, with supercilious waiters, and tariffs such as a millionaire may be supposed to love. And, as touching the food, there seems no end to the hotel meals, nor to the appetite begotten of the Florida



air, warm and moist though it is. You hear the best of music in these pleasure houses, as you lie extended on a straw chair in the verandah, watching the parade up and down of the millionaires, their wives and desirable daughters, and smoking a Key West or something better. The conversation may be as lively or as somnolent as you please. You have but to pick and choose among the guests; from the keen-eyed, chin-bearded gentry of the predaceous kind who buttonhole you on the subject of properties for sale, to the pale-faced girls, in valuable frocks, who reckon they're down here because they can't endure the northern winter. These last, however, are not much to the front. Florida, as a health resort, is rather risky, what with its evening mists and its unconscionable changes of temperature. Christmas Day may yield a thermometer of 80° in the shade at noon, and in the night you may get a film of ice outside. No wonder there are so many doctors settled in the State (at from five dollars a visit), and in the sandy cemeteries so many tombstones, half hidden by climbing and creeping plants, commemorating invalids to whom the land of oranges proved a sad fraud.

In the Jacksonville house where I abode was a fat, lustrous little black damsel, whose duty it was to sweep the spiders and things from my bedroom. She was a merry grig of a girl, with four or five rings on her fingers, clinking gold concerns in her ears, and a marvellous taste for the loud in colours. Of course, she didn't sleep in the house. Being a black, she was regarded by her white mistress as an impossible resident. But that didn't distress her. 'Oh, sir,' she said, with a fascinating simper, when I asked her (injudiciously, I dare say) how she spent her evenings: 'I go home and sew and chat and laugh, and then I go to bed till work time again.' I told her she could nohow pass her time better. Whereupon, beamingly, she confided to me something about her circumstances. Her personal property included a wooden house, which had cost her four hundred dollars, and from which she drew a rental of sixty dollars a year. She had also saved half enough for another house of the same kind. The latter was to be her own home when a certain dusky male came from Louisiana to claim her.

From other accounts, also, I formed the opinion that house building is a better investment in Florida than oranges. In divers snug nooks by the St. John's River, as well as in the heart of the pine forests and on the margins of alligator-haunted lakes,

I found neat little green-shuttered bungalows that brought in nice incomes to their proprietor. The latter had but to advertise them tastily in the northern papers (this sort of thing: 'Magnolia Cottage, a Home from Home: Boarders, ladies and gentlemen, at eight dollars weekly') to get plenty of custom in the winter touring months. There is to the visitor a keen charm of the unexpected in being able in mid-January to swing lazily in a hammock slung in the open, with great scarlet banana blossoms a yard or two away, and at sundown to do battle with mosquitoes and sandflies, while watching the stars twinkling above the tops of the green pines.

The society in these out-of-the-way Florida boarding houses about Christmas time is apt to be diverting. There are oldsters of both sexes, with different accents and ejaculations, from Chicago, Illinois, Maine, &c. The men are mostly of the kind who have made their moderate pile, and can afford to spend their declining years in cultivating the fine arts of comfort. The ladies do tatting and similar work, and keep discreet eyes on their giddy daughters, who have a wild way of finding out the well-to-do young planters in the neighbourhood, and going to orange-pickings and sugar-crushings with them. The buggy-rides home in the dark which these exciting adventures exact are experiences that quite justify the mammas in feeling anxious. Add to this somewhat conventional grouping a stray Briton, with a gun and a bank draft; an itinerant land agent, with a printed schedule of orange groves and city lots for sale; a doctor down south for his health, and not quite satisfied with the result; a minister, who has already preached himself half down the State; and a couple of intellectual spinsters, and you may conceive there will be a hum even in the heart of the Florida woods.

At one white bungalow by the white sands of a lake I encountered an English lord. The house was infinitely fluttered by such a guest. There were at times gatherings of open-mouthed darkies among the pine-trunks of the adjacent wood to watch for a sight of his lordship. And great was their disappointment when they had to confess to each other that the young gentleman with a gun on his shoulder 'didn't differ nohow from a common pusson.'

In another sense also the lord defeated anticipation. He quite baffled the land agents and attorneys who buzzed about him with maps. They were so pressing with their invitations to

him to give them a day here and a day there on their respective properties that he found it easier to say 'Yes' and have done with it, than 'No' a score of times to no purpose. They feasted him, and put him in the way of deer and panther. In short, he enjoyed himself very much. But he bought not a single acre of their little properties.

I wish I had been equally wise. But what is an ordinary man of no particular business parts to do when he is the honoured guest of a colonel, with three enchanting girls always eager to row him on the lake or be rowed by him? A colonel with a great idea of table luxuries and of unstinted hospitality, and whose remarks anent landed estate are offered in a casual kind of way, implying that he will feel 'real vexed' if his guest does not profit by the extraordinary chances open to him. My visit to this good colonel made me owner of half an island. A year afterwards the island had gone down singularly in value, and when at length I got rid of it, I made out that I had paid about fifty dollars a day for my pleasure and accommodation at the colonel's bungalow.

One evening Gainesville way taught me more on this subject. I had been in a buggy among trees and swamp most of the day, and got to a clearing, with a mournful, dirty-looking house in the midst, when the sun was sinking theatrically at the back of the forest. The house did not claim to be an hotel, but they could put me up in it; the owner came in by-and-by with a small deer on his shoulders, and there was plenty of duck-stew in a saucepan. My darky camped out amid the pines, where his fire made a picturesque spot in the gloom. Near him were two caravans. They held the goods and chattels of a couple of families from Iowa. These innocents had fallen victims to an advertisement. The land they had come to was thickly speckled with the charred stumps of great pines. They had understood it to be as manageable as so much prairie. 'I wish we were right back again, that I do,' said one of the wives. They were all forgathering in the house where I was lodged. But my host gave them no comfort. 'Mr. — (the land agent who had vexed them) would,' he said, 'settle up hell if the devil gave him a chance, and that's a fact.' The husband of the wife remarked with emphasis that he deserved to have that chance at once.

This reminds me that at Tampa I ploughed through the white sand to a Baptist chapel one Sunday, and heard the minister announce as the topic of his morning sermon, 'Heaven, or how to

be happy,' while the evening text was, 'Hell, or how to get along in the world.' The same gentleman introduced a brother minister into his petition with these words: 'Bless he that is about to pray for us, O Lord!' This was the week before Christmas, with a blinding dazzle and intense heat from the omnipresent sand, and girls flicking peacocks' feathers over the heads of visitors at dinner to keep off the flies. Moreover, in spite of the precaution of setting the legs of the dinner-table in little saucers of water, the cloth swarmed with vicious great ants. My bedroom here was so conveniently set that I had but to put my hand from the window to pluck the best of russet-skinned oranges, dead ripe. How delicious these Florida oranges are when fresh gathered no one may realise without journeying to Florida. They alone atone for much.

At one young settlement well down south I found them all mourning the sudden loss of their pioneer. He lay in his coffin in the hotel where I stopped—at two dollars a day. The young settlement had achieved a special 'In memoriam' edition of its very small weekly newspaper—at five cents; and the settlers were in knots under the orange trees of the hotel garden, commenting on the blow they had suffered and the happy way in which it was described by their editor. This is how the latter gentleman had got his pen to work: 'It is hard to realise that the pallid hand of the relentless grim monster, Death, has been laid with withering effect upon him who, home and abroad, was so universally respected,' &c.

One of the attractions of this particular settlement struck me greatly. It indicated so much smartness and tact. There was a fair-sized drapery and millinery store with a large window from which three lamentable female dummies ogled the world at large in what were supposed to be the latest fashions in frocks. The local youths (and even others from a distance, who, I believe, drove in for this sole purpose) were wont to assemble at this window, chewing, smoking, and passing remarks upon the wooden damsels. Their remarks seemed of the highly appreciative kind. Real flesh and blood marriageable maidens were not to be had in the neighbourhood. The dummies, therefore, played a useful part in keeping the youths lively with suggestive hopes and fancies.

From this place I drove, at special instigation, twenty miles south through the forest to a city that had been extensively boomed in Jacksonville. In Florida's capital I had made the acquaintance of the city's founder. The language in which he de-

scribed the place was more than glowing. If I desired health, sport, society, beautiful scenery, and the best of orange-land, I could not, he vowed, do better than buy a block in this city. The gentleman was most courteous, pushed his cigar case towards me whenever we met, was evidently an artist in 'drinks,' and seemed exceedingly prosperous. But he was somewhat averse to my viewing the city before investing; his shoulder-shrugs when I spoke to this effect betokened deep compassion for my sceptical soul. He even hinted that at the end of the fortnight of travel that would ensue ere I reached his city there might not be a yard of it left for sale.

I came to that city and laughed. Then I compared it with the fine plan I had been given in Jacksonville. On paper it was girdled by a peaceful river from which charming little lakes with winsome names extruded themselves into the suburbs. On paper it was beautifully laid out in streets, cutting each other at right angles; all named—those from east to west borrowing their nomenclature from natural objects, those from north to south memorialising famous Americans. Public buildings were indicated. Thus the College Grounds were bounded by Lime Street, Lemon Street, Disston Avenue, and Levis Avenue. But all the city consisted so far of two houses, one an hotel. The streets were still only primeval forest, some of the pines being very stout. As for the river, it was not nice to look at, being the colour of a Black Country canal; while the lakes were unmitigated little swamps, thickly studded with tall saw grass, than which nothing is better able to draw blood and tear clothes to pieces.

However, I stayed a day or two at that hotel for the fun of the thing. There was shooting in it one evening. I was also shown a paragraph that was going post haste to Jacksonville to tell of the numerous inquiries about the city's landed estate that were being made on the spot. I myself was one inquirer alluded to; another was a lean Yankee who had come over from a neighbouring settlement, exclaimed 'Good sakes!' and gone back at once, after getting an affirmative to his question if this was the city he had come to see; a third was the tipsy individual who had drawn his revolver under the influence of drink, and fired it point-blank at the bar tender. The paragraph went on to say that 'new streets are rapidly being laid out.' A single dorky was in fact lazily blazing the pines yet farther into the forest. The chips created by his axe blows meant Pineapple Street.

The pioneer conscience is certainly a thing apart. It is the characteristic of no one nation, but of all nations in the endeavour to extend their bounds. One may reasonably conjecture that the most honest of men, if transmuted into land agents in a country like Florida, will straightway, or in a year or two, become so accomplished that they will lie like Munchausen without feeling a qualm.

Of all Florida's cities, St. Augustine is the most fashionable in winter and the most piquant. The chief hotel, the Ponce de Leon, is marvellously luxurious. I wonder what the filibustering Spaniard whose name it bears would think of it if he could be resuscitated from his Florida grave. He did not find Florida at all a comfortable place, and an Indian arrow soon sent him elsewhere. That was early in the sixteenth century. Subsequently St. Augustine became a sturdy settlement, with a fort strong enough to baulk the average Indian brave. The fort still rears its walls on the Matanzas river, with the Atlantic breakers curling white on the sands beyond. It is supposed to be the best specimen of an old citadel in the western hemisphere; and that Vauban himself had something to do with its design. Nowadays, though, it is given up altogether to peaceful pursuits. The two or three popinjay soldiers who stroll about its precincts are there more for the sake of the colour they yield than aught else. At least, so the excursionists who come hither from Jacksonville on Sundays seem to think. For its historical suggestiveness and romantic possibilities (when there is a moon and suitable escort), Fort Marion is also very dear to the young ladies at the Ponce de Leon. Its ramparts afford quite as good walks as the palm-shaded garden of the hotel.

It is interesting to find that British influence is still emphasised a little in St. Augustine. When we held Florida we also held the island of Minorca. It occurred to us that some of the Spaniards of Minorca might do well if they were expatriated to Florida. The idea was carried out. The result is manifest to this day in the Minorquins of St. Augustine, whom some, rather unkindly, call 'Turnbull niggers'—Mr. Turnbull being our Minister at Madrid when the transportations were arranged. I am afraid the Minorquins here are not much esteemed. They are reckoned a bastard lot, thanks to their intermarriage with the negroes; and, on the other hand, they have still enough of the hot blood of Spain in them to resent very strenuously any imputations

about their parentage. I saw some of them lolling in hammocks under their verandahs. They were readily separable from the ordinary Anglo-Saxon American. I must say, though, that the damsels of the community, in this attitude, showed very neat ankles, and that their dark eyes, discovered through the smoke of their cigarettes and environed by bright flowers, were not without charm. Furthermore, I lunched in the house of a Minorquin and was astonished to be indulged with beef, pork, potatoes, beans, rice, custard, ginger-pudding, macaroons, and two or three other things—all for a quarter. The napkin that accompanied the miscellaneous collection of viands was also quite clean.

Christmas Day I spent soberly in Jacksonville, basking in the sunshine that came out of the thick morning mist. There was wild turkey and tinned plum-pudding to remind me of transatlantic traditions. I had come down stream from Palatka the previous day to enjoy as homely an atmosphere as I could obtain, and had passed a night on the ship's deck to boot. The crush for cabin berths on that steamer was hardly credible. The best I could do was to get hold of a mattress and drag it for'ard alongside someone else's mattress. I do not recommend this sort of adventuring in Florida in winter, but one must take things as they come. The night was altogether too cold for sleeping in the open, and when the red sun sailed up from the forest on the river's banks some of us had very blue noses. Considerable hoarseness was also prevalent; for which it is said a sour orange is the best known remedy. Jacksonville's warm welcome, however, went far to make us forget this discomfort. The postmen were delivering the Christmas letters with Christmas smiles and a Christmas card for each householder, the personal present and composition of the letter-carrier himself.

I fancy the darkies enjoy Christmas even more than their white brethren. The scenes in and about their shanties were almost riotously merry; while their youngsters sucked sugar-cane and oranges what time they were not singing comic songs of recognised celebrity. Our own particular black damsel did not honour us at all with her presence this day; her young man was over from Louisiana, and she guessed while he was about he would want her. But the dear warm-hearted soul did not forget us, for all her private felicity. Among the presents she had devised and bought for us was one for me—a stuffed alligator of very tender years. Nor was she so eager as you might expect to receive

a present in return. 'I'm sure I never thought of such a thing,' she protested in her laughing way ere she took what the gods offered her. There were a pretty few police cases between Christmas and the New Year, originated by the dusky inhabitants of Jacksonville.

But with the New Year these children of Ham were able, by special devotional exercises, to start fair again. I went to one of their services for the purpose, and was suitably impressed. A dozen or so of them (of both sexes) were violently moved by the spirit to confess in public their various peccadilloes of the past year. They got exceedingly warm over it, and made the building malodorous. They shouted and gesticulated and blamed the devil most unfairly, calling him several impolite names. The pastor presided over this odd scene, and seemed much pleased. Now and then, though, he said he thought Mr. A. or Miss B. was too excited. The service ended with a distribution of little cubes of baker's bread, which the congregation exchanged with each other in tiny pinches. I understand that this was equivalent to a general absolution. Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith, for example, having eaten a crumb of each other's bread, were bound to forget each other's misdeeds in so far as they had personal bearing. They both formed hereby the most earnest resolutions as to good conduct in the future.

It is somewhat the vogue with the winter visitor in Florida to scorn the darkies, or regard them merely as hewers of wood and drivers of buggies. This attitude is, methinks, a mistaken one. But for these simple and tolerably hard-working souls, the American Riviera as a winter resort would be considerably less interesting and amusing than it is.



## THE PRINCIPLES OF MISS MEHITABEL.

### I.

IT was at Genoa that we first fell in with the two Miss Tuckers.

The merest chance of travel had brought us to the same hotel in the first instance, but the two sisters had looked so forlorn, and appeared so ludicrously, even pathetically, out of place amongst the other hotel inmates, that some charitable person had suggested they should be invited to join our party in seeing the palaces and pictures of that wonderful city.

The Miss Tuckers knew no Italian, and so accepted the offer with gratitude, tempered, in Miss Mehitabel's case, with dignified reserve.

Miss Mehitabel Tucker was the elder sister. She was gaunt and thin, and gave one the impression of being mostly bones and nerves, while from under her iron-grey brows her keen grey eyes looked out as steadily, not to say sternly, on the world at large as those of any of her Puritan ancestors could have done in bygone days.

It was simply from Miss Mehitabel's expression that we settled at once that the new arrivals must have had Puritan ancestors, even before we learnt that the two sisters came from New England.

Nor were we wrong in our surmise, for a belief that a far-removed Tucker had come over in the *Mayflower* was, we subsequently found, the most cherished pride of both sisters.

Miss Aurelia was, however, altogether different to Miss Mehitabel. She could not have been much younger than her sister, and after fifty a few years more or less are of slight importance, save to their owner; but whereas Miss Mehitabel had aged, and in aging had hardened, Miss Aurelia had faded; and whereas her elder sister's strongly marked features could never have been otherwise than plain, she must have been decidedly pretty. Her face was even now attractive, with its delicate pointed nose and sensitive lips, from which all youth had long since vanished.

Both sisters were somewhat silent—Miss Mehitabel from natural reserve, and Aurelia from shyness. For Aurelia was shy as any unfledged schoolgirl, and Miss Mehitabel treated her almost as such, ordering all her goings with kindly imperiousness, and speaking of her invariably as 'my little sister'—a phrase that, looking at

Aurelia's grey hairs, struck us as odd. On the other hand, Miss Aurelia was evidently the one soft spot in her sister's heart. The very expression of Miss Mehitabel's face and the tone of her voice softened when she was in question. There was something at once laughable and pathetic in seeing these two lonely women so far from their natural surroundings, and yet so evidently all in all to each other; but beyond this we knew nothing of their history or peculiarities. The next day we went on a sight-seeing expedition through the town. We examined the filigree work that looked like lace at the jeweller's, and the preserved fruit that simulated jewels at the confectioner's, with equal interest, while admiring the picturesqueness and abusing the dirt of the narrow streets in duly orthodox fashion.

A sudden April shower burst upon us as we at length mounted the uneven steps that led up to the church of the Annunziata. The big raindrops splashing on the grey stone pavement caused us all to hurry into the shelter of the porch.

Below in the triangular Piazza umbrellas were being hastily raised—umbrellas red and blue, russet, orange, and green, all uncompromising bright colours, not like our dull-hued and prosaic umbrellas in England—so that in a few moments the open space before us was transformed into a gay piece of moving patchwork, for the rain was heavy. There was a pause while the old cicerone was collecting the party. Yes, we were all there, all but one.

'Where is Miss Mehitabel?' said some one.

'I am here,' came the answer from outside the porch, 'but I am not coming in, thank you. I shall stay here.'

'In the rain?'

'I have an umbrella.'

'But you will be tired waiting.'

'Thank you, but I have a camp stool.'

There was a little movement of surprise as Miss Mehitabel slowly unfolded a minute camp stool and sat down, and then proceeded with even greater deliberation to unfurl her dark brown umbrella.

Miss Aurelia bit her lip and coloured like a girl. She moved towards the elder woman, and began to expostulate in a low voice. From my place it was impossible not to hear the following colloquy:

'But just this once, Mehitabel, just this once. Only to look round,' she pleaded wistfully.

'No, Relia, you know how I feel about it all. Don't ask me.'

‘But there could be no harm in looking round.’

‘Not for you, perhaps, but for me there would be.’

‘But you don’t mind my going?’

‘No, you can please yourself. Folk are different. Go ’long right away.’

‘And leave you here! Oh, Mehitabel!’ And there were almost tears in the younger woman’s voice.

Some of the party, tired of waiting, had gone in.

‘Go on,’ said Miss Mehitabel; ‘just see, you are keeping every one else waiting.’

But still Aurelia hesitated.

‘I believe I’d just as lief miss seeing it altogether as leave you here.’

‘Nonsense, why should you miss it? The guide books say it’s mighty fine inside. It must be, if it’s to make up for its tumble-down looks. Besides’—as if the statement were a conclusive argument—‘you remember our consul at Marseilles said you were to see it if you came here, and he ought to know. Now, don’t be foolish, but go in right away.’

Thus exhorted, Miss Aurelia reluctantly followed us into the church, but her face was downcast, and it is to be doubted if, for the first few minutes, she took any pleasure in what she saw there. Her thoughts were evidently still with her absent sister, and she cast continual glances of regret behind her.

The interior of the Annunziata is not in good taste. It is, indeed, probably the most costly specimen of what can be achieved to the contrary in existence, in spite of its fine paintings; but, this once granted, there remains a certain splendour in the very profusion of its ornamentation and gilding that never fails to appeal to an uncultivated eye.

Little by little, as the wealth of colour and detail dawned on Miss Aurelia, her face brightened.

She looked up from the massive red marble columns to the gilded and painted roof with childish awe.

‘It’s beautiful—beautiful!’ I heard her murmur softly to herself. ‘I never saw anything like it. If only Mehitabel could have seen it.’ But when we reached the east end of the church, where the lofty cupola rises above the glittering golden sheen of the high altar, she could only gaze and say nothing.

The rain must have ceased, for a ray of sunlight shot suddenly through the upper windows of the dome and lit up the painted

ceiling, where smiling saints and angels floated among clouds. It lent to them a rosy and unearthly glow.

Miss Aurelia looked at them as though spellbound.

Some one softly touched her arm.

‘Are you not coming? We are going on now to the sacristy.’

She shook her head gently, but she never moved, and we left her still gazing upwards at the angels.

When we came back a short time afterwards she was still standing where we had left her, but a vague sweet smile was on her face, as if she had in very truth had a glimpse of a heaven beyond. The vague smile still lingered round her mouth when we emerged into the open daylight.

The rain had freshened the air, and it smelt cool and sweet after the heavy incense-laden atmosphere within. For the time being even the perennial smell of garlic was in abeyance.

Miss Mehitabel was still patiently sitting by the threshold, but she had put down her umbrella and was busy sorting a packet of small leaflets in her lap. She greeted Aurelia with an indulgent smile, much as a mother would look at a little child.

‘Well, Relia did you like it?’ she asked.

‘It was beautiful—if only you had been with me,’ her sister began in a low voice of reproach.

‘No, Aurelia, why, you know I can’t. Idolatry doesn’t suit me.’

‘But just to see it all. I guess that is not idolatry exactly—and when the pictures were so beautiful. They seemed to make heaven quite real.’

Miss Mehitabel gave a disdainful sniff and opened her lips to speak, but thought better of it and closed them again.

‘After all,’ Miss Aurelia went on timidly, ‘these churches ain’t exactly heathen—they are a sort of Christian.’ But she spoke with hesitation and as if she doubted whether the fact would be admitted by her sister.

Miss Mehitabel shook her head as she gathered up her camp stool.

‘Bowin’s bowin, and a graven image a graven image any way you take it,’ she said curtly. ‘Besides, Relia, you’ve forgotten that I once did go into a Papist church to please you, and I didn’t go for nothing. You’re a good child, Relia, but I guess you’re a simple one, and I’ll reckon you’ll allow me, at my time of life, to believe my own eyes.’

And Aurelia, meekly silent, said no more, but prepared to follow her sister down the stone steps that led to the piazza.

‘Why, I declare if I hadn’t almost forgotten,’ exclaimed Miss Mehitabel, stopping short with a jerk, as we gained the narrow street.

‘What?’

‘The leaflet.’

‘Oh don’t, sister; the man won’t read it. ’Tisn’t likely he would.’

‘Why not, when it’s in Italian? Besides, that’s his duty, not mine. I shall go right back.’

‘I wouldn’t if I were you.’

There was real pain in Miss Aurelia’s tones, but Miss Mehitabel had already turned and was threading her way across the crowded piazza to the church door.

Her sister gazed after her with a rueful countenance.

‘I wish, I do wish, she wouldn’t. Isn’t it dreadful?’ she said, turning to me in her despair. ‘And it’s no use—I know it’s no use, even if they are Italian?’

‘What is it?’ I asked bluntly.

‘Those dreadful tracts,’ sighed Miss Aurelia; ‘I ought not to call them so, but indeed they are dreadful to me. They seem to spoil everything. You see it’s this way. Mehitabel is so good, so very, very good, and she thinks it her duty to give them to the people here, being Papists. She gives them always to the men at the church doors. She’d forgotten it this time—that’s why she went back. Sh—— Here she is,’ as Miss Mehitabel, flushed and panting, caught us up.

‘It’s all right,’ she whispered triumphantly to her sister, ‘I made him take it.’

But there was no reply. Miss Aurelia submissively turned her steps to rejoin the rest of the party, through the steep and narrow street that led towards the hotel.

## II.

VERY few tourists even now find their way to the old-world town of Le Puy, their experiences of Auvergne stopping short, as a rule, at Royat, Clermont-Ferrand, or the Mont d’Or, and yet one would have to travel far to find a more picturesque or remarkable spot in the whole of France.

Its very situation is supremely original, for the little town lies at one side of a huge green saucer, whence rise up on all sides cones of strangely shaped hills. They have nothing in common with ordinary mountain peaks. Vesuvius multiplied by the score and then seen through a kaleidoscope conveys, perhaps,

the best idea of their appearance, and in truth each mountain, be it larger or smaller, is nothing but the ancient crater of a long dead volcanic world. Now their sloping sides are overgrown with short, sweet grass, and only here and there masses of jagged rocks, huge pillars of black basalt, and gigantic heaps of fallen boulders are left as witnesses of the fiery chaos that once has been. Nor is the city itself less interesting. Two high, rocky crags rise up like needles in its midst, and round them the houses and many churches nestle. Below on the flatter ground are the public gardens, the large 'Place,' the museum, barracks, municipal buildings, and all the modern and conventional belongings of the ordinary French town, only to be distinguished from others of the same size by the many lace warehouses with English as well as French inscriptions visible thereon, for Le Puy is one of the centres of the modern lace trade, and sends thousands of yards of *torchon* and jetted laces yearly to England.

But the modern town, in spite of all this, is not in the least interesting, and to taste the charm of Le Puy one must climb up higher, through narrow evil-smelling streets and uneven passages, until one feels in another and an older age. One mounts up and up; in places the houses nearly meet overhead in a way that suggests the East, in places one has to climb up dirty steps, where the plump, rosy-faced women sit at the doorways and ply their bobbins, chattering and gossiping with each other as they weave their lace, until at length the striped black and white cathedral is reached, and we can stop to take breath.

The cathedral is not, however, the most curious sight in the town. There are convents, not in ones and twos, but literally by the dozen, for Le Puy is too far from the outer world to move with the times, and so remains to this day a kind of clerical stronghold against republican France.

On the loftiest of the tall crags near by is to be seen the gigantic bronze figure of Our Lady herself. She towers above the whole, and is at once the glory and adoration of all the simple dwellers therein. Made of the cannon taken in the Crimean war, she looks now peaceful and benign enough to belie her warlike origin, and with her Heavenly Child in her arms she embodies rather the symbol of universal motherhood than that of the victory she is supposed to typify.

She stands erect, smiling and calm, the strangest record of the later Empire days possibly to be found in France.

We knew Le Puy well, for we often visited it, having French friends living in the neighbourhood; and we always returned to it with pleasure.

The bright-eyed landlady of the Couronne d'Or was fond of boasting to us that we were not her only English clients. She had others among the rich lace manufacturers and their agents who came over to make their purchases regularly at the proper season, but, with these exceptions, I do not think she had ever known others of our nationality, and we were well content that it was thus, for to escape altogether from the ubiquitous English and American tourist was not the least of the attractions of Le Puy.

It was a brilliant and intensely hot July day when we arrived, and we strolled out into the little hotel garden in search of cooler air. The apricots were beginning to ripen, and shone like golden balls among the green leaves of the apricot trees overhead. The apricots of Le Puy are famous, and every little garden has some trees, not stiffly trained against brick walls as we know them at home, but real trees that stand alone as Nature intended.

There was a small clump of such trees at the end of the garden, and beneath them a shady garden seat that we knew of old; so we turned our steps that way.

To our disappointment it was already occupied by two ladies.

Something in the scantily cut grey skirts struck me as familiar.

The nearest raised her head as she heard our steps crunching over the gravel.

It was Miss Aurelia Tucker.

'Why, see, Mehitabel!' she exclaimed in joyful accents, 'why, if it isn't our English friends!' And she advanced to meet us, limping painfully over the few short steps that intervened.

'Sit down, Relia. Sit down directly, you'll make your foot bad again,' urged Miss Mehitabel in warning accents. 'She hurt her ankle, as you can see,' she explained after our first surprised greetings were over. 'Yes, she did it more than a week ago, at that queer old castle near here—Polly something——'

'Polignac,' supplied her sister. 'I twisted it over a big stone, but I guess it ain't so painful as it was, and the castle was beautiful.'

'I put Pond's Extract on it,' proceeded Miss Mehitabel; 'luckily I always carry my own drugs about with me. I mistrust these foreign ones. It's getting better now, but of course she's

got to be careful, and it's kept us here longer than we meant. We only meant to come here for a couple of days at most.'

'It's not often visited,' I replied. 'How did you chance to hear of it?'

'Well, I think it was our consul at Saint-Luc that told me about it—or was it the one at Lyons, Relia? I seem to forget.'

'Your consul?'

'Yes,' nodded Miss Mehitabel. "'Tisn't likely to be anyone else. That's our plan. We just go to every city where we know we have a consul. We go to his office and ask his advice. Find out, don't you see, from him what there is worth visiting in the town, and so on. It saves a lot of trouble, seeing we have no one with us; and I find we get on in the end quite as well as if we had one of those fine couriers some people have, to say nothing of the saving in expense. What's the use, I say, of paying for a consul unless it's to do odd jobs of the kind now and then, and help their fellow-citizens when they're in a strange land?'

I was silent. Miss Mehitabel had opened up new vistas as to a consul's responsibilities to my mind; but as she went on to tell me of all they had done and seen since we had last met, I began with this clue to comprehend the peculiar, not to say disconnected, nature of their wanderings more clearly.

They were not themselves responsible for their erratic nature, for they were dictated by the consul, in some cases even the clerk of the consulate, to which they chanced to apply. Nor was I, indeed, very certain if occasionally their official representative had not despatched the two Miss Tuckers with all available speed to some spot beyond the limits of his own sphere of influence. Miss Mehitabel's ideas of what might justly be expected from him in the way of attention were no doubt trying.

Of one individual she herself remarked drily:

'I guess I worried him so much to find that missing trunk of mine he got downright mad; but what was the good of a consul if he couldn't fix it up with the railway company for me? And so I told him right out.'

Looking at her stern old countenance, it was to be believed she did. Although she talked more than formerly, and seemed in an unusually expansive mood, she was not looking well. Her face was worn, and she had a bad cough, and at last, with a little shiver, she drew her shawl around her and went back into the house, leaving me alone with her sister.



Miss Aurelia drew her cane chair closer to me. She looked so pleased to see me that I could not but feel touched. She seemed to hail me as quite an old friend, although our former acquaintance had been of the slightest.

Now that her sister was out of hearing, she began to talk at once.

‘Yes, they had had a lovely time—at least she had, for Mehitabel, although she never complained, did not, she feared, really like Europe,’ and here she sighed. ‘But it had all been beautiful,’ she resumed, brightening, ‘and she did love Italy. She liked it much better than France, or even than England. Yes, of course they had begun by doing England—all Americans ought to begin with England first. Didn’t I think so? That was one of Mehitabel’s regular principles.’

And what had she liked best?

‘Ah, well, she guessed Naples and Pompeii, but unluckily Mehitabel had not cared for either; in fact, she allowed she was disappointed, for Vesuvius did not look at all like the pictures on the match boxes. It had been all dull grey, very much like the hills here, only not so pretty, and there had unluckily been no eruption while they were there, which was so tiresome. Yes, Mehitabel had been disappointed in Pompeii too. The houses were so small, and being without roofs made them quite different to what she was led to expect.’

‘Rome?’

‘No, not Rome,’ and here Miss Aurelia sighed again and lowered her voice. ‘Had I forgotten Mehitabel’s principles? With principles like Mehitabel’s it was not likely they could go to Rome, and so they had come back to Leghorn by sea, as they had gone, and then on to Pisa. Mehitabel had been real pleased with the leaning tower. That, she said, was something like. She had even bought a little alabaster model for their parlour at home. I reckon I was real glad to see Mehitabel take pleasure in anything,’ Miss Aurelia went on in her gentle voice, which even its strong nasal inflection could not spoil, ‘for Mehitabel’s real unselfish, seeing that she doesn’t like Europe a mite better than she reckoned on all along. The victuals don’t suit her dyspepsia, nor yet the folk’s way her soul, and she misses her own meeting-house on Sunday.’

‘Why does she travel, then? Why, just out of kindness to me, for she knew I was all along crazy to see Europe, and she has

always given me everything I wanted—always—or nearly always,’ and Miss Aurelia’s truthful tones hesitated as she made the qualification, ‘unless, of course, it was against her principles. Where Mehitabel’s principles are concerned it seems as if she couldn’t give in, like about Rome. Not that it is not quite right to keep to one’s principles,’ added Miss Aurelia hastily, as though afraid she had been unwittingly disloyal to her absent sister. ‘Mehitabel has always had the finest notion of principles. ’Tisn’t in reason she could change now.’ Was it only fancy that there was a tinge of regret in her voice?

The *table d’hôte* bell here rang noisily, and we turned towards the dining-room, Miss Aurelia limping perceptibly as she crossed the narrow strip of garden.

Her sister’s place was vacant, and the plump waiter said that a message had been sent downstairs to the effect that she was not coming to dinner as she had a headache.

Miss Aurelia started up. She was as disturbed at the news as if it had been some great calamity. ‘I never knew Mehitabel do such a thing before,’ she exclaimed nervously. ‘What can be amiss with her? I must go and see.’ And had we not dissuaded her she would then and there have mounted the many stairs that led to their room; as it was, she swallowed her food hastily, and left us before the dinner was half completed.

### III.

WE did not see her again until the following day, when we met her clinging wretchedly to the staircase rail on her way to the bureau.

One had only to glance at her miserable white face to know that her sister was no better.

‘Oh, dear!’ she gasped when I approached her, ‘Mehitabel is real sick. I’m just coming down to ask about a doctor. A French doctor—just fancy!’ She uttered the words as if his nationality was the culminating stroke of an evil fate. ‘And there’s no consul here, nor folks I know, nor—nor—anything,’ she concluded tearfully.

‘But is your sister really so ill?’

‘Why, yes; she’s sick enough. You can come and look at her if you feel like it. She’s far too sick to mind,’ she added encouragingly, as I hung back.

Miss Mehitabel was evidently very ill. There could be no doubt on that score. She lay flat on the high white bed, and her breath came painfully.

Her eyes were bright, but she did not seem to notice us much, and from time to time she muttered incoherent sentences to herself.

'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' sobbed Miss Aurelia pitifully, 'whatever shall I do? I never had her sick before. She was always the one that tended other folk. She nursed me scores of times, and now she's sick herself and there's no one to see after her. It does seem hard. Yes, I sat up with her all last night, but there—I didn't rightly know what I ought to do, and I felt frightened, dreadfully frightened. Oh, dear! I hope that doctor will come soon, even if he is French.'

When he did come he did not give us much comfort. Miss Mehitabel was very ill. 'She ought to have a proper nurse,' he urged, after he had realised that poor Aurelia, the more flurried from her unwonted excursion into French, was her only belonging.

'A nurse,' repeated Aurelia dejectedly, but when a Sister from one of the convents near by was suggested she grew indignant. 'Mehitabel would grow crazy at the mere idea. Mehitabel could not endure nuns. She thought they were all foolish if they weren't wicked, and convents went clean against her principles. I don't mind them so much myself,' faltered Miss Aurelia, 'but I know Mehitabel would never, never forgive me if I took a nun into her room. No, I must just go to Saint-Luc and see if our consul there cannot fix it for me. 'Tisn't so far by rail. I calculate I can get back easily by nightfall, and maybe'—and here she looked at the landlady and myself with her appealing eyes—'maybe you would be so kind and look after Mehitabel while I'm gone?'

It was useless to argue with her, and she started off on her mission of inquiry. She returned late that night, more miserable, if possible, than before. She had, indeed, succeeded in seeing her consul, but he had only re-echoed the doctor's advice, and shown her, moreover, conclusively that the expense of procuring a nurse from Paris would be such as to put that idea out of the question for her slender purse.

'So there's no other way,' she said helplessly, the next morning. 'I must give in, and the doctor declares I'd better go to the convent myself and bring one back. He says there may

otherwise be some difficulty about it, seeing Mehitabel and I are heretics—according to the nuns' way of thinking. Did you ever hear the like? Mehitabel a heretic! Why it is downright dreadful to think of it; but the doctor's given me a letter! Oh yes—I can walk there quite well. It's close by, and I know the house—the big white house in the large garden, next to the tall pink one with the green shutters.'

She spoke quite steadily, and as though the shadow of her sick sister's dogged sternness had fallen on her along with her anxiety.

Then she turned to me hesitatingly, and said timidly, as of old, 'Would you mind very much just coming with me? I guess I should not ask you, but I never—never was in a convent before.'

I naturally did not mind. The sight of Miss Aurelia in her present unhappiness would have melted a heart of stone.

As we walked slowly towards the convent she talked incessantly, and gave me, quite unconsciously to herself, odd glimpses of her former life. A simple, narrow life, but with the one dominant note of Mehitabel running through it. Her parents had died when she was but a child, and her sister had brought her up and been mother and father to her in one.

She described to me the little homestead, and Mehitabel's skill in all housewifely arts.

'She never, never let me do a thing she could help. It was always Mehitabel who made the bread and saw to the biscuit and cakes, and she looked after the dairy herself. You should just taste her butter. No one at Golden Spring can beat Mehitabel's butter, and they reckon themselves pretty smart at buttermaking all round us. Mehitabel was downright proud of her dairy, and she had a right to be so. And then to think she gave it all up just for my sake, and my silly fancy to see Europe before I died. Oh, why did I ever want to leave home? No, she never cared to leave home. It was entirely my doing. You see,' continued Miss Aurelia confidentially, while a shamefaced blush rose to her faded cheek, 'it came about like this. When I was a young girl Mehitabel took for granted I should marry. She made up her mind so firmly that I should, that from the time I was seventeen she actually got all my outfit ready, and she put aside fifty dollars regularly every year towards my furnishing and bridal trip—bridal trips were coming in then, and Mehitabel always declared I should have one like the rest. She fixed it all up to

her mind—all but the man, and—and when it came to him’—and Miss Aurelia’s voice dropped—‘well, she never found one to her liking. I had plenty of beaux; I really was a pretty girl then,’ she said, with a pathetic little blending of childish vanity and regret. ‘It was so long ago you won’t think it conceited of me to say so; but there was, of course, some one whom—whom, well—whom perhaps——’ She paused, and then went on hastily: ‘But then he was poor. Mehitabel did not think him good enough; or, rather, he was all right but for the want of money, but his family was not. Maybe she was right enough, for you see we Tuckers had always held our heads high, and Mehitabel thought she had a right to be very particular for me. She isn’t a Tucker for nothing, and she takes after my father’s family.’

‘But I thought no one in America minded such things,’ I interposed.

‘Why, no more we do. We are all free and equal there, of course, only when it comes to one’s own folk, why——’

‘Ah, yes, I see then it’s the same as here.’

‘Yes,’ acquiesced Miss Aurelia with great simplicity, ‘I guess it’s about the same.’

‘And so your sister objected to your marriage.’

‘Yes, and then after a while he grew tired of waiting and went away—went west and settled there, and, I heard, got married himself; but only years and years afterwards,’ she added hastily; and in the thought of the years that had elapsed I gathered that Miss Aurelia had found a certain consolation.

‘And you?’

‘Well, what could I do? I just lived right on—went on going to all the prayer-meetings and tea-parties, christenings, weddings, and funerals. What else could I do? Only I—I did not marry.’ She spoke the last words slowly. ‘Mehitabel always seemed to think I should. She was real kind; gave me every trifle I wanted. Of course other folk wanted to marry me sometimes. There was even one man Mehitabel herself thought would do for me, but somehow I could not think of him, and I just lived on, and at last I began to feel myself growing old. Do you know that feeling? It’s terrible, I think.

‘No, I don’t think Mehitabel ever had it, although she’s a whole seven years older. She’s different somehow, and, to begin with, she has always been a sight too busy. She never knew what it was to fancy she was of no use in the world. That’s what’s

near driven me crazy sometimes, and the more Mehitabel made things easy for me the more I felt badly over it. I guess it's only women like me who know what a terrible feeling it is. Maybe it's to make things more equal that we are given it, and one cannot speak of it as a rule, but one knows it is there all the same. I don't think I'm the only one that feels it, and it's just the most miserable sort of thing in life when it seems as if everything and everybody else had its proper place in the world excepting just your own self. Now, if I had married Aaron Miles,' went on Aurelia thoughtfully, 'I might have had trials in plenty. I reckon I was bound to, although that's as the Lord wills; I'm not maintaining I shouldn't, but I guess that dreadful sort of useless feeling I never should have known. It's rather unfair I should know it, too, seeing there's plenty of women, and unmarried ones too, that don't have it. I just tried once to explain it to Mehitabel, and I guess you should have seen her stare. I don't rightly know why I'm telling you now, only all this anxiety tells on me. Seems as if I had to talk, or I should die right away. So the years went on at home, and sometimes, although I was always very quiet, the thought of, maybe, all I might have had but for poor Mehitabel's principles, and all the love I had missed, just grew intolerable. It was not the being loved myself I cared for so much as finding folk I could love that I wanted. Why, there have been days when I could hardly bear the sight of a child's face, or the sound of its little, shrill voice, through thinking that had things been different——' She broke off abruptly, and passed her hand over her eyes. 'What nonsense I'm talking! But, anyhow, Mehitabel saw me getting miserable, although she never could find out the reason, and at last one day—it was on my birthday, of all days in the year—that she had been considering, and that she found the money she had been putting aside yearly against my wedding came to a good bit—over a couple of thousand dollars and more—and she thought, maybe, I'd better invest half of it, and, maybe, give the other half to foreign missions. That was what she thought fair and reasonable, and she was downright taken aback when I said, "What? so that I may have good security in both heaven and earth"; and I dare say I did speak snappishly, for Mehitabel was not pleased, and said she never counted on my being so irreverent; but I did not mean to be that, only it was my wedding money, and to see what might have been all my happiness for years past going to a foreign

mission did upset me somehow; and then, how it was I never knew—I guess I must have been overtired, or queer, or something—but I just spoke up, and told her right out in one flash of how sick and tired I was of my life, of the farm, and the village, and the folk, and everything, and then I burst out crying.

‘And your sister?’

‘She said nothing then, only looked very sober; but a week afterwards she came to me and told me she had been thinking it all over, and she had fixed it all, and that we were to take our passages for England in two weeks, so that I should never be able to say again that I had lived and died without having a chance of seeing the world. Oh! she was real generous. She said the money properly was mine, and although she would have dearly liked to give a big sum to the mission, I came first and had first right to it, and maybe she could do some good herself in mission work in her travels, seeing she always thought the poor Papists were worse than heathen niggers.

‘That’s why she gives around those tracts—it’s just her conscientiousness—and now to think that this is the end of it. If anything happens to her over here, I can never, never forgive myself. Why, oh why, did I ever wish to leave home?’ But here Miss Aurelia’s self-reproaches were luckily cut short by our arrival at the convent.

‘If it doesn’t look, I declare, just like any other gateway!’ she remarked in a surprised voice, as she looked at its whitewashed portals.

Nor did the sight of the rosy old nun who appeared in answer to the tinkling bell strike her as alarming; indeed, she whispered to me that, apart from the white wig, she bore a striking resemblance to a certain old ‘Aunt Hepsie’ far away in her own Massachusetts.

We explained our errand and gave the doctor’s note, but there was some delay, and the old *tourière* demurred. ‘Better for Madame’—Miss Aurelia here made a feeble disclaimer to the matronly title—‘to go upstairs and wait. The Reverend Mother would come and arrange the matter later,’ and before Miss Aurelia had collected her presence of mind we were ushered into a large bare room divided at one end by a light wire netting. As the heavy door shut behind us with a clang that re-echoed along the wide passage, Miss Aurelia gave a perceptible start.

‘I suppose it is all right,’ she murmured anxiously. ‘It’s not

a trap? I'm real glad I'm not alone; but one has heard of such dreadful tales of convents. Mehitabel has several books about escaped nuns.'

I laughed outright, I could not help it. But she walked nervously to the window and looked out.

'Why, there's no bars to speak of,' she said in a relieved voice, 'and I declare there's roses—lovely roses, too—just the same kind that grow round our own house at home.' She leant half out of the window as she spoke.

The roses were indeed lovely.

They hung in heavy garlands of crimson and creamy pink from above, they pressed up inquisitively from below, and filled the air with their sweet scent, making an oddly incongruous frame for poor Miss Aurelia meanwhile. She buried her tired face in a delicious cluster. When she looked up there were tears in her eyes. 'They are so home like,' she said apologetically; 'I'm glad the poor nuns have roses. It must be a comfort to them. One can forget a good deal in a rose. I thought they always had to live in dark cells and sleep on the floor, but this garden looks real nice.'

The ringing of a bell interrupted her; from our window we could see a door open and a stream of bright-faced girls come out, followed by four or five nuns.

'Why, are those nuns?' she asked in astonishment. 'And you don't mean to say those are novices. Why, they look like anyone else. After all, perhaps, Mehitabel——' A subdued rustle behind her made us turn.

It was the Reverend Mother.

Miss Aurelia's French was very rusty, but her broken sentences explained how things stood better than any eloquence, and it was soon settled that the only Sister available should return with us at once to the hotel. Miss Aurelia's fears for our liberty had by this time diminished. She no longer trembled at the sound of a closing door; nevertheless she cast dubious glances at the black-robed figure in the quaint white cap and bands that walked by our side.

'I don't believe Mehitabel will stand her,' she whispered. But poor Miss Mehitabel was past taking heed of such things, and the Sister was installed in her sick room without any remonstrance on her part.

But in spite of the doctor, in spite of medicine, and in spite of



the Sister, she became steadily worse. Being known to be merely a chance acquaintance of the two American ladies, I speedily heard the truth.

From the first the doctor had thought very badly of the case. That her sister was very ill could not, of course, be hidden from Miss Aurelia, but as far as was possible she was kept away from the sick room, for the mere sight of her grief-stained face seemed to distress Miss Mehitabel and make her more restless and excited.

In consequence she hung about the passages and haunted the staircase, a picture of utter misery that it would be hard to match anywhere.

Two or three days more, and it was conceded on all sides that Miss Mehitabel's wanderings on this earth were likely to be soon over.

The doctor had left that morning, after a few sympathetic words at the door to the weeping Miss Aurelia. It could be now, he said, but a question of hours.

There was a murmur of mild sympathy throughout the sleepy hotel at the news. Then a voice at the door was heard asking for Sœur Agnes, and the landlady herself climbed up to the sick woman's room and knocked at the door.

It was important. A message from the convent.

Miss Aurelia slipped into the room through the open door. She sank into the Sister's chair by the bedside.

'I will stay here. Go down,' she nodded, and Sœur Agnes, after a doubtful glance, obeyed.

Outside the sun shone brightly, but Miss Mehitabel never stirred, and her sister did not dare to speak to her although her heart was full. Her eyes were fixed upon the silent form. She clenched her hands in her agony. The cruelty of the blow paralysed her mind. She was past praying in words, but in her heart rose despairingly the supplication, 'Save Mehitabel, save my sister,' and then the remembrance of the doctor's recent verdict came over her and crushed her anew.

The door creaked, and Sœur Agnes again appeared bearing a bottle—an ordinary black wine bottle—but her face shone with unusual excitement. She was followed by another Sister and the landlady. All seemed somewhat flushed.

'Imagine your good luck, Mademoiselle,' she exclaimed in a loud whisper, as with almost reverential care she placed the bottle in safety on the high old-fashioned bureau.

‘My good luck?’ repeatedly Miss Aurelia, stupidly.

‘Yes. Ah! but there are good, kind hearts in the world. The lady who lives in the pink house next to our convent heard of your misfortune. There is a good kind woman—she has sent you this,’ and Sœur Agnes pointed triumphantly to the bottle.

‘But what is it?’ asked Miss Aurelia. ‘Wine? Medicine?’

‘Wine!’ exclaimed the Sister scornfully. ‘Medicine! No, indeed! It is better than either. No less than a bottle of water from the famous shrine of St. Anne d’Osac. Ah! but she is a good saint, that dear Saint Anne, and since the doctor can do no more——’ and she paused expressively, while her companions nodded their heads in approbation of her words.

‘Yes, indeed, Mademoiselle,’ broke in the landlady, ‘Saint Anne has made many wonderful cures. I could tell you of several.’ But she stopped as Miss Aurelia’s face fell, and her looks expressed nothing but blank disappointment.

‘We can but try it,’ continued the good nun, briskly. ‘Naturally your poor sister, not being of the faith, may make a difference to Saint Anne; but there is infinite mercy, and if it fails why it fails, and we have at least done our little best.’

Sœur Agnes was a good woman, but she had seen too many death-beds in her time to take more than a professional interest in her present patient.

Even now she was evidently thinking more of the possible glory that might accrue to the dear Saint Anne than of Miss Mehitabel’s own share in the matter.

As for Miss Aurelia, she stood like one petrified. She put her hand to her throat and made an effort to speak; but the words would not come, and with a species of fascination her eyes followed the two nuns’ movements as they deliberately uncorked the bottle.

‘Mademoiselle need fear nothing,’ whispered the landlady, consolingly. ‘Let her not disquiet herself. It is but pure water. Sœur Agnes is always careful, and’—with marked significance—‘there is no time to lose.’

‘Oh,’ groaned Aurelia faintly, as Miss Mehitabel only stirred uneasily when the cup was held to her closed lips. Her eyes never opened.

‘But she has swallowed some,’ exclaimed both nuns triumphantly in a jubilant duet, and they sank on their knees on each side of the narrow white bed.

The landlady and I, although with less quickness, followed their example, but Miss Aurelia still stood erect, her gaze fixed despairingly on her sister's unconscious face.

How long she stood there she never could have told. She had lost all sense of time in the intensity of her own anguish. As she looked at the kneeling figures around her, there arose in her heart an overwhelming impulse. For Mehitabel—to save Mehitabel she would defy all her carefully taught traditions. She would pray to Saint Anne also. Perhaps even Saint Anne, being a woman herself and therefore human, would hear her the better in her extremity. Had not all her other prayers of the last week been apparently of no avail?

She sank upon her knees at the foot of the bed, but when her voice tried to frame the words, she could only murmur brokenly the familiar 'Our Father.' She said the syllables over and over again. The room was very still, save for the buzzing of a fly on the window pane and the low monotonous murmur of the two nuns' prayers.

The landlady's voice broke the spell. 'Look, look,' she cried, in an excited whisper, 'look, there is a change!' At the words the two nuns started up, and Miss Aurelia strove to struggle to her feet, but the tension had been too much for her, and she fainted dead away where she knelt.

#### IV.

WHEN she came to herself she found she was lying in her own room. The landlady was sitting beside her, with an anxious expression.

'Mehitabel? Ah! you have come to tell me she is dead—I know she is dead,' murmured Miss Aurelia.

'But not at all, Mademoiselle! Ah, that blessed Saint Anne. Mademoiselle must calm herself, and I will tell her all. It is a veritable miracle. The doctor himself can make nothing of it. She is getting better hourly, and sleeps now as quietly as a child. She has taken some soup. Mademoiselle need have no longer fear. Ah! you weep; that is good, *ça soulage le cœur*.' For Miss Aurelia's tears were falling fast. It was true enough. Miss Mehitabel, against all medical rules and precedents, was much better. The alarming symptoms had suddenly disappeared. Whether the doctor had not made sufficient allowance for the

tenacity of the New England constitution, whether Sister Agnes had exaggerated the gravity of her case, or whether, again,

More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of,

I do not pretend to say. The fact remains.

That there were great rejoicings in the convent may be imagined. The fame of the surprising miracle was noised far and wide. Among the simple peasants on the hill-sides, among the *béates* and nuns, it was a nine-days' wonder.

In honour of the unconscious Miss Mehitabel's recovery a local pilgrimage was even instituted to Saint Anne's nearest shrine.

Miss Aurelia told me of it with bated breath.

'Fancy what poor Mehitabel would say to that. Yes, she is much better and stronger to-day, but I don't think her principles are a bit changed by her illness. She told me only this morning she guessed she could do without Sœur Agnes now. Not that she was not real kind and helpful, but it worried her dreadful to see a nun around. She allowed she was not such a bad sort of woman as she expected—I guess that was something from Mehitabel—but when she comes to hear how she was cured, oh my——' Miss Aurelia's pause was expressive.

'If I weren't so happy, and thankful to see her getting round, I should worry over that too—I sha'n't tell her if I can help it. I never kept anything yet from Mehitabel,' she added, with a sigh, 'at least not of that kind. But this is different. I did an awful thing yesterday, but I could not help it either, and it seemed real mean not to show my thanks, even if it were in their own queer way, and the Sisters were downright pleased. Can you believe it?' her voice sank to the merest whisper, 'I—I—sent a candle to Saint Anne. Do you understand? A candle to Saint Anne!'

I seemed to understand very well, and so I said.

'Well,' she said doubtfully 'I'm glad you're not as shocked as I guessed you would be.'

'Do you know,' she went on confidently, 'I've always been carefully brought up, Mehitabel took care of that; but, in spite of all the ministers say, I begin to think it's almost a want of faith to think one's own ways must always be the best, specially when it comes to religion. I guess the Lord knows what suits folk better than we do, even if we are earnest Christians. I said as much to Mehitabel only the week before she fell sick, but she

didn't take it well. She said she'd pray for me—that's what lots of people say when they're really only provoked with you. She said she prayed I might see the true light more clearly. I pray for that, too,' said Miss Aurelia simply, 'only somehow the more I pray the less I see it her way. It's all a great puzzle'—and she sighed as she ascended the staircase towards her sister's room.

Miss Mehitabel's recovery, once begun, proved unusually rapid. Every succeeding day left her better and stronger and more her old staunch Puritan self. She was able now to sit out under the apricot trees in the hotel garden. The apricots had passed away and had fulfilled their destiny in tarts, and the famous *pâte d'abricots* for which Le Puy is renowned; but the shade was still pleasant and the invalid enjoyed the fresh air; and, while thus sitting guarded by Miss Aurelia, curious passers-by would gaze at her through the hotel railings, and perhaps come back twice or thrice to behold her again.

'Why, sakes alive, Relia, one would almost think they had never seen sick folk before,' Miss Mehitabel remarked impatiently, after an unusual display of such interest. 'I declare they stare at me as though I were a wild beast, and I'm not a camel yet nor an elephant neither, although I've grown a perfect scarecrow since I fell ill. There's another one come to look. Whatever can it be? I know well enough they're talking about me too.'

'I reckon,' faltered Aurelia mendaciously, 'they mean no harm. They're just ignorant peasant women. Maybe they feel sort of pleased, because—because you got well.'

'If that's so,' said Miss Mehitabel relenting, 'it's real kind and friendly of them, seeing we're after all but strangers. I don't know if I sha'n't bow to them, poor misguided Papists and idolaters as they are.' And she nodded her head and smiled in quite a friendly manner.

The peasant women were charmed. They craned their necks over the high railing and nodded their white-capped heads vehemently in return.

One held up her baby in her arms and pointed to Miss Mehitabel.

'Did you ever see the like?' said Miss Mehitabel, rather gratified at the sensation she was creating. 'Do find out, Relia, what they are saying. You understand the language. What is it?'

Miss Aurelia's face had crimsoned. She knew only too well

what their curiosity betokened, even had not broken sentences from the road occasionally reached her ear.

‘What is it, Relia?’ cried Miss Mehitabel suspiciously. ‘Now, don’t deny it. You heard well enough. Why are you so red? What is it? What have I done? Mercy on us, if there isn’t one of those black priests talking to them now, and if he isn’t looking our way too. Tell me right away, Aurelia Tucker; I’m not going to have you hide anything from me after all these years.’

Miss Aurelia’s sensitive lip quivered. ‘Oh dear!’ she said tremulously. ‘I don’t see how I can ever——’

‘Tell me this moment,’ interrupted Miss Mehitabel imperiously. She had raised herself from her cushions, and now sat bolt upright. Her cheeks were flushed. She looked quite her old iron self. ‘What is it?’ she repeated.

‘Well—oh mercy, I know you’ll be vexed. I guess they want to look at you because—because of the miracle.’

‘Miracle!’ exclaimed Miss Mehitabel.

‘Yes, miracle. St. Anne, you see.’

‘St. Anne! Miracle!’ gasped the invalid. ‘Are you crazy, Relia? What have I to do with miracles and St. Annes. I know no miracles, thank God, out of their proper place, the Bible, and as to St. Annes’—and she gave a wholly disdainful sniff. ‘You tell me all about it. Tell me right away! Oh dear, I knew things would go to rack and ruin directly I was took sick.’

And then, with averted face and frightened voice, Miss Aurelia told her tale.

Miss Mehitabel listened in silence, her hand nervously clenching itself at times. It is to be feared her feelings towards everyone concerned, the good Saint Anne included, were hardly charitable ones. At last Miss Aurelia’s voice ceased.

‘And so you let them give me the water?’ Miss Mehitabel’s voice was hard and dry.

‘Yes.’ A very feeble ‘yes’ came from under her sister’s shady hat.

‘And I got well directly?’

‘Well, yes—pretty soon afterwards.’

‘And you never told me before?’

‘No. No, Mehitabel.’

‘Why?’

‘I—well—I guess I was afraid.’

‘Afraid of what?’

‘Well, I reckoned you would not care to be cured in that way.’

Miss Mehitabel lifted her eyes for the first time. They were fairly blazing with suppressed anger.

'You were right,' she said bitterly. 'You were right enough there. I'd rather—far, far rather—have died.'

'Oh, sister.'

'I suppose I'm wicked. I suppose I ought to be thankful, but I can't feel it. No, I can't.'

There was a silence.

Miss Aurelia furtively wiped away two large tears. Mehitabel's method of receiving her revelations was even more terrible than she had anticipated.

She spoke at last hesitatingly. 'Maybe, very likely it was not Saint Anne; but at any rate, sister, you cannot deny it was the Lord's doing.'

I don't pretend to deny it, but I guess that's why I find it so hard. 'Tisn't as if He couldn't have fixed it for me in some other way.'

There was another silence.

Miss Mehitabel's brow was wrinkled with emotion. She looked troubled, and as if she were pondering what she had best do next.

At length she spoke again.

'Relia, I reckon you'd better go in and pack up our trunks.'

'Pack up. Why?'

'Yes, pack up. We shall leave here to-morrow.'

'But you're not fit?'

'I'm strong enough to get away.'

'Indeed you're not, Mehitabel. I won't hear of such foolishness.'

'Then I shall have to go by myself.'

'You won't.' Amazement made Aurelia audacious.

Miss Mehitabel made no answer, but slowly and painfully began to rise. She was still so weak that she had to steady her shaking knees by clinging to the apricot tree's gummy bark.

'Whatever are you doing?' cried out Miss Aurelia.

'I'm going in—I've got to pack. I guess, as you won't help me, I must just fix it by myself.'

Aurelia gave one incredulous glance at her sister's set face, and then rose. She knew that particular expression far too well to venture on a further contradiction.

'You need not move, sister, I'll see to it. But I can't see why you take it so.'

'Not see why!' interrupted Miss Mehitabel fiercely, as she sank

down in her chair again from sheer weakness. 'Not see why! Well, Relia, I never thought to hear you ask such a silly question. 'Haven't I been working all my life in the Lord's cause? You know my principles. You know—no, you can't know—how hard I've tried to do my best for these poor foreign folk; how I've striven to save them from their superstitious ways, and then now to think I should myself be a fresh stumbling-block in their path. If I'd have died it wouldn't have happened, but now I don't suppose if I went round and told each separate individual one of them different they'd mind——'

'No,' interrupted Miss Aurelia, almost as stubbornly as her sister, 'that they wouldn't. Not a mite, for you see you *did* get well, Mehitabel. You can't run against that.' Miss Mehitabel groaned. The fact was unanswerable.

They left the next morning for Paris on their way to Havre. Miss Mehitabel has hitherto avoided that town as being 'a wicked city,' although less given over to all iniquity than Rome; but now her spirit was crushed, and she agreed to use it as a halting-place for a night or two. She even sent a message to me, through Miss Aurelia, as to whether I could recommend her to the quiet hotel she had heard us speak of.

We were spending a few days in Paris ourselves ten days later, and were somewhat surprised to find that the Miss Tuckers were still in the hotel, having been detained longer than they expected.

I sent up to know if I might pay them a visit, and after a little delay Miss Aurelia, rather dishevelled from packing, came running down the stairs to welcome me.

'Come right up, Mehitabel will be so glad to see you. She's had a dull time here, for of course the journey tired her out and she's never been able to stir since; but she's better to-day, and we leave to-morrow morning early for Havre. What luck you should come to-day! We should have missed you otherwise;' and, talking, she opened the door of their room and ushered me in.

'Yes, I'm here still, and I'm better, but I don't think much of Paris after all,' was Miss Mehitabel's characteristic remark.

Poor thing, it would be wonderful if she had, for their room, *au quatrième*, although large and clean enough, looked down into a courtyard where a stunted oleander bush in a green tub and a grey parrot in a cage supplied the place of all other decoration.

'I'm glad you've come, though,' she said more graciously. 'I wanted to see you again.'



'We said "good-bye" so hurriedly at Le Puy,' interposed Miss Aurelia.

'Yes,' I answered, somewhat maliciously I fear, 'everyone there was so disappointed. They intended to organise quite a pretty little farewell to you. You were to have been escorted to the station and——'

'Who told you that?' interrupted Miss Mehitabel, sharply.

'Let me see. Perhaps it was Sister Agnes—or, perhaps, the landlady; but several people spoke of it. You see you were no ordinary visitor——'

I broke off. I felt my tone was out of place, and that any reference to her recovery was not to be made lightly. A dull red was rising to Miss Mehitabel's cheek. Miss Aurelia nervously began to fold up some dresses.

'There's such a lot of packing to get through,' she stammered apologetically, with a glance at her sister's disturbed face.

'Wait,' said Mehitabel, as I prepared to take my leave. 'I want to say something to you. I meant to do so anyhow to Aurelia, and I guess now you're here I'd as lief you should hear too, seeing as you've been so much with us all along. Put down that sack, Aurelia, and just listen to me.'

Aurelia dropped the jacket and drew nearer.

'Give me that packet of tracts,' said Miss Mehitabel. 'There they are, Relia, just under my black bonnet. No, don't be frightened. I'm not going to give them away, but I've got to do this, for I've been thinking. I've been thinking things out all this week, and—and praying, and somehow I begin to see things different to what I did before I was sick. It began in an odd way, too. I guess you'll not believe it—you needn't if you don't feel like it—but it began all along of the butter. You know the butter here is first-rate, and it set me thinking, seeing as I rather fancy I know about that, at least. I was wondering how they made it, and then I remembered how in Devonshire they had very good butter, and I went into a dairy there to see how they fixed it, and then when I came to look into it, it was clean against all my own ideas of what was right in making, and then, when I came to look into it, everything they used was a trifle different, right away from the beginning. It was only the cow that one might say was the same. Churn, dashers, skimming-pans, and all had something wrong with them according to my notions. The same over in Normandy. And so I said to

myself, I declare I don't see why it shouldn't be the same with religion, and that folk might do worse than leave it to the Lord to work out in His own way. I guess you think I'm mighty queer to speak of butter and religion in the same breath, but it's just how it came to me, and the Lord knows I don't mean to be wicked. I went thinking right on, and then it came to me that maybe we are so busy trimming and tending our own rushlights we forget that the moon and the stars are shining, too, for us outside.'

She stopped. There was a suspicious brightness in her eyes.

'See here,' she said, and, stooping down, opened the door of the empty stove and crammed the packet of tracts into it. She lit a match. Her hand trembled as she held it to the mass of crumpled papers.

'Goodness! Mehitabel,' exclaimed Aurelia, in a terrified voice, 'you surely are never going to burn your tracts?'

'Yes, I am,' said her sister doggedly, 'seeing, as I see now, I was thinking more of myself and of pleasing the minister at home than of the glory of God, when I gave them around.'

'But it's awful wicked to burn tracts,' urged Miss Aurelia anxiously.

'Why? Isn't it better to burn them than to leave them lying so that folk can make fun of them?'

'Well, I never!' murmured Miss Aurelia faintly, as she watched the flickering flame.

The stove was cold, and the tracts did not kindle quickly. They smouldered for a while, and then a thick cloud of yellow smoke issued from the narrow grating and curled up into the room, making us cough and choke. Miss Aurelia hastily threw up the window, then turned and surveyed the ascending smoke pensively.

'Doesn't it remind you, Mehitabel, of the picture in the big Bible at home—the one of the "Burnt Sacrifice," you know?'

Miss Mehitabel started. A peculiar expression crossed her face. For a minute she did not reply. Then she answered, slowly—

'Well, Relia, maybe it is something like—more than you think for. I reckon the Lord knows.'

And I doubt not that He did!

## POPULAR SONGS.

THE recent announcement that a history of famous songs is soon to be brought out gives rise to the reflection—What is the secret of popularity in music? Why does one air in a new opera catch the taste of the multitude, and be whistled all over the town before it is a week old, while other airs in the same composition, equally melodious—superior, perhaps, from a musical point of view—are never heard outside the theatre? What causes the public to fix upon one tune in a music-hall entertainment, and give it preference over every other tune till all London is wearied by the repetition? These questions are easier asked than answered; the secret of musical popularity will probably never be discovered. Sometimes a song will owe its success to the circumstances in which it is first heard, having been composed for a special occasion; to the fact of its being introduced by a favourite singer; or to some other cause in no way connected with the music itself. As regards musical worth, it is always impossible to tell beforehand what will take the public taste, or how long a favourite tune may retain its popularity, often lost as unexpectedly as it was gained.

Probably no one would have been more surprised than Sir Henry Bishop himself could he have foreseen that a simple melody in one of his numerous operas would achieve such celebrity that, at the present day, more than seventy years after it was first heard in London, it is still sung by leading *prime donne* at fashionable concerts, jangled on street organs, and loved by a vast public that knows nothing of music properly so called as the purest representation of the English spirit—‘Home, sweet Home.’ ‘Clari, the Maid of Milan,’ the opera in which this favourite song occurred, has long been consigned to the limbo of forgotten musical works, but ‘Home, sweet Home’ survives with undiminished popularity, and is likely to survive when many more pretentious compositions have followed the ‘Maid of Milan’ into oblivion.

Another ballad that won instant fame against the expectation, and even the wish, of its author, was ‘Auld Robin Gray,’ written by Lady Anne Lindsay about the end of the last century, merely for her own satisfaction, to replace the coarse verses of an old

melody that pleased her. She sang charmingly, and the new ballad soon came into favour. Great was the curiosity aroused as to the author of this pathetic song, in whose simple verses all the elements of a heartrending tragedy are contained; but Lady Anne, modest and retiring by nature, preserved silence for many years, smiling, no doubt, at the controversy that raged so hotly. In the course of it her ballad was attributed by some disputants to David Rizzio, declared by others to be a genuine sixteenth century production, finally made the subject of a twenty-guinea prize to be bestowed on anybody acute enough to bring to light the veritable author.

At an earlier date the still favourite old song, 'My lodging is on the cold ground,' obtained a success of a very different kind, attributable, perhaps, at first, to the singer. We are not told whether it was composed especially for the play in which the actress Moll Davies, a rival of Nell Gwynne's, sang it so effectively; history only records that her exquisite rendering of this plaintive air attracted the attention of his Majesty King Charles II. on a visit he paid to the playhouse, and resulted in royal favour for the singer, who was not in future so hardly lodged!

A remarkable success was achieved half a century later by 'The Beggar's Opera,' a collection of popular airs of the time, which was brought out by Rich at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1727. Swift had suggested the idea of a Newgate Pastoral to Gay, who was not slow to work it out, and the 'Beggar's Opera' was intended as a skit on the bribery and corruption characteristic of politicians of the time, combined with a burlesque of that much satirised entertainment the Italian opera. But as Rich was in pecuniary difficulties, and no especial success was anticipated for the new travesty, it was produced at the smallest possible cost; the hero, 'Captain Macheath,' being entrusted to an actor named Walker, who knew only just enough music, we are told, to enable him to sing in tune, though his voice was fine and his acting good. As for Lavinia Fenton, the obscure actress engaged to represent the heroine, she was certainly far enough from suspecting that her name would go down to posterity indissolubly associated with 'Polly Peachum,' the fascinating singer of 'Can love be controlled by advice?' 'Cease your funning,' and other once popular ditties.

The 'Beggar's Opera' was the first ballad-opera ever composed, all the favourite ballad tunes of the day being utilised for the

songs. Its success was immediate and unprecedented. The whole fashionable world rushed to enjoy the humours of the diverting 'Beggars' and their criminal companions; discussions as to the morality of the clever travesty drew still greater crowds to the playhouse, and in spite of a strong condemnation pronounced by no less a personage than the Archbishop of Canterbury—who solemnly declared it 'in the highest degree injurious to public morals'—the 'Beggar's Opera' ran undaunted a triumphant career.

In a short time it had, according to popular wit, made 'Rich gay, and Gay rich.' Lavinia Fenton, who had undertaken the character of 'Polly' for the modest remuneration of fifteen shillings per week, suddenly found herself the most celebrated person in London. Her portraits were sold everywhere, her opera costumes copied by fashionable ladies; when she went nightly to and from the theatre a bodyguard of strong friends had to be formed to escort her, lest the fair damsel should be carried off by one of her many importunate admirers. Lavinia's musical success ended with the run of the opera (after which she retired from the stage), but not so the good fortune it had won for her. The Duke of Bolton was so fascinated by her charms as the saucy 'Polly' that he made her his Duchess after the death of his wife, from whom he had long been separated; whereby Lavinia became the first of the actresses connected by marriage with English nobility.

Turning from the musical triumphs of the theatre to those of the battlefield, mention may be made of a doggerel ballad called 'Lillibullero,' that won immense popularity in its day, and is said to have contributed not a little to the revolution in which James II. lost his throne. Henry Purcell had composed a spirited air, used in the army as a march, and popular as a catching tune. To this doggerel rhymes ridiculing the 'Papists' were written, with the refrain:

Lero, lero, lillibullero,  
Lillibullero bullen a la—

utterly foolish verses, written in a kind of broken English, with a view to satirising the French allies of King James. This song so caught the taste of the English soldiers that the whole army was perpetually chorussing 'Lero, lero, lillibullero,' and their enthusiasm for it greatly strengthened the chances of the Prince of Orange, if we may believe contemporary chroniclers. Bishop Burnet, speaking of 'Lillibullero,' says: 'It made an impression

on the army that cannot be imagined by those that saw it not. Perhaps never had so slight a thing so great an effect,' and Lord Wharton, the Viceroy of Ireland, was credited with having 'sung a deluded prince out of three kingdoms with it.'

'Lillibullero' (or 'Lilliburlero,' as it is variously spelt) has not retained its warlike significance. No revolutions are likely to be accomplished by it now; it was, in fact, discontinued as a march about the middle of the eighteenth century, in order that our Irish soldiers might not be offended by the idea of ridicule to Roman Catholics connected with the spirited air. To our generation it is only known as the tune for a favourite nursery rhyme:

There was an old woman tossed up in a blanket  
Ninety times as high as the moon.

Such is the fickle nature of popular favour.

Equally celebrated, equally instrumental in determining the fate of a nation, while more enduring in military popularity, was the famous 'Marseillaise,' which owed its composition to a sudden inspiration of French patriotic enthusiasm—a dramatic episode in a most dramatic period. The division of the French army quartered at Strasburg in 1792 had received orders to march against Austria, and the mayor of the town expressed regret that the soldiers were without any patriotic song to encourage them on their way to 'glory or the grave.' A young captain of engineers, Rouget de Lisle, who heard the remark, at once left the company, and, returning to his lodging, called for pen and ink, animated by a desire to try and make good the deficiency. He was already a musical amateur, and with the aid of his violin sought to compose a suitable melody for the words that were to inspire his fellow-soldiers with courage. All night long he worked, and by daybreak had produced the most vigorous martial song whose strains ever incited men to brave the horrors of war. Arriving at the mayor's house that morning with his composition, he triumphantly displayed it; it was hastily copied, arranged for a military band, and performed at a review before the week was out. A few weeks afterwards it was sung with such good effect at a banquet at Marseilles that copies were in all haste printed and distributed to the volunteers of the battalion which was just starting for Paris; hence it became known as the *Chant des Marseillais*, later curtailed to *La Marseillaise* only. No wonder those stirring strains acquired instant popularity—as fresh to-day as when they were

first heard by the eager revolutionists. Alas! that the 'Marseillaise' should be associated with so much bloodshed and cruelty that its mere name calls up images of horror! Rouget de Lisle was by no means a rabid republican. It is recorded that he was imprisoned for disapproving of the bloody proceedings on August 10, and, had it not been for the fall of Robespierre, would doubtless have expiated his plain-speaking by mounting the guillotine to the sound of his own war-song! The success of the 'Marseillaise' may be easily understood, written as it was in a moment of intense excitement, with the heart's blood of its author, amid events that shook all countries of Europe to their foundations. Less easy is it to account for the sudden frantic popularity of the 'Ça ira,' or understand why such a harmless air should have been chosen by the French populace to express their wildest fury at that terrible era. Excited mobs yelled it round the tumbrils conveying prisoners to the guillotine, and unfortunate aristocrats trembled when they heard distant echoes of the fierce refrain:

Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!  
Les aristocrates à la lanterne!

knowing that it boded death. Yet this tune was originally nothing but a simple country dance, as its lively measure—not in the least fitting the ferocious words—testifies; and under the name of 'Carillon national' had been popular in scenes of innocent festivity a short time before it degenerated into a symbol of the worst revolutionary excesses. After such sanguinary associations there could be no return to the condition of an inoffensive dance-tune. In later times the very name of the 'Ça ira' was hated for recalling scenes of unparalleled atrocity, and the peaceful origin of this rather commonplace melody has been entirely forgotten in favour of the dreadful use to which it was put during the triumph of lawlessness in France. The 'Ça ira' affords a sad example of musical popularity, infamous alike to the song and the singers, and which, it may be hoped, will never be repeated in history.

An amusing instance of the peaceful diversion of an air from its original use is furnished by a song out of an operetta called 'The Golden Pippin,' performed at Covent Garden in 1773. The part of 'Juno' in this burlesque was sung by a now forgotten *prima donna*, Miss Anne Catley, celebrated as a beauty and a charming singer in her day. Miss Catley received especial applause for her rendering of two songs in 'The Golden Pippin,' one of which has since figured under different names as a variety of comic songs,

while the other, entitled 'Where's the mortal can resist me?' has become familiar to later generations as the tune of the Advent Hymn! It is indeed no secret that many of the most popular airs in our Hymnology are derived from sources—German and other—by no means suggestive of religious devotion; to such widely different purposes may favourite tunes be adapted in the lapse of years and the frequent changes of public taste.

Composers may complain of these fluctuations of taste as increasing their difficulty in winning the favour of audiences, but it is not always impossible for them to predict the success of their music even before it has been introduced to the public. Weber, when rehearsing his new opera 'Der Freischutz,' which had been selected as the first work to be produced in a recently finished theatre in Berlin, June 1821, was in the best spirits, notwithstanding the great anxiety felt by his friends lest his musical success should be eclipsed by that of the rival composer Spontini. Spontini was a chief favourite in Berlin, and to equal him seemed a difficult task. But Weber would not allow himself to be discouraged, and the triumphant reception of 'Der Freischutz' fully justified his hopefulness. Not only was it welcomed with enthusiasm throughout Germany when it first appeared; it still holds the stage as a favourite opera, despite the many and great changes in the world of music since Weber's time.

Another example of this presentiment of success occurs in the account of the production of 'Rigoletto,' brought out at Venice in 1851. It is related that Verdi, when at work on this opera, refused to fill up a certain blank in the score, alleging, in answer to entreaties from the singer who was to perform the missing aria, that there would be plenty of time to study it—it was nothing difficult. This he continued to repeat until the actual day fixed for the performance of 'Rigoletto,' when, with much mystery and many precautions against being overheard, he played the enchanting 'La donna è mobile' to the mystified singer. As the latter was expressing his delight, Verdi cautioned him strictly on no account to hum or whistle the catching air before the evening; the orchestra, he said, had learnt it already, and were also under a solemn vow not to let one note be heard before the actual performance. 'Why this mystery?' inquired the puzzled artist. 'Because,' replied Verdi, 'I do not wish all Venice to be singing it before my opera is brought out.'

Sure enough, the following day 'all Venice' had caught the



facile melody, and 'La donna è mobile' was assured of immortality.

However, first performances cannot always be relied upon as tests of popularity. On the production of 'La Traviata' at the same theatre, two years later, dead failure resulted, catching as were the airs and interesting the libretto. Verdi wrote to a friend next day: "'Traviata" last night made a *fiasco*. Is the fault mine or the actors'? Time will show.'

Time showed plainly that only the actors could be held responsible for the failure. A contemporary account says: The tenor, Monsieur Graziani, took cold, and sang his part throughout in a hoarse and almost inaudible voice. Monsieur Varesi, the baritone, having what he would call a secondary *rôle*, took no trouble to bring out the dramatic importance of this short but capital part, so that the effect of the celebrated duet between Violetta and Germond in the second act was entirely missed. Madame Donatelli, who impersonated the delicate, sickly heroine, was one of the stoutest ladies on the stage or off it, and when at the beginning of the third act the doctor declares that consumption has wasted away the young lady, and that she cannot live more than a few hours, the audience was thrown into a state of perfectly uproarious glee—a state very different from that necessary to appreciate the tragic action of the last act.

No wonder that 'La Traviata' made a *fiasco* under these trying circumstances! Yet, when more adequately performed, the opera soon became an immense favourite with audiences of all nations, and Verdi had no reason to remember the disasters attending its first appearance in public.

One of the most popular operas of the present day, 'Carmen,' underwent a similar unfortunate experience, but achieved success too late, alas! to console the disappointed composer, whose death was accelerated, it is said, by the ill reception accorded to his *chef-d'œuvre*. 'Carmen' was, in fact, actually hissed off the stage on its first performance (in Paris, 1875), and poor Bizet died shortly after, unable to foresee the great success in store for his latest and best work, whose stirring music so admirably fits the thrilling Spanish libretto it illustrates. Such are some of the vicissitudes attending favourite melodies, concerning which a large volume of interesting matter might easily be written, were the adventures of our most popular songs collected from the date of their composition down to the present time.

## ANIMAL TEMPERERS.

IF I only had a Kodak I should often take a flying shot at our cat, who looks out of the dining-room window with a display of appropriate interest, which shows how differently people view the same question or fact. He puts the blind aside with his paw and gazes into the street in an obviously inquiring mood, but no gleam of interest comes into his receptive eyes (I don't know how much larger they are in comparison with his size than those of, say, the Astronomer Royal, who is supposed to see farther than any man) till a dog happens to stroll by, or a sparrow to hop after its lunch. They represent to him the ways of the world. He does not turn his head when a German band plants its tripods by the roadside and rends the air. Not that 'Blackie,' as he came to be called during a period of inquiry after a darker name, is humanly unsociable. He fulfils all the requirements of domesticity, sleeps by day, catches or deters mice by night, and asks for his meals without insistent mews. But he is the only cat I ever knew who 'ran' after his mistress with canine alacrity. In fact, he must be a 'Dog-incarnate.' Generally even the most devoted puss enters or leaves a room with an air of respectful deliberation, which is overdone when you have to open the door for him or her. But 'Blackie' runs to meet his friend, and trots up and down stairs in her company like a terrier. At the same time, he has a warm heart towards his kind, and when his mate died was so inconsolable as to begin shrinking away with such rapid loss of weight that we had to send into the country for a bride, who came in a hamper, and after whose arrival the disconsolate bereaved began at once to put on flesh again, and weeps no more.

Talking of the inability of some cats to restrain their feelings, I might mention an instance of this which caused passing embarrassment at, or rather before, a party. The courteous host owned a greedy inconsiderate 'Tom,' who always, at meal-time, pleaded with *crescendo* mews till he had received his dole. Well, one day an old Scotch minister who had been asked to say grace was saying a very long one, 'Tom' meanwhile trying to attract attention. Upon this the host, who was somewhat deaf, and thus whispered audibly, vexed at the solicitations of his cat (which

nobody interpreted beside himself), said behind his hand to the lady next him, who had glanced at the wordy divine, 'He always goes on so when there is anything to eat.'

From cats it is a short step to dogs. I have one now, a brisk fox terrier, 'Spot,' who shows a mood of resentment I never saw in a dog before. In our dining-room there is a sofa standing against the wall with a narrow upright strip of looking-glass behind it. One day I took up Spot, who was sleeping on a cushion, and showed him the image of his face. He glanced at himself, but, beyond a low growl, thought apparently no more of the matter, for he lay down again without saying a word. Presently, however, after reflection in more senses than one, he got up, and flew at his own in the mirror. He obviously fancied that I had introduced another (kennelled) dog into the family without consulting him, and that he was bound to assert himself. Baulked by the unexpected resistance he met with, he retired, and bided his time. Whether he imagined that my presence supported the courage of the other dog I could not ascertain; but, anyhow, the next day, when we were all out of doors, our servant heard a great rumpus in the dining-room, and, coming hurriedly in, found Mr. Spot furiously fighting his double in the glass. He had many subsequent rounds with him, sometimes in public. Finding, however, that attention was being directed to his procedure, and that occasionally an appreciative bit of biscuit followed an encounter, he put two and two together, and began to look at the business of warfare in a lucrative light. Thus he will now present himself, asking for some inducement to have a turn with the enemy. On my saying 'Sss!' he leaps on the sofa and dashes at him open-mouthed, returning after the bout for material recognition. Occasionally, indeed, finding that he is none the worse personally for these encounters, he volunteers a display of one, and the silence of a conversational pause is broken by Spot's attack upon the mysterious kennel from the recesses of which the other dog, though never able to make his teeth felt, returns to the combat with undiminished alacrity. Spot is plainly perplexed at this, for now and then while lying on the carpet he glances at the kennel's mouth, since, perhaps, his enemy may be looking out, or he peeps under the sofa to see if he happens to be hidden there. His whereabouts, except when distinctly challenged, is the unsolved problem which ever exercises the mind of his enemy, who (like many others) is haunted by inability to define the inscrutable.

Spot, moreover, displays notable confidence in accepting deceptive proposals, since, whenever I chance idly to make a hole on the grass with my stick, he assumes that it indicates an entrance to the lair of some latent prey, and 'scraps' as if he had never been disappointed, though his preliminary sniff, which always precedes excavation, might be expected to daunt his appetite for research. 'Silver,' his companion, a big retriever, always treats these exhibitions of energy with humorous contempt, and is, indeed, the only dog I ever knew who distinctly smiles. He does this, often irresistibly, when he wants to be unchained, but also at other times when an absurd thought happens to cross his mind. He and Spot are the best of friends; though, in responding to a playful snap, he is apt to forget how big and sharp his own teeth are, to the detriment of his small companion, who, even if his wounds have to be dressed, refuses to reckon them as the kisses of an 'enemy,' but returns to the risky game as soon as he can with unabated affection.

Though dogs 'delight to bark and bite,' this is by no means always an indication of ill-will; but the displays of enmity or cruelty in the animal world are often sorely painful to their human friends. In no region, perhaps, are these more notable than among the fowls of the air. We do not readily notice the unfeeling appetite with which fish prey upon one another, though we may be struck by the sign of it which appears when we find a small pike in the belly of a big one which has been caught with a live bait. We are left to imagine the anxious lives led by little fish in the confined waters of a pond, but can see for ourselves some of the terrors which pervade the spacious air. Every sportsman knows—though many, I am glad to think, decline to avail themselves of this artificial influence—how a partridge will crouch to the ground if a paper kite in the shape of a hawk is flown over a field from which it would have flown at the approach of a man. And no one can have seen an unhappy owl which has strayed into the blaze of day 'mobbed' by a crowd of spiteful little birds, without apprehending the bitterness of opinion which often prevails in the flying world.

No doubt there is a marvellous (one might call it mysterious) unanimity shown in the flight of a flock of starlings, which turn on the wing with a sudden impulse impossible to have been communicated by a leader; and the gathering of swallows, bred in England, before they start for an unrehearsed flight into tropical warmth as

hopefully as invalids flit to the Riviera, is a display of concerted action and pleasant fellow-feeling. But amongst those birds which stay at home, especially the most domesticated, there is often an exhibition of unkindness seemingly unaccountable. The graceful swan, e.g., is one of the most ungracious in its ways. Not only (in the breeding season) does a male bird resent the intrusion of strange gentlemen, but it will spend the day in driving off from its domain any unlucky geese, who might be plainly assumed to have no designs upon its domestic arrangements, and have, indeed, no desire beyond that for a comfortable wash and swim. It will also pursue even the most innocent of new-born ducklings while they unwittingly rejoice in an early taste of their common element. But this is not all. When an only child has passed out of the cygnet stage of life, and grown to full physical if not mental maturity, father and mother swans have been known to fall upon and deliberately beat it to death with wing and beak. I have myself seen an instance of this. The gratified parents swam gracefully about the mere in which they lived, while the great white corpse of their son lay, battered and dead, upon the shore. The following year, after another had been born to them, and in infancy carried upon his mother's back, they began to treat him so roughly that, not being pinioned like them, he wisely flew away, and we saw him no more. Curiously enough, geese which have experienced rudeness from swans in the lusty spring have been known to retaliate in the calmer autumn, when the fierceness of their enemy had become mitigated. I have seen a gander leap upon the back of a once arrogant swan, and after a period of enforced impotent enmity pound away at it in the full enjoyment of gratified revenge.

But it is not the water alone which provides these displays of jealousy, violence, and deliberate reprisal among birds. For instance, I have known all the fowls in a yard (moved by some occult reason) 'boycott' one of their number who had shared the same meadow, house, and perches with themselves. He might be seen wandering apart all day, and at night waiting, apparently, till the whole community had gone to roost and was fast asleep before he ventured to seek a night's rest for himself. Not long ago a cockerel of our own, in the country, came to be thus treated. His plumage was badly ruffled, some of it being torn off, showing spots of blood upon his skin. 'Been fighting?' I asked our observant man. 'Well, no,' he replied; 'but the rest

never let that cockerel alone. They fall upon him if he tries to go to bed with the others.' I presently saw an illustration of this unkindness. There was a little tunnel leading from the meadow in which fowls spent the day into a yard containing the houses where they roosted. This admitted the passage of only one bird at a time, and if the outcast attempted to enter it before all the rest had disappeared, our man said he would be driven back. I waited to see. One by one each member of the meadow party, when the lowering sun announced the hour of bedtime, stooped its head and passed out of sight into the tunnel, but it was not till the last had gone that the battered lonely cockerel (after a cautious pause, as if he were listening to hear whether his enemies had begun to snore) crept through in search of a perch. What had he done, what had he said, to be thus ostracised? Is there any 'shibboleth' in the pronunciation of a cackle or a crow, failure in which determines the social position of a fowl? No sign of kindly recognition ever met him in the whole community. They were all of one mind, and never noticed the outcast, except to strike him if he made a neighbourly advance, and leave him out in the cold when they retired comfortably to rest. Yet he was of the same feather as themselves, had brothers and sisters, hatched under the same hen, with whom he had shared the same nursery coop, but from all of whom he had become socially severed on coming of age. It could not have been that he had carried himself as a too-confident Lothario, for in that case he would have passed through the same experience as any other cockerel—fought, i.e., his maiden duel, and either had his claims recognised or been driven to make fresh matrimonial arrangements. No. There was some occult influence which barred him from his seemingly due place in the world. What subtle forces are these which move the minds of birds? There is certainly a marked individual difference of character among those in the same fowl-yard. It is not merely that some of the same feather are good 'layers,' while others fail to admit that eggs are intended to be sat upon as well as laid; but some are exceptionally maternal in their ways, 'mothering' brood after brood with a display of devotion which leads the housewife to speak of them as if they were human neighbours distinguished for their skill in bringing up a family. In this case, so far as regards the interests of an affectionate hen, it is, perhaps, unkind for a mistress to treat her very tenderly, lest others (who fail to

realise humble virtue) should resent favouritism and make her life unpleasant.

They are not fowls only, however, who object to the presence of such as properly belong to their own society and are of the same kin. We had two calves, much attached to one another, which had from earliest calf-hood dwelt together in the same little room, till it was time to introduce them to our small herd, containing mostly their own uncles and aunts as well as mothers. We thought they would have been welcomed with affection, but they were boycotted for at least a month. Nothing would induce their family to let them graze with it, though the prohibition was afterwards removed. Our two old horses, also, at first peremptorily resented the arrival of a Welsh pony ('Taffy') when he was turned into 'their' meadow. They hunted, kicked at, and bit him without mercy or provocation, till he made such great friends with our donkey, who was on good terms with them, that they accepted this alliance as an introduction, and agreed to recognise 'Taffy' as a companion, especially when I gave him carrots and would let them have none unless they behaved themselves. But to this hour he generally ranges himself with 'Daisy' (our donkey), and always jogs up with her when I make my appearance at our entrance door with, presumably, biscuits and bits of bread. But 'Daisy' is by far the daintier of the pair, and flatly refuses a piece of dry buttered toast.

The intelligence of a donkey is much underrated, and it is hard to say why his name is used to indicate human stupidity. Nicety of taste is not perhaps an infallible measure of intellect, but there is no animal more particular about its food than an ass, and I doubt much whether it really has any predilection for thistles. 'Daisy' not only declines a scrap which has any grease upon it, but objects to dog-biscuit (though she sees 'Taffy' enjoy it), and is twice as cunning as he is in evading proposals to put her into harness. When once, however, within the shafts, she accepts the situation with such alacrity as to justify the wisdom of Solomon, who says, 'A whip for the horse and a bridle for the ass.' It is often as hard to hold her in as to catch her if wanted for the cart. Curiously enough, neither horses nor donkeys, though otherwise intelligent, seem to recognise the distinguishing names by which they are called. Dogs, who are clever and eat almost anything, respond thus, especially in advertisements, when the identification of 'Dash' is supposed to be assured if he is so

addressed. I heard, however, lately of one named 'Dan,' who on Sundays refused to answer unless he was called 'Daniel.' Talking of dogs, 'Daisy' dislikes 'Silver' so much as often to kick at him if loose; but, I take it, this is because once, when she was hopelessly harnessed to the cart, he bit her nose and made it bleed. Animals do not readily forget and forgive. There is a well-authenticated story of an elephant who, on appealing for an alms to a spectator, was given a copious pinch of snuff from a box which he saw taken out of the donor's pocket. Of course this gift produced an unexpectedly prodigious sneeze, embarrassing to the elephant's self-respect, whose virgin nostril had never before been so affronted. So the next time the gentleman passed by he suddenly took the box out of his waistcoat pocket with the finger of his trunk, and stamped upon it. The friend who told me this anecdote vouched for its truth, and said he had seen the obnoxious silver mull flat as a saucer.



*THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE DRIFFELL.*<sup>1</sup>

BY JAMES PAYN.

## PART I.

DRIFFELL HALL in the Midlands is not a 'show place,' not because it is lacking in picturesqueness, or even a certain grandeur, but because it is too modern. The Driffells are an old family, as families go, but they are not a 'county family.' This distinction has been withheld from them because, from father to son for several generations, they have been 'connected with trade.' George Driffell, the head of the family when I first came to know it, so far from being ashamed of this fact, took pride in it. Upon the whole, I think he would have preferred being the architect of his own fortunes, rather than, if it had been possible, to have had any progenitors at all. No one could have been prouder of his ancestral acres than Driffell was of his, provided, as it was, with all the newest inventions of science. Some of them he had suggested himself, and was always adding new improvements to the machinery of his mill. The Hall was handsomely furnished, quite in the modern style, without any pretence of æstheticism or particularity of any kind; but what it possessed in the way of art was both choice and rare. There were not a few graceful statues and many pictures, most of them by artists of high repute. There was also a fine library, chiefly drawn from modern authors, and—what seemed curious in the house of so clever a mechanic—mostly poets and novelists. But George Driffell was a many-sided man. It was only as a boy, a friend of his son Laurence, at that time, like myself, about fifteen years old, that I first knew him; but his character impressed me even at that early age, when character must be striking indeed to produce impression. He was a fair man, well-built, very good-looking, and in appearance about six-and-thirty, though I have reason to believe he was some years older. Of course I could not foresee

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1896, in the United States of America.

that he was destined to be the most interesting person I had ever come across, the talk of all his neighbours, the puzzle of the countryside for years; but I well remember overhearing a remark made about him by Dr. Garden to Mr. Chorley, the clergyman of our parish. 'He is all you say, my dear sir, and more; I have a very high opinion of his intelligence; indeed, what rather alarms me about him sometimes, is that he seems capable of such possibilities.'

I did not quite understand what he meant by this at the time, but it struck me later on as being a very far-sighted description of the man. It attracted my attention because Dr. Garden was a person of great reputation for intelligence. Mr. Driffell and he were great friends. They would sit for hours together in the billiard room without touching a cue, in close conversation over their tobacco—the visitor with his pipe, the host with a cigar, mild, but of the finest brand. Mr. Driffell was also very particular about his coffee, and there his love of luxury ended. His tastes in other respects were extremely simple, and I remember that Mrs. Driffell found it very difficult to make him dress for dinner, even when people came to dine with them. Perhaps I did not notice these matters at the time; but afterwards, when circumstances took place which rendered his peculiarities of the highest interest, I recalled them. His wife was about his own age, but not so young-looking. She had, I was told, been a very pretty girl, which, when a woman is six-and-thirty and a boy fifteen, it is hard for the latter to believe. I once heard the Rector say that they were the handsomest young couple he had ever joined together. Her hair was still plentiful, and of a brilliant brown; her figure had not fallen away; but her face, though it could not be called haggard, bore the autograph of care upon it. The pair did not live unhappily together; her husband was uniformly kind, and even at times tender in his manner to her; but this was almost always after some little disagreement with her—a not unusual occurrence—and proceeded, I think, from remorse; not, that is to say, from any deep-seated sense of wrong-doing, but from repentance at having vexed her. He was unconscious of having ever really behaved ill to her, nor, indeed, so far as I know, had he ever done so; but I think it was that he did not love her as she deserved. Perhaps it was because she knew this, that she had not succeeded in retaining the affection he once had for her, that her brow had become so clouded. Immersed in

business and devoted to its details as he was, her love was not so necessary to him as his was to her. With men, as a great writer says, 'Love is much or little; with women it is everything.' She did not understand him; not only was the business side of his character incomprehensible to her, but, what was of far more consequence, the sentimental side.

She was not stupid, far from it; but she had little imagination and did not sympathise with his love for poetry and fiction. Still less did she share his admiration for Shakespeare, to whom he was more devoted than any man I ever met. He had formed a little Shakespeare Club, as he liked to call it, comprising, however, only a very few members, and we met once a fortnight at the Hall in the winter to read a play. Dr. and Mrs. Garden, Mr. Chorley, Mr. Sandeman, the family lawyer, who was a near neighbour, and his wife, were the most regular attendants, with Mr. and Mrs. Driffell and we two boys. These evenings were a great trial to Mrs. Driffell, who would much rather have been a spectator than one of the *dramatis personæ*. She was not fitted to sustain characters of great importance, and her failure to do so always annoyed her husband, especially as Mrs. Garden, an exceptionally intelligent woman, came on these occasions into favourable comparison with her. I am almost inclined to think that Mr. Sandeman, an acute solicitor enough, but not given to the dramatic art, would have preferred to have his dinner at the Hall without the intellectual entertainment that followed it. As for Laurence, he confided to me with characteristic frankness that he thought the Shakespeare evenings 'Tommy Rot.' Whatever game one plays well at, no matter what it is, is attractive to the player, and it is no wonder that Mr. Driffell, on the other hand, was fond of these readings; whatever part fell to his share he performed it well, but his favourite rôles were those of impulse and passion.

I was too young, of course, to perceive how strangely this was at variance with his character as it was generally understood by his neighbours. He was by them considered not only a long-headed, but a hard-headed man, devoted to business, and, so far as they understood it, to science, and little given to the softer emotions. Yet I felt that in this last opinion at least they were mistaken. Laurence, as his son, was of course an object of far greater interest to him than myself, but he was, so to speak, his mother's boy and not his father's; he had, necessarily at so early an age, no

particular devotion to business ; he was not averse to the part he knew he must one day play in the world as the master of the mill, a great employer of labour, and the leading manufacturer of the district ; but he preferred for the present to think as little of that as possible. He liked riding, and even shooting, for he had been indulged with a gun of his very own, and was distinguished in all athletic sports, of his excellence in which his mother was very proud, while Mr. Driffell took no sort of interest in them ; the intellectual side of Laurence's character (though he by no means wanted for wits) was, on the other hand, little developed, and of imagination he had very little. He loved books, though he had a turn for mathematics, as a dog loves a whip, and no better.

It was not to my credit that my tastes, on the other hand, were literary. I was born in India, and like many children under the same circumstances, was delicate and disinclined for outdoor sports. My mother had died when I was very young, and my father, a general officer in the Indian Army, the year after I had been sent for my health to England. The Rector, who had been made my guardian, and his wife (who however died shortly afterwards), supplied, so far as it was possible, the place of my parents. They were very kind and indulgent to me, and perhaps more careful in seeing that I was exposed to no dangers than if I had been their own son ; their sense of responsibility was, I fear, a source of anxiety to them. I was not permitted to go to school, but received probably as good an education at the hands of Mr. Chorley as I should have done anywhere. I was a questioning boy, a type which is not encouraged at schools, and never questioned my dear guardian in vain. What I lacked was such advantages as come from the society of other boys. Laurence was the only young friend I had, and I was with him but during the holidays. Thus I mixed almost entirely with my elders, and to some extent grew out of the boy in tone and manner before my time. My guardian looked after my studies as far as learning was concerned ; but, as is the case with every boy with any independence of character, the books that I naturally turned to formed my real education, and I was permitted to read pretty much what I pleased. This was chiefly poetry and fiction. In Luxton, the town near which we lived, and in which Mr. Driffell's mill was situated, this class of literature was not popular. People who read at all did so for the avowed purpose of improving their

minds, and not for pleasure. I discovered, however, a kindred spirit where I certainly had not expected to do so. On returning one afternoon from Luxton I was overtaken by Mr. Driffell, who was on his way home, as usual, from the mill.

'Well, Gresham,' he exclaimed, at the same time clapping me on the back, 'what have been your studies to-day? Have you been a good boy?'

I replied, laughingly, that as Mr. Chorley had been absent at a clerical meeting I had been reading 'Nicholas Nickleby' instead of the ancient classics.

'Do you mean really reading it,' he answered, in his short, sharp way, 'or only glancing through it after the manner of your kind?'

'I have read every word of it,' I replied, a little indignantly, 'and almost know it by heart.'

'Those be brave words, Master Gresham,' said he; 'then tell me about Mr. Bonney.'

'Mr. Bonney,' I repeated; 'there is nothing about any person of that name.'

Mr. Driffell laughed in his dry way, but by no means ill-naturedly; he was not, perhaps, displeased with his own better memory.

'What, have you forgotten already the Chairman of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company?'

'Dear me, how stupid of me!' I said, 'and he was in the very first chapter, with Sir Matthew Pupker.'

'No, he was not, sir, he was in the second; but that's a detail. Whatever is worth reading at all, my lad,' he added gently, for he saw that I was sadly put out, 'is worth reading with attention.'

Then he began talking about the book, and of Dickens, who, with the exception of Brunel (the engineer), was, he said, the greatest man alive.

'Mr. Chorley will probably put him after the Duke of Wellington, but there are some matters in which even the good Rector is mistaken.'

There was something in Mr. Driffell's manner that often made me in doubt whether he was speaking seriously or not; and it prevented me on this occasion from assuring him of what I was very certain, that my guardian thought a good many people

beside the Duke of Wellington (including the bishop of the diocese) superior to Dickens.

From that time forth—I cannot tell why, and, indeed, there were many things that puzzled me, and were fated to be many more about him—Mr. Driffell often conversed with me upon literary topics; it seemed to please him that I was enthusiastic about this and that author, of whom he knew much more than I did.

But these conversations never took place till after business hours, during which, I believe, he never thought of anything save what concerned his calling. I got into the habit of meeting him at some point or another on his road home in the late afternoon, and he seemed to be glad of my companionship. About this time, however, a circumstance occurred which monopolised all his attention, and caused great excitement in Luxton. A strike was threatened in that part of the country, and though, when such things had occurred before, Mr. Driffell's mill, thanks to his excellent government and the general esteem in which he was held, had been excepted, it was now included. I went in and out of the Hall like a tame cat, and heard a good deal of talk between Mr. Driffell and his manufacturing friends upon this matter. They were all for standing firm and resisting what they described as the unreasonable demands of their workpeople, but he, to my surprise, took a different view.

‘I shall give in if they compel me to do so,’ he said; ‘but I do not think they will compel me.’

This speech was taken very ill by the others, first, because it seemed to desert the cause, and, secondly, because they thought it assumed a certain superiority over them as regarded popularity with the men. But he was quite firm, and refused to join anything in the nature of a lock-out until he had seen how his men behaved to him. As it turned out, his resolve, from his own point of view, was a correct one, but the others never forgave him; it created a rift between him and his neighbours, and after a certain mysterious event, in which his character was deeply implicated, caused many uncharitable remarks and surmises.

I am not sure that personally he was exceptionally popular with his workpeople. They knew him to be a just, and by no means grinding man, but there was no great intimacy between them. He was open-handed enough; but his wife was his almoner, and it was through her that they benefited, when in sickness or

distress, by his liberality. In the Midlands as in the North country the relations between employer and employed are different from those in the South. The mechanic is far more independent than the labourer; he dislikes patronage and resents interference of any kind. Though with his workmen he was familiar enough, Mr. Driffell knew nothing of their wives and families. It was not his business, as he would have expressed it, to do so, nor would they have welcomed his intrusion. A certain circumstance, therefore, which took place about this time, though commonplace and unimportant in itself, made some impression upon me. The country close to Luxton would have been picturesque but for the havoc made with it by the various manufacturing processes of the town. Scores of chimneys vomited forth all kinds of unwholesome exhalations, which fell like a blight upon vegetation. But a few miles off, where Driffell Hall was situated, the landscape improved greatly. I was returning home one afternoon with the Rector along a footpath through the meadow, which was never much frequented, when we noticed in a field ahead of us two persons standing by the stile. They were very close together, and talking, as it seemed, confidentially.

‘The old, old story,’ remarked Mr. Chorley, with his pleasant smile.

‘Yes,’ I agreed, ‘it looks very much like it.’

But, when we came nearer, what was our surprise to recognise in one of the two persons Mr. Driffell. The other was a young girl, Esther Kean, the stepdaughter of one of his factory hands. She was well known to the Rector, and had not a very happy home; he had been called in on more than one occasion to settle certain domestic differences concerning which Esther had not been in fault—she had an excellent character, and was diligent and hardworking. We were quite sure when we identified the couple that our diagnosis of them had been incorrect; but as we came on the girl walked swiftly away, and Mr. Driffell waited quietly for us at the stile. He did not allude in any way to his late companion, and was evidently quite undisturbed as to any conclusion that might be drawn from her meeting with him. But, in fact, we drew none, though the circumstance was doubtless strange from his never, as I have said, concerning himself with the families of his workpeople; we felt it impossible that he could be associated with anything in the nature of a flirtation with a factory girl. I was fated to see him that same evening

playing a part that befitted him much better, and was, in fact, characteristic of him in the highest degree.

Laurence and I were in the billiard-room, when Mr. Driffell came in, cigar in mouth as usual, and watched our very unscientific game; when it was finished he took up a cue and showed us, with great patience, how certain strokes were to be made. While thus engaged, Merton, the butler, entered the room, and told his master that some 'persons' had called and wished to see him. We all knew by his face that they were not callers that would be welcomed, because he looked so pleased. I believe the man had really a liking for his employer and the family generally, but I never saw anyone so charmed with having bad news to tell. When a couple of men had one day met with their deaths by accident at the mill, he told his mistress of it in my presence with a relish that would have befitted congratulations on her birthday, and when she exclaimed, with emotion, 'Oh, Merton, how dreadful! How did it happen?'

'Well, they do say, mum,' he replied with an engaging smile, 'that it was through our unfenced machinery.'

On the present occasion, under his master's eye, he knew better than to grin; but I saw him furtively rub his hands.

'Oh, there are "persons" here, are there?' said Mr. Driffell. 'How many persons?'

'Well, sir, I think there's half a dozen at least. They calls themselves a deputation from the mill, I believe.'

'Very good,' said Mr. Driffell, executing a very difficult canon, 'show the "persons" in.'

I rose to go, but he said, 'You may stay if you like, Gresham; and as to you, Laurence, I wish you to stay. What you hear will be worth your while to listen to, as a lesson in later life, when the mill will have passed out of my hands.' There was a noise without of trampling feet, heavy and slow, and then a stoppage as though the visitors were not anxious to take precedence of one another in entering the room. However, the door opened and six mill hands presented themselves. I knew two or three of them by sight: one was Robert Saken, the stepfather of Esther Kean; an ill-favoured fellow with a slouch in his gait and a slink in his eye. The others were well-set, resolute-looking fellows, but on the present occasion with a certain doggedness of manner due, no doubt, to the nature of their errand. Mr. Driffell, leaning on his billiard-cue, cigar in mouth, regarded them with an easy air.



‘Well,’ he said, ‘what is it, my men?’ There was a moment’s pause, and then Saken, admonished by sundry nudges from behind, took on himself the *rôle* of spokesman.

‘Well, you see, it’s about present rates, sir, that is, of wages; we think, considering the business as is being done, that we ought to be better paid. That is what is thought in the other Luxton mills, and they are going to strike about it.’

‘And you are going to join them, eh?’ said Mr. Driffell, his face growing very set. ‘Is that what you mean?’

‘Well, we are sorry; you have been a good master, we don’t deny it. But we must look to ourselves. It’s a chance, you see, as don’t come every day.’ (Mr. Driffell removed his cigar to emit a not very pleasant laugh, and put it back again.) ‘I mean, there’s a good many orders on hand.’

‘I see, then, you mean to strike, do you? Just so; you will, however, listen to a word I have to say upon the matter, I suppose, or you would hardly have taken the trouble to call.’

‘We are very glad to listen, sir; you have, as I says, been always a good master to us,’ said Saken; ‘it’s no pleasure to us——’

‘You have had your say,’ interposed Mr. Driffell, impatiently, ‘now let me have mine. I have had the mill in my hands these ten years, and my father had it before me for three times ten.’

‘That is so,’ put in one of the oldest men. ‘I’ve been more than forty years with the two of you.’

‘Now, has anyone here, or any man that you know of, been treated by me or mine otherwise than justly? Have we been hard upon you in hard times, or taken advantage of our opportunities in any way to get the better of you?’

‘We don’t deny as you have been a just master—ay, and a kind one,’ said the men in a sort of chorus; ‘but we have ourselves to look to,’ added Saken.

‘Quite right,’ said Mr. Driffell; ‘nothing more natural. We all do that; but sometimes we are mistaken as to what is good for us, that is, in the end. There have been strikes now and again, in this neighbourhood, but not in our mill. Not one, I believe, in forty years.’

‘No, not one,’ murmured the men.

‘It’s a long record of good will on both sides, and it seems a pity to break it. But, as Saken yonder has said, a chance has just now happened that does not occur every day. My necessity has become your opportunity; you have got me in a cleft stick, and

if you insist upon your demands, if they were even greater than this one—I give you that *in*—I am compelled, however ungrateful I may think your conduct, to submit. That is pretty much your view of the case, I take it?’

‘Well, yes,’ said the men (two of them grinning, though by no means maliciously), ‘that is about it.’

‘Very good: now you shall have *my* view. If you insist, as I say, you must have your way. But, remember, this mill of mine will not in that case be carried on upon the old lines. My motto will henceforth be “Hard and Fast.” It is very profitable at present, but that, as you well know, cannot always last. It will be less so one day. Now take it from me, and you know I am a man of my word, there will then be no consideration about hard times; I will have my pound of flesh whatever happens. My turn will come round; to-day for you, to-morrow for me; and when it does, I will have my rights to the uttermost farthing. I know all about this matter. It is only a few of you—and those not here—who have picked this quarrel; but if they think they are going to get the better of me in the end, whatever they may do just at present, they don’t know George Driffell. That is my last word.’

He threw away his cigar and confronted them with resolute eyes, just a trace of colour in his usually pale cheeks, but with no other sign of anger. There was a significant silence among the deputation, broken by a cough or two, then a whispered conference, after which their spokesman, Saken, observed, with some pomposity, that the deputation would make its report upon the interview to the committee, which would in their turn inform Mr. Driffell what determination they should resolve on respecting the strike. Then, with a ‘Good-night’ in a tone meant, I thought, to be conciliatory, on the part of the men, and a nod from the master of a less genial character, the deputation withdrew.

It was a curious experience for one of my age to have had, and it made a strong impression on me. Such sympathies as I had on the matter were for the ‘hands,’ and not for their employer, but his attitude and behaviour interested me very much. Without the least harshness, or even hardness, he struck me as the very type of firmness, nor was the confidence he evidently felt in his own position, and which he had already expressed to others, misplaced; so far as he was concerned there was no more trouble about the strike. He was not at all triumphant about it, but, this cause of anxiety being removed, he more than ever devoted him-

self to business affairs. It was significant of his frank and masterful nature that he spoke of them, no matter who was present, or however little they might be expected to sympathise with him, provided there was even one person who was supposed to understand them. If Mr. Sandeman, the lawyer, for example, happened to be at the Hall—and he was a frequent visitor—he discussed these things regardless of the fact that the rest of his audience were women and boys. It was touching—for it was so evident that even I could perceive it—how Mrs. Driffell strove to interest herself in these topics, and most lamentably failed. Laurence listened with an enforced attention which was a considerable strain upon him, but which an occasional reference to himself rendered necessary. ‘You must remember this, my boy,’ his father would say to him, after some rather abstruse statement regarding financial matters, and poor Laurence would nod his head and break into a profuse perspiration from a consciousness that he understood nothing about it. It was a subject even more foreign to me than to him, but I gathered that Mr. Driffell’s property was by no means entirely in his own hands, and that when Laurence came to be twenty-five years of age, some deed would have to be executed by father and son to set free some considerable sum which was at present locked up. It was an immense nuisance, Mr. Driffell said—though the lawyer did not seem wholly to agree with him—since it prevented a great extension of his present business under most favourable circumstances. Even as it was, he appeared to contemplate the expenditure of a great deal of money in the purchase of a certain patent, which would involve the introduction of much new machinery. It was not a topic that would have been received with rapture in any drawing-room, and it was little less than painful to watch Mrs. Driffell’s countenance during its discussion. She would, as it seemed to me, have been so pleased if she could have shown some intelligent interest in it, but it was simply impossible; nor, it was clear, did her husband in the least expect that she should do so, which, instead of mitigating her distress, strangely enough increased it.

‘He has given up,’ she seemed to be saying to herself, ‘any expectation of my being able to sympathise with what he has most at heart; he is content, but only as one who makes the best of a bad bargain.’ This may perhaps have been an afterthought of mine suggested by subsequent events, and put into my mind by older heads; but, boy as I was, I had such a regard for Mrs. Driffell,

from whom I had received a constant and unstinted kindness, that I think I could enter into her feelings.

A person with whom one would have thought Mr. Driffell would have preferred to discuss his affairs rather than with Mr. Sandeman was Mr. Baird, his manager at the mill, who had also, though to a very small extent, a pecuniary interest in it. But, though a man in whom he put the greatest trust, he was in temperament his very antipodes; averse to risk, content with present gains, which indeed were very large, and thoroughly conservative. For him the machinery, by help of which the mill had been so prosperous for years, was good enough. Baird was always, as his senior partner used contemptuously to express it, for patching; in short, though the two men worked together very amicably, they had not an idea in common. It may, indeed, have been without confiding to him his intention to purchase the new patent—though the manager could hardly have been ignorant of what was so openly discussed—that Mr. Driffell announced one evening that he was on the morrow going to town for that purpose and might be away for some few days.

There was quite a large dinner party at the Hall that night—my guardian, who brought me with him as a matter of course, and, indeed, being by that time sixteen, I was almost to be counted among the ‘grown-ups,’ Mr. and Mrs. Sandeman, and Dr. Garden and his wife. The Rector, who was not a smoker, joined the ladies after dinner; but the three other gentlemen adjourned, as usual, to the billiard-room, where we two boys had already gone to knock the balls about. It was characteristic of our host that we were permitted to go on with our game while he spoke with his friends about his plans. Never was any man so free from reticence in such matters; not that he wore his heart upon his sleeve by any means; indeed, his neighbours, with few exceptions, found him difficult to get on with beyond a certain point. ‘One never gets any forwarder with Driffell,’ they said; but about business matters, which they treated (as it struck me) with a certain sacredness and mystery, he was as open as the day. He spoke, too, in a loud, confident tone, and between the click of the billiard balls it was impossible (had there been any impropriety in listening) to avoid hearing the conversation. The purchase of the patent, it seemed, would probably involve a large sum of money, and would have to be conducted with a certain secrecy. Mr. Driffell did not wish, at all events for the present, to be

known as its proprietor, and still less was he willing that his rival manufacturers should know of his intention to be so, before he had effected his object. He would, therefore, he said, not even take his cheque book with him, but in order to avoid identification would pay for it, as well as for the machinery of which it was the outcome, in bank notes. 'It does not much signify, I suppose, what is thought about the matter in Luxton,' observed the doctor, 'but the cashing of so large a cheque at the bank will probably be commented on.'

'That misfortune must have happened already,' replied Mr. Driffell, drily, 'for I *have* cashed it, and have the money in the house.'

'Then I think the least said about it the better,' remarked the lawyer.

'Perhaps it was rash of me to mention it before you two gentlemen and the boys,' said Mr. Driffell, smiling.

'It will be much more rash to walk about London,' said the doctor, 'stuffed with bank notes, like Douglas Jerrold's "man made of money."'

'Pon my life, *I* should not like to do it,' agreed the lawyer, 'and for my part my mind will be considerably relieved when I hear that it is invested.'

'Do you think I am a likely man to get drunk, or in bad company?' asked Mr. Driffell, laughing. 'Well, I shall be well provided for the confidence trick, at all events.'

I had not seen Mr. Driffell in such good spirits for a long time. Speculation was always agreeable to him, and the prospect of realising what for some time had occupied his thoughts excited him. The patent would not be easy to get, as he had told us; it was not an ordinary business affair; the vendor would not be eager, as usual, to sell; the matter would require tact and judgment as well as a long purse, and these difficulties to him were a part of its attraction.

The shrubbery that bounded the grounds of the Hall had a gate into the Rectory garden, and my guardian and I looked in the next morning to wish our neighbour good-bye. We found him at the breakfast table in high spirits, and rallying his wife upon her downcast looks. 'One would think,' he said, 'that I was going to run away from you.' She did not think that, but their parting was not such as takes place, even in the case of a few days' separation, between a husband and wife who are deeply attached to one

another. She loved him, at all events, much more, I think, than he loved her, though, as I have said, there was nothing to be found fault with in his behaviour to her. He kissed her on the forehead, and said he should return on the ensuing Thursday, or Friday at the latest, and then his Gladstone bag—which was all the luggage he took with him—was thrown into the dog-cart, which was driven off at a great pace. He did not, as usual, take the reins himself, and I thought that he might have looked back once at his wife, who stood in the porch waving her handkerchief, which would have been more useful if applied to her eyes; but, as she afterwards pitifully expressed it, ‘It was not dear George’s way.’

Some husbands—not always the best of husbands—write when away from their homes a daily letter; if it is not received anxiety is aroused about them. ‘What can be the matter,’ they say, ‘with dearest George?’ but Mr. Driffell was not a George of that description, so that when Wednesday came—he had departed on a Monday—and even Thursday morning, no great apprehension for his safety was aroused. If Mrs. Driffell felt it, at least she did not show it; he had said he would return on that day, or Friday at the latest, and no doubt he would keep his word. She was rather less talkative even than usual, which perhaps indicated some apprehension, but any reference to him was received with cheerfulness. Mrs. Sandeman, a kind and judicious woman, took care to treat this silence as a matter of course, but I noticed that she every day found a pretext of visiting the Hall and passing an hour or two with her friend. She was a good, motherly woman, of excellent common-sense, and knew how suspense is increased by solitude. The fact was that the lawyer himself began to feel some apprehension, which he had communicated to his wife, chiefly because of that vast sum of money Mr. Driffell had taken with him in spite of his remonstrances; the half of it, said Mr. Sandeman, would have been temptation for any thief to turn murderer. He and Dr. Garden came over to the Rectory that evening and discussed the situation. If there was no news of the missing man the next morning, it was agreed that the notes he had taken with him, and the numbers of which could of course be ascertained at the local bank, should be inquired for, if not stopped provisionally at the Bank of England.

This was no little responsibility for the lawyer to take, considering the character of his client, who, if it should turn out that there was nothing the matter, would without doubt be

exceedingly indignant at such a proceeding—for what he hated above all things was interference—but matters were getting too serious to admit of minor considerations. Friday morning came, and still no news. Mrs. Driffell looked a trifle paler, but said nothing. Laurence told me that his mother's hand had trembled so when she unlocked the post-bag that it fell on the floor. But after all, this was the day that he had promised to return home, and what need, if he meant to come, was there to write? That was, at all events, the remark she made to Mrs. Sandeman. It was very pitiful, said the lawyer's wife, to hear her say it. She seemed to feel it to be a humiliation; to have gone from Monday to Friday without a word from her husband, and not to know where he was gone—for he had not even mentioned the hotel he intended to stay at—was a trial for any wife.

During the forenoon the communication agreed upon was made by telegraph to Threadneedle Street, where Mr. Driffell was well known and had an account. The reply was: 'All the notes mentioned exchanged for gold yesterday by a stranger.' This was terrible news. There could have been no reason why Mr. Driffell should have wanted to change them; nor for any person who had come by them in an honest fashion. It was most unfortunate, though he had nothing to reproach himself about in the matter, that Mr. Sandeman had not telegraphed twenty-four hours earlier, when the notes would have been stopped and the thief arrested. We took it for granted that thief it was; but all that the facts told in the way of information was that the notes had not changed hands before the previous afternoon (Thursday), since, if illegally claimed, they would have been taken to the bank at once before notice of their numbers could be given. Up to Thursday, therefore, in all probability nothing had gone wrong with the missing man. All this was discussed in the drawing-room at the Hall, in the presence of Mrs. Driffell. It was sad to see her. Yet she did not behave altogether as one might have expected of a woman under such circumstances; she never 'gave way.' It was very rare to see the tears in her eyes; she listened to all that was said with a sort of patient resignation. Once, and only once, when some one was essaying to comfort her, she murmured, or rather moaned, 'He will never come back again.' This had begun to be the unwilling conviction of us all; but to my mind she seemed to have arrived at it by other means. She was like

one who has had a presentiment of evil, and beholds it realised. At times it struck me that she had some reason for her despair which she kept to herself; but, as a matter of fact, she knew nothing of her husband's disappearance that we did not know. That he had no intention of leaving his home was certain. Not only had he taken but a single change of clothes with him, and just such things, and no more, as a man who was indifferent to his personal appearance would take for a few days, but he had left his private papers in such a state of disorder as no man of business—and least of all such a man as he—would have dreamed of doing. Mr. Sandeman went over them with Mrs. Driffell, and placed them out of the reach of prying eyes.

It was curious how the house seemed to have changed now that its master had so mysteriously disappeared. The horror of it appeared to have affected the very rooms; though he was not there, they were, in my fancy, haunted by his presence. Laurence and I had no longer the spirit for playing at billiards, but if it had been otherwise I think we should have avoided that apartment, which used to be peculiarly his own. It was unfortunate that Mrs. Driffell had no daughters to sympathise with her in this great calamity; but Mrs. Sandeman did her best for her, and made her hours of solitude as few as possible. It was strange that she did not seem to suffer from suspense so much as those of us who were interested, indeed, but much less so, of course, than herself, in the loss of her husband. Every ring at the bell, every strange voice at the door, seemed to us to portend some tidings of him. I think she was too far gone in her despair to feel these things, of which hope was necessarily a factor.

That things looked very black as regarded the return of my kind friend and host—always pleasant and cordial to me, though that was not his character in the eyes of most—was certain enough. All that the telegraph could do for us had been done, and Mr. Sandeman started for town on Saturday to make such further inquiries as were possible. Every day he wrote to my guardian or the doctor, and they brought such news—which, indeed, was little enough—to Mrs. Driffell as they thought it well for her to know; or, rather, they told her all except the expressions which the lawyer occasionally used regarding the hopelessness of his quest. He knew the London hotel which Mr. Driffell usually put up at, and went thither first, and so far was fortunate that he there found traces of him. His client had gone thither as usual, and



what was very strange and made the whole affair more and more inexplicable, was that he had stopped there the whole time he had intended to be away, and only left it on the Thursday, the very day the notes had been changed at the bank, when he had packed his bag and paid his bill, and started, as the hotel people concluded, for home. It was possible, of course, that he had been robbed and murdered on that day—the notes having been changed in the afternoon—but, if so, it must have been in broad daylight.

This seemed to the lawyer to the last degree improbable, though less so to the Scotland Yard people, with whom, of course, Mr. Sandeman had at once put himself in communication. In the first place, they knew better than he did what strange things may happen in London, even to the best of us; and, secondly, they had not the knowledge which the lawyer possessed of his client's character. Mr. Deering, the detective who had 'the management of the case,' was confident there was a lady in it, at which his companion could not restrain a smile. They called on the patentee with whom Mr. Driffell had proposed to deal, and also upon a machinist of whom he had intended to make extensive purchases, but they could give them no information. This was not, however, unexpected, as he had told Mr. Sandeman that he intended in both cases to withhold his name. Upon the whole, Mr. Sandeman's investigations extended to ten days, and he returned to Luxton not much wiser than he went. He brought back, however, an idea with him for which he was solely indebted to the detective, and which was strongly combated by my guardian, that Mr. Driffell might have left his home designedly. My own impression at this date is that that was the view of Scotland Yard, because it had failed to find him in London; but at that time I had no grounds for such a diagnosis. The notion, to my mind, was simply ridiculous. It was not even mentioned, of course, to Mrs. Driffell. She had received the news, or rather no news, from London with impassive calm, as though she had expected none.

About this time a circumstance happened at Luxton that caused as great excitement in a narrower circle as the disappearance of Mr. Driffell had done. It was, in fact, another disappearance—that of Esther Kean, John Saken's step-daughter. There was no doubt, however, of her having gone designedly, since she had taken the contents of her little wardrobe with her. If it had been only on account of the similarity of the two occurrences, it

was impossible not to connect them together, and scandal did so very quickly. It was kept, for the present, from Mrs. Driffell's ears, but, as it is its way to do, it permeated all classes of society. The lawyer and his wife, and Dr. and Mrs. Garden, were often accustomed to hold council together at the Rectory, and the matter, of course, came under discussion. It was rather a varied company. The good Rector, with his grave, pained face; Mr. Sandeman, a man not much past middle age, but mature in appearance, and just a little slow of apprehension; the doctor, a bright and cheery old fellow, keen of eye and quick of thought; Mrs. Sandeman, a kind, matronly woman, adored, as she deserved to be, by her husband, and much the more popular of the two with their neighbours; and Mrs. Garden, the doctor's second wife, almost 'a young person' in contrast with the rest of the company, but by no means backward in expressing her views. Indeed, Mrs. Sandeman used satirically to remark that these friendly councils were like courts-martial, where the youngest member gives his opinion, except that he is asked for it and Mrs. Garden was not. But she was an intelligent woman, and not so easily swayed by sentiment as the lawyer's wife. Mr. Sandeman treated with contemptuous indignation the notion that the disappearance of the girl had anything to do with that of Mr. Driffell; and, indeed, that was more or less the view of the whole company. Still, for Mrs. Driffell's sake, Mrs. Garden contended that the matter ought to be thoroughly investigated; sooner or later it was pretty certain the poor lady would hear of it, and it would be well to have taken such steps as would prove the suspicions that had been aroused were without foundation. Mrs. Sandeman, on the other hand, thought that the scandalous rumours that were afloat should be treated with the contempt they deserved. Any attempt to grapple with them would be sure to be thought a proof that Mr. Driffell's friends had at least some doubt of their falsity.

'Then let some person apart from ourselves look into the matter,' argued Mrs. Garden. 'Mr. Sandeman's detective, for instance.'

This was a sagacious remark, for, as she probably foresaw, it at once enlisted the lawyer on her side.

'Upon my life,' he said, 'I think that is a good notion.'

Under the new conditions that had arisen the doctor thought so too, nor was the plan opposed by anybody. It relieved them, for one thing, of responsibility, and I think they were all pleasantly excited by the idea of having an emissary from Scotland

Yard amongst them. For my part I was delighted. It was long before the days of Sherlock Holmes, and a detective was a character I was only dimly acquainted with, and longed to see in the flesh. The matter was not to be mentioned, of course, beyond our own circle, and the difficulty was to instal Mr. Deering in Luxton without exciting remark. Several plans were proposed, but the one that found most favour was a proposal from my guardian that the man should be received at the Rectory in the character of a personal friend. He would be remote from the town, and not under the close observation that would certainly be his lot if he put up at an inn, and, indeed, playing the *rôle* of guest no one would venture to question him. I need hardly say that I welcomed this notion with rapture. To be under the same roof with a thief-catcher seemed the very height of social distinction.

It was resolved that Mrs. Driffell should not be let into the secret; there were many reasons why it should be so; and if Mr. Deering could clear her husband's name from suspicion—even though she had never known the cause for it—she would forgive the deception that had been practised upon her. Laurence also was told, because, perhaps, they thought it would be beyond my powers of secrecy to withhold the matter from my bosom friend; but there was no risk in telling Laurence, who, for his years, was a very staid and prudent young fellow, and taking after his mother rather than his father in being little subject to emotion of any kind.

There was nothing in Mr. Deering's appearance when he drove up in his fly from the Luxton station to induce anyone to think he was otherwise than what he professed to be—a guest of the Rector. He was far from distinguished-looking, but, on the other hand, with nothing *outré* or third-class about him; indeed, his most remarkable feature, if one may say so without an Irish bull, was that he had none; his air and manner quiet, but essentially common-place, by no means one of those persons of whom the novelists say, 'no one could meet him without turning back to look at him.' Even I, who scanned every inch of him with admiring interest, could make nothing of him, except a short, thin, wiry man of fifty years of age or so, with a face that had a pleasant expression so far as it went, only there did not seem to be enough of it. He had arrived by a late train, so for that evening my guardian and I had him all to ourselves, and it really seemed,

as I looked at him across the little dinner-table, and listened to his ordinary conversation, that he could not be that 'astute and intelligent officer' of whom we had heard so much from Mr. Sandeman.

When the servant had withdrawn, however, and he began to talk of the matter that had caused him to be sent for, his countenance strangely altered; the mask of indifference, not to say of stupidity, fell from his features, and left them keen and thoughtful enough.

'This young gentleman, I conclude, is in our secrets?' he remarked, interrogatively, but with a pleasant smile that was in itself a compliment.

My guardian assured him that I was to be trusted, of which I was very proud, for my years were still few for me to be made a confidant in such matters; and then informed him of Esther Kean's disappearance, taking care to impress upon him that all that was wanted was to put an end to the scandal which, by all who knew Mr. Driffell's character, was felt to be groundless and indeed absurd. A smile passed over Mr. Deering's face, which seemed to have a sort of pity in it such as is evoked in an adult by the simplicity of a child.

'Then, as far as you know,' he answered very gently, 'there has nothing whatever occurred as regards these two persons to connect them together in any way?'

'Certainly not,' said my guardian, confidently. 'In this part of the world an employer of labour keeps himself apart from his people, except so far as their work is concerned; with his wife, it is, or may be, different, but he himself often does not even know of the existence of the members of his workmen's families.'

'And there was no exception in this case?'

At this my guardian and I exchanged glances; the recollection of the meeting—an accidental one, no doubt, but still a meeting—between Esther and Mr. Driffell, of which we had been witnesses, recurred to us, not, perhaps, for the first time; but, in so, we had never mentioned it to one another; even when the news of the girl's departure had come, we did not think what we had seen of sufficient importance to be associated with it. The glance that passed between us, momentary as it was, did not escape our guest.

'Eh?' he said, 'then I gather that there *was* an exception.'

'Not at all,' said my guardian earnestly, 'nothing that could possibly be termed such. What happened, as my young friend

here will certify, for he was with me and a witness of the occurrence, was as follows——'

'One moment,' interrupted Mr. Deering, holding up a thin, sinewy hand. 'Would it not be better if this young gentleman withdrew for a few minutes?'

'Indeed,' exclaimed my guardian, indignantly, 'there is nothing, I assure you, in anything that passed between Mr. Driffell and the young person in question that might not be proclaimed upon the housetops.'

'I was not thinking of your pupil's morals,' replied Mr. Deering, pleasantly; 'but when there are two witnesses of one occurrence, one always finds it more satisfactory to hear their statements separately.'

There was nothing for it but to comply, so that that very uninteresting episode between Mr. Driffell and Esther Kean had to be narrated privately to Mr. Deering by both of us; there was nothing one would have thought much worth hearing in either of them, but the result seemed satisfactory to him. He smiled in a manner that I could see annoyed my guardian.

'I am afraid, Mr. Deering,' he said, 'that you do not understand what manner of man Mr. Driffell was.'

'Still,' replied the detective, quietly, 'he *was* a man, and not, I conclude, without the weaknesses of human nature. My experience, as I told Mr. Sandeman when speaking of this subject, is that there is this difference between ordinary persons and that of—well, those with whom it is my mission to deal—that the "previous record" is valueless. We may reasonably doubt the guilt of one who is charged with an offence for the first time; but as regards our relations with the fair sex, character has little to do with it; no, nor age, nor station, nor any other circumstance which might seem to presume our innocence. Unlike drunkards, who "break out" at intervals after previous indulgence, we may "break out" in this direction at any time and without the least sign of previous weakness. Present company excepted, of course,' added Mr. Deering, with a ludicrous recognition of my guardian's profession and his pupil's youth, 'we are none of us safe.'

The Rector smiled, not such a superior smile as Mr. Deering had, but one equally confident. It was a point on which it was evident they must agree to differ. When it came to be disputed later, however, though my guardian held to his own opinion, the detective was not without his supporters. Mr. Sandeman wavered,

but he by no means opposed himself to the other's views so vehemently as he had done in London. He acknowledged that Esther Kean's disappearance, occurring as it did within so short a time after that of Mr. Driffell, was, at least, a curious coincidence. As for the interval, Mr. Deering thought that it was a very natural thing for a person of prudence, and with a reputation of respectability, to have insisted upon. Dr. Garden, though by no means convinced, thought the double event looked suspicious; if Mr. Deering's forecast should turn out correct, the doctor affirmed (and I am very sure quite truthfully) that he would be both distressed and disappointed, but he admitted that Mr. Driffell's character had always appeared to him exceptional and open to unexpected possibilities of conduct.

'Men of your profession know something of human nature,' observed Mr. Deering softly, at which the doctor looked modest but not displeased.

The reason, it was given out, why Mr. Deering had become the Rector's guest was, besides renewing an old acquaintance (which was a pious fraud at which my guardian winced a little), that he was interested in investigating the relations between capital and labour, and wished to see with his own eyes how the problem was worked out with us. He therefore paid visits to the principal manufactories in the neighbourhood, and especially (as was only natural) to Mr. Driffell's mill. In a few days he had struck up quite a friendship with Mr. Baird, whose views upon the social question, it appeared, were singularly in unison with his own. That gentleman gave him every facility for pursuing his inquiries, and they extended to the workmen themselves—men not very easy for a stranger to approach, much less to get on with, but whom he seemed to have little difficulty in conciliating. The attentive and almost respectful way in which he listened to what everyone had to say was very attractive, and not the less so to the grumblers, who found in him a sympathiser with all their grievances. Among these the chief was John Saken, the step-father of the missing girl; considering that he knew nothing about her, the interest which Mr. Deering took in her loss was greatly to his credit; it was only second to the interest which he took in *him*. It was with honest indignation that he learnt how, notwithstanding the zeal with which he had served Mr. Driffell for years, that gentleman had coldly ignored it. With Mrs. Saken Mr. Deering found it more difficult to establish relations without

arousing her husband's suspicions—not that he was jealous of his lady, who was indeed considerably past the age attractive to the most resolute of Lotharios—but he was averse to let her 'have her say,' as she expressed it, 'about anything to anybody.' A woman, he was of opinion, ought to keep herself to herself and to matters of the house, which it seemed, however, did not include a missing daughter. He had enjoined an absolute silence on her upon that point, which was a little difficult for her to observe, since her neighbours wished to speak of it and nothing else; he affected the sublime indifference to their gossip of the motto of the northern college: 'Say! What do they say? Let them say,' notwithstanding that it was exceedingly injurious to his young relative's reputation. They openly suggested that she had gone off with 'the master,' and he did not contradict it, but confined himself to saying, in his gloomiest manner, that he knew nothing about her for certain, but that when he did know it would be the worse for somebody.

The circumstance of Esther Saken's disappearance of course strengthened Mr. Deering in his original opinion that Mr. Driffell had left home designedly. He thought that his expressed intention of purchasing the patent and new machinery was merely an excuse for taking so large a sum of money with him. As to the changing of the notes for gold at the bank, he believed it had been done by Mr. Driffell's direction to prevent the money being traced and his whereabouts discovered. He more than once stated these views to the Rector in my presence, but without gaining that gentleman over to his opinion. Nor, except as regards the girl's disappearance, could the detective point to anything in corroboration of his views. Thanks to the good offices of my guardian, he was a pretty frequent visitor at the Hall, where he pursued his investigations with the same caution and sagacity as elsewhere. Merton, the butler, thought very highly of Mr. Deering; 'a very affable gent, with no airs about him, Master Frank,' as he described him to me; 'but wonderful simple for a Londoner.' In a week or two, upon one pretext or another, he had been all over the house, having been introduced by Laurence's contrivance even into Mr. Driffell's dressing-room; but he did not seem to have got any nearer to the object he had in view. Nor did Mr. Deering confine his inquiries to the Hall, nor even to Luxton, but passed two days and nights away from home on some quest that he did not disclose. We got rather to like this very quiet and extremely

civil gentleman, and sometimes forgot on what a strange business he was bent, or that he was anything other than the guest he was given out to be. Mrs. Driffell, too, liked him, I thought. He was silent about the shadow that hung over us all, but his manner was respectfully sympathetic. I sometimes doubted whether she had not some suspicion, not indeed of his errand, but of something more in his presence than a mere desire to help her.

One afternoon when I was up at the Hall, Mr. Deering called, and was shown into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Driffell was sitting alone, Laurence being at school as usual. I was surprised to see the visitor, for when I had left home he had not returned from his two days' excursion into the county. He wore his normally placid and unmoved air, but he was a little out of breath; he had come, of course, by the short cut I have mentioned through the Rectory garden, and must have walked fast indeed for that to have winded him. I wondered what his haste could have been about, but was quite sure there had been a good reason for it. He had hardly taken a seat when Merton came in with a smiling face (by which I knew there was something wrong) to say that John Saken wished to see Mrs. Driffell alone.

Then a strange thing happened: there were two doors to the drawing-room, which was a very large one, and opposite to one a tall screen to keep the draught out. No sooner was the butler's message delivered than Deering rose with a bow, and opened and closed this door, remaining, however, within, though unseen save by myself, who was sitting close by. He stood quiet as a statue, with his head slightly bent in a listener's attitude. Presently at the outer door Merton announced John Saken. He was a man with a stoop in his shoulders and down-drooping eyes, and Laurence and I, in our rude boyish fashion, had always thought him a sneak; Mr. Driffell, as we knew, had held no high opinion of him, but our own view was an independent one; and he certainly had never seemed to do so much justice to our diagnosis as on the present occasion. He stood in the middle of the room, hat in hand, and with it he pointed (to my great indignation) to myself.

'If you please, ma'am, I wish to speak to you alone.'

Mr. Deering from behind the screen shook his head imperatively, in token that I should remain.

'I shall certainly not leave Mrs. Driffell alone,' I said, 'unless at her own request.'



'You can say anything you have to say before Mr. Gresham,' she said, in tones very grave and quiet; but there was something like terror in her eyes, and she was deadly pale.

'You had best do as I asked you,' said the man, in a bold and menacing tone.

'You must not speak to Mrs. Driffell like that,' I said indignantly. 'How dare you?'

'Let the man say on, Frank,' she said firmly, 'whatever he may have to say. What is it, Saken?'

'Well, if you *will* have it said before other people, it is about my daughter, Esther Kean, and your husband.'

Mrs. Driffell rose from her chair with passionate vehemence, but the action seemed to exhaust her strength; she remained standing, but clutching the arm of it with her hands, without which I verily believe she would have fallen. Her whole body trembled with nervous excitement.

'You know about it, of course,' he continued drily; 'everybody knew about it except me.'

'I have heard nothing about your daughter, Saken,' she put in, 'except that she has disappeared.'

'There's none so deaf as those who won't hear,' answered the man insolently. 'Yes, she has disappeared, just as your husband has done, and almost at the same time. That is a curious coincidence, don't you think? But there's more in it than that. They have gone away together, you may depend on't.'

'It is false!' she cried impetuously. 'Why do you come here with your wicked lies? Is it to sell them?'

'Well, ma'am, if they were lies they would not be worth selling; but I am a poor man and must look to myself. The girl was useful to us; to her mother, of course, especially; in losing her we have lost money, or money's worth. What is done cannot be undone, but compensation is owed to us.'

Mrs. Driffell did not seem to hear him. In her gentle face there was incredulous indignation, but also something else, difficult to define. The man's words had roused her, though she did not believe them.

'I should think a hundred pounds,' he continued, 'would not be too much for the loss of a daughter's services; in that case I promise to keep my mouth shut. I don't want a family scandal no more than you do. Come—a hundred pounds.'

'Too much!' observed a quiet but very distinct voice, and

Mr. Deering stepped from behind the screen. 'Not too much if your story was true, Mr. Saken ; but a great deal too much since it is not true.'

Mr. Saken's complexion was what is called pasty at the best of times, and it now grew very unwholesome-looking indeed. 'I think,' he answered doggedly, 'that a father is likely to know what has become of his daughter better than a man who has never so much as seen her.'

'But I *have* seen her,' was the quiet reply. 'I saw her yesterday, and her husband too. She gave me an account of why she left your roof that was not much to your credit. You ill-treated her, as you ill-treated her mother, but she was not of the same patient sort. However, that is a domestic affair with which the law has nothing to do. As to Mr. Driffell, she never spoke to him but once in her life, and that was at your instigation. You made her your mouthpiece, and bade her tell him that though you were compelled to be apparently on the side of your fellows in the late projected strike, you were really working in his interest. That though he should see you in their deputation, you were still, she was to let him know, his friend. You thought to curry favour with your employer in this manner, but he was not made, it seems, that way. You expected preferment, and you got none ; even if you had been a real traitor it would not, I think, have done you much good ; but, you see, you were only a sham one. You are only a sham blackmailer now instead of a real one, because you have nothing to go upon ; but the law holds one as guilty as the other. You have put your foot in it, Saken, by endeavouring to get that hundred pounds out of this lady here. There are two witnesses to the fact, Mr. Gresham here, and myself, Inspector Deering, of Scotland Yard. Have you anything to say ; bearing in mind, however, that whatever you do say may be produced against you ?'

Saken's face was the picture of baffled malice ; his shifty eyes gleamed with hate and fear. 'It is my cursed wife who has put you up to this !' he cried ; then added between his teeth, 'she shall pay for it.'

'No,' said Mr. Deering confidently ; 'she will not pay for it ; first, because she is going to live with her daughter and son-in-law, and, secondly, because she had nothing to do with the matter. It was you yourself who gave me the clue to what had become of your step-daughter, though at first I was inclined to think as you

would have had us believe. I followed her up and found her. I was uneasy all the time I was away lest you should try this very trick, for it was on blackmailing that you had set your mind, I knew. I came home just in time, and when I saw you upon the road to the Hall, I guessed your errand, and cut in before you. Unless within twelve hours you shall have let the truth be known about your daughter, and done your best to drown the scandal that you were the first to set afloat concerning Mr. Driffell, you will be lodged in Luxton gaol.'

As for me, I was entranced with the neatness and comprehensiveness of Mr. Deering's address, which somehow had the air of a written document which was also signed and sealed; what legal ground he had for his menace I knew not, but if it had been delivered by a judge in scarlet it could not have had a greater effect upon its recipient. When he added, quite cheerfully, 'For the present you may go, Saken,' the man slunk away, an odious picture of baffled greed and malice, without a word.

When we were alone: 'I am sorry to have intruded upon you under false pretences, madam,' said the detective respectfully; 'but in my calling it is sometimes absolutely necessary to meet fraud with—well, a little deception.'

'It is no matter,' said Mrs. Driffell, who had sunk into her chair, and presented no appearance of satisfaction at the discomfiture of her late visitor. 'I am accustomed to be deceived.' The hopeless, helpless tone in which those unexpected words were uttered went to my heart.

When Mr. Deering left us, which he did the next morning, he had not succeeded in finding Mr. Driffell, but he had at least discovered what had not become of him as regarded Esther Kean. This was, I think, a relief to Dr. Garden and in a less degree to Mr. Sandeman. But it was not (as I have shown) the relief to Mrs. Driffell that one might have expected it to be. Weeks, months passed by, but without news of the missing man. My guardian believed him to be dead, which was also my opinion—not worth very much, it may be said, but I had known Mr. Driffell, in my small way, as well as anybody, and I could not conceive of him as having gone away and left his wife and child and the mill designedly. It sounds foolish, perhaps, to connect the mill with the other two objects of his regard, but he had such a pride in it, was so resolved to make it the most perfect specimen of its kind, that there seemed to be as great a wrench in the one case as the

other. Indeed, truth to say, I could hardly look at his parting from his wife as a wrench at all; nor did she appear to regard it in that light herself. She was distressed at what had happened to an extreme degree; it was the rarest thing to see a smile upon her gentle face; but she did not strike me either as one in a state of suspense, who says to herself: 'Here to-day or here to-morrow he will surely come;' and still less as a widow to whom all hope is denied. Even after years had elapsed, and both Mrs. Sandeman and Mrs. Garden thought it was time for her to put on widow's weeds, she declined to do so; she gave no definite reason, but of course they concluded that she still clung to the idea that her husband was alive. She never spoke of her own accord about the matter, not even to her son. Laurence, on his part, was equally reticent. The occurrence had had a marked effect on him. He had always been silent and reserved, but had been fond of athletics of all kinds; these had no longer any attraction for him. He had suddenly become a man. Like a boy king who finds himself suddenly called to the throne, he put away from him all boyish things, and applied himself to affairs of state, which in his case meant his father's mill. Mr. Baird was very pleased with the business faculties he exhibited; Mr. Sandeman felt that though the mill had lost its head—a head unequalled for sagacity and promptness to take advantage of happy Chance—it could be left in safe hands.

And so, for years, matters went on at the mill and at the Hall, the missing man had ceased to be talked about, but not to be thought about. There were some who were of opinion that he was as dead as Queen Anne; and others who would not have been surprised if he had turned up some day, and declined in his masterful manner to be cross-examined by anybody.

Notwithstanding his aptitude for business, it was decided that Laurence should go to Cambridge, where it was thought he would distinguish himself in mathematics, for which he had the same natural gift as his father. Up to that time I had thought little of his talents, because they were altogether out of my line. My reading had been very desultory, and, out of pupil hours, of the lightest kind, but I had the *cacoëthes scribendi*, that terrible disease which of late years has spared neither age nor sex in England, and whose victims are counted by thousands. By the time I was old enough to go to college I had 'run through each mode of the lyre' as regards writing for every description of

periodical, and been rejected by all. Nobody was so sanguine as to imagine that *I* should take honours at Cambridge, but my guardian was a firm believer in a University education, and I was well content to be with Laurence, for, perhaps upon the principle of 'his unlikeness fitting mine,' we remained fast friends. This link was for the present the only one that connected me with the circumstance which forms the basis of the story I have sat down to relate; but in after times it was fated that in the 'grooves of change' down which the great world rings, I should be brought into still nearer contact with that amazing mystery, and in the meantime I must ask pardon of my readers if I seem to trouble them too much with my own affairs, which I cannot expect will have an equal interest for them. Still, my position, though common enough in the present day, was at that time exceptional. Young men now 'go in' for Literature, as they go in for Law and Physic, and succeed in something like the same proportion (which is a small one) as in other professions. Parents no longer hold up their hands in horror at a calling that was once universally despised; it has improved, no doubt, of late years, but what reconciles them to it, perhaps, as much as anything, is that in these hard times it is pleasant to find that they are not called upon for any initial expenses. At present—though this is coming—premiums are not exacted by professors of the art of letters; dinners have not to be eaten or fees to be paid; chambers have not to be taken, with a clerk or (by a species of legal vivisection against which nobody protests, and least of all the victim) half a one; no one's 'governor' is too hard up that he cannot supply his offspring with a box of steel pens, a quire of foolscap, and his blessing. As for me, there was no one either to bless or to ban me, and I took my own way.

What a marvellous experience is that of a young fellow, with a sufficiency of brains and money, who first enters an English University. I say 'of brains' because, without some intelligence, we are not keenly conscious of social change; and I say 'of money' because, if we are straitened as to means, if we have to 'cut and contrive'—however good that discipline may be for our moral nature—we lose what is the very keystone of undergraduate enjoyment: the entire absence of care. Whether such a protracted term of pleasure is beneficial to those who have afterwards to make their way in the world is doubtful. It is certainly 'something to look back upon,' but that is not always the happiness it

is said to be. Pleasure is a thing to be looked forward to, but its retrospect is melancholy; when the College gown is the sole relic of our palmy time, we almost wish we had never worn it.

These considerations, however, affected neither me nor Laurence. There were no evil days, at all events in the way of struggle and poverty, before us; we could enjoy the present without the shadow of the future intruding on its sunshine. As for me, endowed by nature with more than my share of animal spirits, fond of companionship (of which I had but slight experience), and very adaptable, I was as happy as a bird. Laurence was of a less genial disposition, and took his pleasures more sadly; moreover, he seemed never to be able to shake off the gloom that settled on him in consequence of his father's disappearance. He had never fretted about it, as one of a more emotional nature might have done, but he never seemed to forget it. I reasoned with him concerning it in vain. 'Even if you knew he were dead,' I argued, 'time ought by this time to have healed your sorrow.'

'Yes,' he answered, in a tone that seemed to forbid further talk upon the matter; 'but I do not know he is dead.'

I knew that the doubt upon that subject was a very material disadvantage to him; Mr. Sandeman had told me as much; it prevented his making full use of his patrimony, and especially interfered with certain prospects a few years hence which could not be realised without his father's concurrence if he were alive, or without proof of his demise if he were dead; but I felt that it was not these matters which were occupying his son's mind. He had certainly no reason to doubt his father's probity, but still he seemed to have some misgiving, which I well knew he would never confide to me. Was it possible, I wondered, whether it could have been communicated to him by his mother, whose own behaviour had been so inexplicable to me?

*(To be continued.)*

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*CLARISSA FURIOSA.*<sup>1</sup>

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.

‘WHEN a mistake has been made,’ Clarissa began, in the deliberate, decisive accents of one who is laying down a proposition which may appear novel, but can nevertheless be supported by powerful arguments, ‘the only wise plan is to acknowledge it frankly and, so far as may be possible, rectify it.’

As she seemed to expect some response, Mr. Dent remarked blandly, ‘The audience is with you, my dear. I can only hope that you will always act in accordance with such unexceptionable principles.’

‘I hope so too—and I have made up my mind to do so,’ Clarissa declared. ‘Now, I have known for a long time past that my marriage was a mistake.’

‘For my own part,’ said Mr. Dent, ‘I never thought that it was anything else. Still, it has to be borne in mind that, in the particular instance of matrimony, rectification of a mistake is a somewhat more complicated and difficult process than frank acknowledgment.’

‘Of course; and I only said that it ought to be rectified as far as might be possible. I am not thinking of a divorce or a legal separation; I merely wish you to understand how matters are, and that I cannot any longer live with Guy. You take the announcement very coolly,’ she added, with a touch of resentment, on receiving a slight nod for all reply.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States of America, 1896, by W. E. Norris.

'Perhaps I shall warm up when I understand how matters are,' said Mr. Dent. 'At present I only know that you propose to adopt a course which has obvious drawbacks.'

Clarissa sighed. 'I am not at all sure,' she said, 'that I shall be able to make you understand; still, I can but try. First of all I must tell you that this is no sudden impulse of mine, and that I am not in the least blind to the drawbacks that you are thinking of. I dare say that there are many good reasons why a wife should submit to anything and everything rather than forsake her husband. Most wives, as you know, do forgive a great deal which husbands would not dream for a moment of forgiving, and although that is obviously unjust, we are assured that such is the way of the world. The fact is that the way of the world wants altering, and before it can be altered there must be a few martyrs, I suppose. I am ready to be one of them.'

'I seem to have heard and read,' remarked Mr. Dent meditatively, 'of more cruel forms of martyrdom than unfettered liberty and 5,000*l.* a year. But I am interrupting you.'

'It is easy to sneer,' returned Clarissa, with a somewhat heightened colour, 'and I am prepared for sneers; though I hoped that perhaps I should not be sneered at by you, Uncle Tom. You think, I suppose, that I am still a silly, self-willed girl; but it is not so. I am a woman; I have grown much older since you saw me last, and I have learnt many things which I did not know then. The people who did know might have warned me——'

'Only you wouldn't have listened.'

'Well, never mind; I am better informed now, and, since I can't begin my own life over again, I can at least save others from failing as I have failed.'

'By separating yourself from the man whose name you bear, and who is the father of your child?'

'That will be one step towards the goal. I want women to realise that they are not less entitled than men to the individual freedom which is the birthright of every human being; I want them to realise that marriage need not, and ought not to, be another name for slavery. And if every woman who is situated as I am would decide to act as I am going to do, we should not have long to wait for a complete reform.'

'The difficulty,' observed Mr. Dent, 'is that only a very few women are blessed with an independent fortune.'

'Those who are not can work for their living. It seems to me



that that would be infinitely less humiliating than to depend for food and clothing upon men whom they can no longer respect and who have been untrue to them.'

'Oh—untrue! Now we seem to be coming to specific charges. May I hear them?'

She said what she had to say, and said it after a fashion which, if not entirely convincing to her uncle, yet extorted from his sense of justice a tacit admission that she had not been too well used. Guy, so far as he could gather, had been guilty of nothing flagrantly scandalous; but the flirtation with Mrs. Durand, which had so nearly brought about an open breach between him and his wife, had been succeeded by other flirtations with Mrs. This and Mrs. That, while his habits, if the account given of them could be trusted, were obviously the reverse of domestic. However, Clarissa did not insist particularly upon that point. She affected to speak with disdain of her husband's philanderings, which she declared were a matter of complete indifference to her, merely mentioning them as affording some additional justification for the measures that she contemplated. What she declaimed against was the iniquity and absurdity of a social compact which chained together two people who had nothing—absolutely nothing!—in common. It was not only that her own tastes were literary, whereas Guy's reading was confined to the sporting intelligence column in the newspapers; it was not only that he cared for none of the things that she cared for, while she could not bring herself to take an interest in what interested him; but their ideas upon every imaginable subject differed so completely that, when they met at meal-times, they were driven to take refuge in a bored silence.

'And, if you will think of it, is there anything in the world worse than being bored!' Clarissa ejaculated.

Mr. Dent thought that there might be worse things—such as being knocked down and danced upon, for instance, or even nagged at; but he refrained from saying so. He refrained also from the protests upon which his niece had, perhaps, counted; for he was a man whose high reputation for commonsense had been earned quite as much by judicious silence as by speech.

Clarissa wound up by repeating that she had not arrived at her present resolution without having given the subject full consideration, and she added that, to the best of her belief, freedom would be as great a boon to Guy as to herself. She spoke of him some-

what contemptuously, yet with no extreme bitterness. Only once, when she alluded to the death of their infant boy, her composure deserted her and her voice quivered for a moment. Guy, it appeared, had been absent on a shooting expedition at the time, and his reception of the news, when he returned, had been what his wife described as characteristic.

‘He said, “Well, after all, you know, it’s only a baby.” I quote that remark of his just by way of showing you how much and how little he is capable of feeling. He did not mean to be unkind; it was his way of offering consolation and pointing out the folly of crying over spilt milk. But I believe it was from that moment that I began to look forward quite definitely to the—the release which was in store for me upon our return to England. For many reasons, it was best to go on as we were while Guy’s duties kept him in Ceylon.’

‘And is he aware,’ Mr. Dent inquired, ‘of the release which awaits him?’

‘I hardly know. I told him that it would be out of the question for me to live at the *dépôt* in the north where he will have to take up his quarters, and he seemed to acquiesce. He said something about getting a house in London. The truth is that he will cheerfully acquiesce in any arrangement which does not threaten his personal comfort; only, after he has seen his people and consulted with them, objections are certain to be raised; so that it will be as well to meet him and them with an accomplished fact.’

‘Dear me!—what sort of an accomplished fact, I wonder?’

‘Well, a house. I shall feel that I stand upon a footing of independence as soon as I have a house of my own—and can lock myself into it, if I choose.’

‘Ah! And doesn’t it strike you that Guy’s comfort may be in some degree threatened by the loss of 5,000*l.* a year?’

‘Of course we shall make a division,’ answered Clarissa a little impatiently; ‘I thought you would take that for granted. As he will be to all intents and purposes a bachelor, he will really be better off with an income of 2,500*l.* than I shall be. But if he thinks he ought to have more than half he can have more.’

‘A dissolution of partnership upon the pecuniary terms that you mention,’ said Mr. Dent, ‘would, amongst business men, be considered a highly satisfactory one for the retiring partner.’

Well, my dear, you are your own mistress and can dispose of your income as may seem good to you. You will not expect a man of my age and conventional prejudices to approve unreservedly of what you say that you mean to do; but I will, at all events, abstain from offering advice for which I haven't been asked. I will only venture to suggest that you should wait for your husband's return before proclaiming your intentions. Your mother-in-law is a most charming and amiable lady; but I suspect that, if you were to tell her as much as you have told me, there might be—avoidable unpleasantnesses.'

'Oh, I shall tell her nothing; I don't feel that I am bound to tell her anything,' Clarissa answered with a gesture of slightly disdainful indifference. 'I did feel bound to tell you, Uncle Tom, because, after all, you are the only near relation I have in the world.'

She was disappointed, and showed that she was disappointed at the composure with which she had been listened to by her only near relation: one does not propose to set the house on fire with the anticipation of being told that one is free to do as one pleases with one's own. But Mr. Dent, even after Clarissa had so far sacrificed her dignity as to ask whether he did not consider her justified in setting conventionality at defiance, declined to commit himself.

'I have heard your version of the affair, my dear; I haven't heard your husband's,' he replied. 'How can I pronounce judgment upon an *ex parte* statement? Moreover, I take it that you hold yourself at liberty to snap your finger and thumb at any judgment of mine.'

That was so far true that she certainly had no intention of yielding to an adverse judgment; and, after a night of reflection, she was able to tell herself that she was glad Uncle Tom had proved so accommodating. What, indeed, would have been the use of arguments and expostulations? She knew her own mind, and knew well enough all that there was to be said against, as well as in favour of, amicable separations. She had not, to be sure, deemed it necessary to mention that she and Guy had parted upon cold terms, owing to his behaviour with a certain actress who had visited Ceylon in the exercise of her profession. To have mentioned that would merely have been to obscure the real issue—with which actresses had little or nothing to do.

So the first and most important thing to be done was to seek

out house-agents and inspect untenanted houses—an occupation which, if not precisely exhilarating in itself (for nothing in the world looks quite so hopelessly unsuitable and undesirable as an empty house), at least kept her fully engaged for several days and spared her the pertinacious visits of Lady Luttrell. That Lady Luttrell smelt a rat and was exceedingly anxious to be reassured was evidenced by the cards, scribbled over with affectionate messages, which she left at the door every afternoon ; but Clarissa was not much afraid of her mother-in-law, whose measure experience had enabled her to take ; though doubtless Uncle Tom had been right in recommending that revelations should be postponed until Guy's arrival. As in duty bound, she called twice in Grosvenor Place, taking care to do so at an hour when nobody was likely to be at home, and when she and her uncle dined there one evening, the presence of other guests rendered confidential intercourse impossible.

‘Have you found a house to suit you yet?’ Mr. Dent inquired suavely, while they were driving home from this entertainment. ‘I wouldn't be in too great a hurry about it, if I were you ; people always begin by asking a much higher rent than they have any expectation of getting.’

He had been curiously, not to say provokingly, impassive upon the subject of his niece's plans ever since they had been intimated to him ; it was his habit to breakfast early and be off to the City before she left her room, and when they met at dinner, he seldom troubled her with questions as to how she had spent her day. Clarissa had an uncomfortable impression that he did not very much believe her to be in earnest, and that he, too, was awaiting Guy's advent to join in an organised attack upon her impregnable position. Her position was, for many reasons, impregnable ; yet it would have been more satisfactory, perhaps, to have been given an opportunity of proving it so.

Opportunity presented itself, about a fortnight later, in the person of Guy himself, who, having disembarked at Portsmouth forty-eight hours previously, had telegraphed at once to his wife, and whose despatch had been forwarded from Sir Robert Luttrell's house to Portland Place. The meeting which took place in the somewhat stiff and gloomy drawing-room where Aunt Susan had been wont to doze over her knitting in days of yore, partook of the formal character of its surroundings. Guy—smiling, interrogative, obviously embarrassed—made a hesitating forward move-

ment which might have culminated in an embrace, if Clarissa had not drawn back. As it was he contented himself with shaking hands and saying cheerfully :

‘ Well, you got over your journey all right, I hope ? Little one all right too ? ’

Clarissa answered that both she and the little one were all right ; and then she begged him to sit down.

‘ I expected to find you in Grosvenor Place,’ Guy said ; ‘ but they tell me your uncle won’t surrender you yet. And, after all, I dare say you’re more comfortable here, having this big house practically all to yourself.’

‘ I don’t know that I care about a big house,’ Clarissa replied ; ‘ but I certainly do feel the necessity of having one to myself, and I have seen several during the last few days which I think will do very well for me. I want to tell you, Guy—and I don’t think you will be either surprised or distressed to hear it—that I am going to live by myself for the future. We need not quarrel ; we need not even announce that we have agreed to live apart ; only you must go your way, which cannot be mine, and I must go mine, which cannot be yours. Indeed, that is what we have been doing for a long time past—under rather less favourable conditions. Just now your being obliged to joint the *dépôt* of your regiment in the north will lend an air of *vraisemblance* to the arrangement.’

Guy Luttrell, who, since we saw him last, had aged a little and had put on more flesh, frowned meditatively at his boots and remained silent for some seconds. Presently he looked up, with a smile in his blue eyes, and said :

‘ Really, you know, Clarissa, I think this is rather a strong measure to take because I asked little Léonie What’s-her-name—upon my word, I have clean forgotten her name!—to supper. I was sorry you were vexed about it, and I told you so at the time ; but——’

‘ But I am not taking this measure, which I quite admit is a strong one, on that account, and you know very well that I am not,’ interrupted Clarissa. ‘ I take it because—well, in a word, because it is inevitable. Why should we renew disputes which we have had before, and which never lead to anything, except an increased longing on both our parts to run away ? It is easy for a man to run away ; he has barracks and clubs and other places to run to ; it isn’t so easy for a woman.’

‘You don’t seem to be finding it difficult,’ Guy interpolated.

‘I should find it almost impossible, but for the happy accident that I have means of my own. It ought not to be so; but of course in the majority of cases it must be so; and that is just one of the injustices which I hope will be set right in the better times that are coming. But I must not trouble you with my notions, which I know you consider fantastic. As we are upon the subject of money, I may as well say now that I should suggest our making an equal division of our income. That would give us about 2,500*l.* a year each, I believe. But I shall be satisfied with less.’

Guy rose and, walking to the window, gazed down for a moment at the broad thoroughfare and the passing vehicles.

‘Pleasant to see hansom-cabs again, isn’t it?’ said he, quite irrelevantly.

His eyelids were, as usual, half-closed; he looked perfectly good-humoured, contented and sleepy; but Clarissa, who knew that her husband, on the rare occasions when he was angry, always looked like that, perceived that she had wounded him and was not sorry for it. He had so often wounded her, while she had so seldom been able to flatter herself that she had inflicted even a transitory pang upon him!

‘Will that arrangement suit you?’ she asked presently.

‘Oh; the money arrangement? Well, no—thanks very much—I’m afraid it wouldn’t suit me.’ He turned his back to the window and took two steps towards his wife. ‘Look here, Clarissa,’ said he; ‘I am anything you like to call me, and you are not inclined to call me anything very complimentary, I imagine; but really, strange as it may appear to you, I am not the sort of person who can be bribed to take himself off. I am ready to take myself off free of expense, and you may be sure that I shall never touch a penny of your money.’

From this very inconvenient and disconcerting attitude she strove in vain to move him, being a good deal less touched by his show of unselfishness than annoyed with him for exhibiting that virtue so tardily and inopportunately.

‘But you put me in the wrong!’ she exclaimed at length.

‘I am sorry for that,’ answered Guy; ‘but, according to my view, you were there already, you see. Anyhow, I can’t offer to put you in the right by accepting a retiring pension. We will say no more about the matter, if you please—especially as there

are one or two other points to be considered. There is Netta, for instance.'

'Of course I shall keep her with me,' said Clarissa quickly; 'you can't expect or wish to deprive me of my child!'

'No; but I don't expect or wish to be deprived of my child either. I must be allowed to have free access to her when I choose.'

Clarissa nodded. 'I think that is only reasonable,' she said.

'Do you really? How awfully generous of you! Then I shall make so bold as to take her out for an occasional holiday, and perhaps, if I am still alive when she grows up, she will sometimes come and spend a week with me. Meanwhile, it will be my endeavour to remind you as seldom as possible of the painful circumstance that you bear my name. By the way, what do you propose to do about my people? Are they to be told the whole truth at once, or allowed to find it out by degrees for themselves?'

'That must be as you think best,' Clarissa answered. 'I should have liked to be able to tell them that you would always have the half of my income, whatever it might be.'

'But as it won't be in your power to tell them that, I advise you to keep them more or less in the dark. Anything rather than rows! As for me, I shall make haste to bury myself at Kendal; but you, I understand, mean to establish yourself in London?'

'Yes, I mean to establish myself in London. I want you to understand, please, that, although nothing would induce me to live with you again as your wife, I shall always be glad to see you as—as a friend, and that I would not have separated myself from you now if—if I had felt that it was at all possible to do otherwise.'

Guy took several turns up and down the room. More than once he opened his lips, as if upon the point of speaking, but closed them again, and at length he remarked: 'Well, I suppose that is about all that there is to be said?'

Clarissa, apparently, had nothing further to add; so he wished her good-bye—without shaking hands this time—and presently the front door was heard to close behind him.

His wife, whose victory was thus complete, was less relieved and less triumphant than she had expected to be. That she had been absolutely within her right in acting as she had done she did not doubt, and if the whole history of her married life were related,

many ladies might be found to agree with her—but then he had spoilt all by refusing to take her money! She had to console herself by reflecting that he certainly would take it in the long run.

‘He is entitled to it; his father and mother are sure to urge it upon him; and he is so easy-going that he won’t be able to hold out against them. Besides which, he will feel the want of it; and he is not a man who can feel the want of anything that is within his reach and refrain from stretching out his hand.’

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PAUL TRIES HIS HAND.

‘I REALLY don’t see what good you are likely to do by reasoning with her or scolding her,’ said Sir Robert Luttrell. ‘On the other hand, you may do some harm. It seems to me that, for the present at all events, we had better affect a judicious blindness.’

He was sitting in his study, late at night, before a table littered with documents upon which he had been at work ever since dinner, and the state of public affairs was, for the moment, so dubious and dispiriting that he felt little inclination to discuss the unsatisfactory state of private affairs with his wife, who had just returned from an evening entertainment.

‘*Mais enfin!—il faudrait prendre un parti!*’ exclaimed Lady Luttrell, who sometimes lapsed into her own language when she was perplexed or irritated. ‘What is one to conclude from Guy’s having gone off into banishment, from his refusing to leave the army—as it would be only natural for him to do, now that he has a comfortable fortune—and from Clarissa’s having taken this house in Cadogan Gardens, as if her husband’s movements were no concern of hers? What,’ repeated Lady Luttrell, spreading her hands apart with an eloquent gesture, ‘is one to conclude?’

‘Oh, well, I suppose one must conclude that they are a pair of fools—or, at any rate, that one of them is a fool,’ answered Sir Robert impatiently. ‘Leave him alone and he’ll come home. In point of fact, he simply *must*, unless he wishes to live upon his pay for the future; for Heaven knows I can’t afford to keep him. How I am going to keep myself, if our side loses the General Election, as I expect it will, is more than I can tell you.’



‘But Parliament isn’t dissolved yet, Robert.’

‘It is going to be; and as we have scarcely made a single mistake during all the years that we have been in office, a grateful country is pretty sure to kick us out. Perhaps I ought to be thankful that Haccombe is not entailed; but at the present moment I don’t feel very much disposed to be thankful for anything. Least of all for having a son who is—saving your presence—such an infernal ass as not to know when he is well off. Leave him alone, I tell you, and let him come to his senses at his leisure.’

‘As far as I know, Guy has not been in the least to blame,’ returned Lady Luttrell. ‘The question is what is to be done about Clarissa? Is she to be left alone, to do exactly as she pleases?’

‘It is always a good plan to let people do as they please when you have no means of preventing them. From what Dent tells me, I gather that the woman is upon her hind-legs and that she has had some provocation. You know what happens when a horse gets upon his hind-legs and his mouth is touched. If you will be advised by me, Antoinette, you won’t touch Clarissa’s mouth just now. She means, I take it, to play the idiot, and nobody can stop her. After she has had her fling, she will quiet down and realise that a married woman who has had a split with her husband occupies an equivocal position in society. There is no occasion for us to advertise or acknowledge the circumstance that she has had a split with her husband. Added to which, we shall make it ten times more difficult for her to retreat gracefully if we do.’

This, it had to be admitted, was sage counsel, and Lady Luttrell resigned herself to act upon it. She was extremely angry with her daughter-in-law; but she contrived, by putting pressure upon herself, to swallow down her wrath and simulate ignorance of the obvious. Clarissa, on her side, seemed quite willing to be friendly; though she did not go out of her way to seek her husband’s family, with the exception of Madeline, who was often with her, and who was assisting her to furnish the house in Cadogan Gardens which she had secured. Madeline probably knew more than her mother did, but was not inclined to be communicative, when questioned.

‘I am not at all sure that Clarissa is a good companion for you, my dear,’ sighed Lady Luttrell, who was becoming alive to some of the disadvantages of bringing up a daughter *à l’anglaise*;

but Madeline only professed to wonder what contamination could result from discussions with upholsterers, and indeed it was true that Clarissa and she were chiefly occupied with upholstery at that time.

Mr. Dent had vainly implored his niece to take up her residence with him, pointing out that she would have all the liberty that she could desire under his roof, and that she would do him a great kindness by keeping house for him.

‘You wouldn’t like my friends, Uncle Tom,’ was her reply; ‘and I hope to see a good deal of my friends as soon as I am settled.’

Her friends!—where in the world had she picked them up, seeing that she had had absolutely none before her departure for Ceylon, and that Singhalese society cannot be said to be largely represented in London? But it soon appeared that she had for some time past been in active correspondence with certain persons for whom, so far as he knew anything about them, Mr. Dent had in truth no great liking. A few of these, who called upon her in Portland Place, he chanced to encounter—women in strange attire, long-haired, flabby-looking men, whose names he recollected, when reminded of them, to have heard as associated with what seemed to him to be a singularly silly propaganda. Upon the whole, Mr. Dent was quite of one mind with Sir Robert in deeming that Clarissa was bent upon playing the idiot and had better not be interfered with until she was tired of so doing.

If this good-humoured and slightly contemptuous acquiescence in her vagaries was not altogether agreeable to its subject, a different method of treatment was provided for her by Paul Luttrell, who met her at dinner in Grosvenor Place one evening, and who, in expressing the pleasure that it gave him to renew acquaintance with her, told her frankly that the pleasure was not so great as he had hoped that it would be. Paul, now Vicar of a poor parish down Whitechapel way, had acquired a certain notoriety, both as an eloquent preacher and as an occasional writer of articles upon the labour question. Clarissa, who had read his articles with interest, was unaffectedly glad to meet him again and not at all sorry to be provided at last with an opportunity of defending herself. Because, although she had been explicit with Uncle Tom, he had received her statement in such a manner as practically to take the wind out of her sails.

‘How do you mean?’ she inquired, putting up her glasses to

scrutinise her neighbour ; though of course she knew well enough what he meant.

‘Well, it is never exactly a pleasure,’ he answered, ‘to reflect that one has had a hand in bringing about a fiasco, and you may remember that it was I who married you.’

‘I remember that you performed the ceremony,’ said Clarissa, smiling ; ‘I remember also that you were by no means enthusiastic about performing it. If anybody ought to have a clear conscience in the matter, you ought. I was only afraid, from the way in which you looked at me just now, that you doubted whether my own conscience was as clear as it actually is.’

‘Oh, I don’t doubt your self-approval—which is what many people mistake for a clear conscience. But perhaps, since you remember so much, you may remember a little conversation that we had before your wedding-day. I told you then that, according to the Christian view, marriage is something more than a mere contract, to be dissolved at any given moment by mutual consent, and you replied, I believe, that you would certainly never wish for an amicable separation from your husband. You have changed your mind, it seems?’

‘I may as well say at once,’ returned Clarissa, ‘that arguments from the Christian point of view don’t appeal to me. Christianity has been made to sanction intolerance, persecution, slavery and I don’t know how many other forms of injustice. If you want to be able to blame me, you must find some broader and more human ground for censure.’

‘I am generally accused of being a little bit too broad in my ideas,’ remarked the Reverend Paul ; ‘but the line has to be drawn somewhere, and I can’t admit that a woman is entitled to break solemn vows which she has taken upon herself with her eyes open.’

‘But my eyes were not open,’ protested Clarissa ; ‘that is just the point—or, at least, one of the points. I heard things about Guy after we were married—Mrs. Antrobus and other people told me—which, if I had only known them in time, would certainly have prevented me from taking any such vows. Whose fault was it that I did not know them in time?’

‘Ah, there I am partly with you. It is a difficult question——’

‘I don’t see the slightest difficulty about it,’ interrupted Clarissa. ‘In what conceivable case, except in the case of marriage, would you maintain that people ought to be allowed

and urged to take a leap in the dark? I, and other women who have suffered, are determined that girls shall not be kept in the dark any longer, if we can help it.'

'Nevertheless, there are difficulties and complications. But even admitting that you were not as fully enlightened as you might have been, I still think that, when once the marriage had taken place, you were in duty bound to live with your husband, unless his conduct was such as to practically drive you away from him. And I have heard of no reason as yet for your separating yourself from Guy, except that you are not in sympathy with him.'

The above colloquy was held after dinner, and as a good many other people were present, Clarissa and her rebuking cleric, who had withdrawn into a recess of the long drawing-room, were in little danger of being overheard or interrupted.

'I don't expect any *man* to sympathise with me,' she declared; 'not even you, though it does seem to me that the religion which you profess ought to compel you to do so. But there are reasons for my claiming the right to lead my own life which I think you would have to call sufficient, if you could afford to be perfectly honest.'

'I am quite sure that I can't afford to be anything else,' said Paul.

'Mind, I don't assert that those are the reasons which weigh most with me; only, if it had not been for them, I should perhaps hardly have had the courage of my opinions. If Guy had continued to care for me as he did at first, I might have discovered, and I suppose I should have discovered, that he was a very different sort of person from what I had imagined him to be; but I should not have felt, as I do now, that I was under no obligation whatsoever to spend the rest of my days with him.'

After that exordium, Paul was prepared to hear the worst; so that what he heard did not scandalise him quite so much as Clarissa had perhaps expected it to do. There had been flirtations, it seemed, and even a good many of them; but to what extent those flirtations had been carried appeared doubtful, although the narrator spoke as if no doubt could be entertained upon the subject. No complaint of ill-usage was put forward.

'He has scarcely spoken an unkind word to me since the day of our marriage,' Clarissa said disdainfully. 'That would have been far too much trouble, and would have exposed him to the

possible discomfort of a scene, you understand. Courageous as he is supposed to be, there are things which Guy doesn't care to face, and discomfort is the chief of them. If he is going to be a little uncomfortable now, that is no fault of mine. I offered him the half of my income, and I think he ought to have taken it. But he will probably end by taking it.'

Paul heard her out without interruption. He thought he could understand pretty well what was amiss and that this breach was not of necessity an irreparable one; but he took good care to refrain from saying so. The only comment that he permitted himself upon what he had been told was:

'I am not going to undertake my brother's defence; he has evidently not been a pattern husband. Still, I suppose there must be a very large number of worse husbands who are tolerated and forgiven.'

'Is there a single wife in the world by whom such conduct as his would be tolerated or forgiven?' asked Clarissa.

'I hardly know; but from all that one sees and hears, I should think so. Besides——'

'Besides, there is a vast difference between a husband and a wife? But that is the very thing that I deny; and I should have imagined that Christianity denied it too. Or do you really maintain that what is an unpardonable sin in the one is only an amiable weakness in the other?'

One is not a parson in Whitechapel without being required to take up an uncompromising stand with reference to such conjugal questions, nor can one occupy that position long without appreciating the beauty and necessity of compromise. Paul adroitly contrived to convey to his sister-in-law the impression that she had had the best of the argument, while reserving to himself full right to disapprove of her action. One result, therefore, of their interview was that they parted very good friends, and another was that the Reverend Paul Luttrell took a third-class return ticket to Kendal the next day.

He was a good fellow—kind-hearted, by no means wanting in intelligence, and conversant, after a somewhat restricted fashion, with the vagaries of human nature. Perhaps, like priests of all denominations, he was apt to rely a little too much upon his own persuasive powers and to assume that, because he rarely failed with those who sought his advice, he was likely to succeed in cases where clerical authority does not count for much. Any-

how, as his means were small and his time fully occupied, he would not have undertaken that long journey unless he had felt tolerably confident of his ability to do two mistaken people a good turn. Accordingly, he was no sooner seated, with a pipe in his mouth, in his elder brother's modest quarters than he deemed it his duty to read that delinquent a sharp lecture.

'You are a great deal more lucky than you deserve to be,' Guy was told in conclusion; 'for, whatever Clarissa may be pleased to say, I am convinced that if you will only go back to her, beg her forgiveness and resolve to behave better for the future, all that you have done in the past will be condoned. She is under the impression that she is standing up for a principle; but the simple truth is that she is wounded and jealous—as any other woman would be in her place.'

'My dear old chap,' returned Guy, who, during his brother's harangue had been reclining upon two chairs, with his feet rather higher than his head, and smoking placidly, 'I'm awfully glad to see you and obliged to you for having come all this way to see me; but as far as your errand goes, a sheet of notepaper and a penny stamp would have answered all the purpose. You won't give me credit for possessing many virtues, I'm sure; but perhaps you'll allow that I am patient. Well, Clarissa has got to the end of my patience, and I don't propose to beg her pardon any more—that's flat! She may have her grievances and I may have mine; but there wouldn't be the slightest use in discussing them; it's evident, at least, that she can't have much to complain of now, since she has been allowed to have her own way, and since she remains a rich woman, while I'm a deuced poor man.'

'She doesn't wish you to be a poor man. On the contrary, she asks nothing better than to make over the half of her income to you.'

'So she was kind enough to inform me; but, you see, I don't happen to be built quite that way. I didn't marry her for her money, and I don't want it. Or, to speak with stricter accuracy, I can do without it.'

'I am not so sure that you can,' said Paul musingly, after a pause. 'Things are going badly—worse, perhaps, than you suspect. My father doesn't say much, and it is not for me to question him; but I am afraid there can be no doubt that he has been living far beyond his income for many years, and of course his income, like that of all landowners, has seriously diminished of late.'

‘That’s a funny sort of argument for a parson to use,’ remarked Guy, laughing.

‘Well, such as it is, I am not ashamed of using it,’ returned his brother. ‘You say you can do without your wife’s money, and I only want to point out to you that it is an open question whether you can or will. I understand your thinking it beneath you to take an allowance from her; but don’t you see that there is considerable danger of your consenting—as she expects that you will—to accept that allowance in the long run?’

‘Oh, that is what she expects? Then let me assure you and her, once for all, that there isn’t the slightest danger of my accepting it. And, as there is nothing more to be said, I think we’ll change the subject now, if you don’t mind.’

It was not at once that Paul could be induced to change the subject; but he was forced to recognise before he went to bed that his mission had been a complete failure, and he returned to London on the ensuing day, feeling more like a fool than he was at all accustomed to feel. There was no overcoming the imperturbability or gaining the confidence of a man who neither admitted nor denied anything, who neither blamed his wife nor took blame to himself, and who appeared to be satisfied with a condition of things which he must have felt to be thoroughly unsatisfactory.

‘The only comfort,’ reflected Paul, as he journeyed southwards, ‘is that they would behave in quite a different manner if they weren’t still fond of one another. Perhaps the child will bring them together again eventually; one can but hope so. But it is a pity that Clarissa is a rich woman and that Guy is not the man to put up long with the discomforts of poverty. That complicates the situation in more ways than one.’

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE ‘MOVEMENT.’

THE situation was doubtless, as the Reverend Paul Luttrell had discovered, a somewhat complicated one; and so, of necessity, are most of the human situations which arise during a highly civilised epoch. The situation, personal and political, in which Sir Robert Luttrell, for example, found himself was of so involved

a character as to demand his whole attention and to prompt the dismissal, with an impatient shrug of the shoulders, of his daughter-in-law's whims from consideration. With the prospect of compulsory retirement into private life looming upon the near horizon, with estates hopelessly mortgaged, with expenses which seemed to increase rather than diminish, and with premonitory symptoms which could not always be ignored of declining health, how could he be expected to bother himself about matters which, after all, concerned his successor and must be left to his successor to be set right?

'You have done what you could for Guy; hadn't you better begin to try what you can do for Madeline?' he suggested to his wife. 'I tell you plainly that, in my opinion, there isn't too much time to be lost; for in all probability there will be no London season for us next year. I must get rid of this house; and I only wish I were half as sure of selling it at a reasonable figure as I am of being out of office before the autumn!'

Lady Luttrell was fain to acquiesce. It was certainly most important to establish Madeline, and although she took a somewhat less gloomy view than her husband of the political outlook, she knew enough to know that Sir Robert's chances of being included in a reconstructed Ministry were not great. Also she knew that, without the excuse of official duties and the aid of an official salary, it would be almost essential to give up the house in Grosvenor Place. Thus Clarissa was suffered for the time being to pursue her independent career unmolested, Mr. Dent, to all appearance, aiding and abetting her.

'I shall always think, you know, that you have been very much to blame,' Lady Luttrell could not help telling that elderly philosopher, when she met him at a dinner-party one evening. 'Surely you ought to have some little influence over your niece!'

'I should lose what little I have if I were to issue orders to her,' Mr. Dent replied, smiling. 'Do you think that obedience is to be expected of a woman who has 5,000*l.* a year of her own?'

'Obedience is to be expected of all women when they are managed in the proper way,' Lady Luttrell declared decisively. 'One doesn't issue orders; one has recourse to other methods—one appeals to their sense of duty, to their natural affection. Every right-minded woman must have some natural affection for her parents or—or her uncle.'

'But, my dear lady, I thought you agreed with me that



Clarissa is not in her right mind just now. Besides, I am so inexperienced, never having had any children of my own. You must try to forgive me for taking up a detached attitude, and for being powerless to command the willing submission which I am sure your children render to you.'

Lady Luttrell suppressed a sigh. She herself had rendered unquestioning submission to her parents, in accordance with the French custom, which she felt more and more convinced as she grew older was a salutary one; but Madeline had been brought up as an English girl and had English ideas of independence—in addition to the extravagant ideas with which it was to be feared that she had been imbued by Clarissa. There could be no absolute certainty that Madeline would dutifully bestow her hand upon a husband of her mother's choosing. Moreover, universally admired and liked though the girl was, it was by no means easy to choose a husband for her from amongst the very few Catholic bachelors who were to be met with in society. A mother-in-law so beset by pressing cares and anxieties was, as may be imagined, not disinclined to accord at least a temporary respite to Clarissa, who had now taken formal possession of her abode in Cadogan Gardens.

That abode, notwithstanding the extreme rapidity with which it had been rendered inhabitable, was a very luxurious and charmingly furnished one.

'It is one of our fundamental principles,' Madeline was informed, 'to surround ourselves with beautiful things, or, if beautiful things can't be had, at least with pretty ones. We consider that quite as much a duty as personal cleanliness and quite as necessary to mental development.'

Clarissa had taken to making free use of the first person plural. It seemed (as in the case of writers of leading-articles) to lend a certain dignity and sanction to sentiments which were sometimes startling, often silly, and almost always trite. But who 'we' were Madeline did not very distinctly gather. With the names of some of her sister-in-law's new intimates she was dimly familiar, having heard of them as speakers at public meetings and contributors of essays to advanced periodicals; but her acquaintance with their writings was of the slightest, and she did not find them personally attractive. The women for the most part affected a style of dress which was neither fashionable nor becoming, while the men—notably a certain fat and rather dirty poetaster, named Alfred Loosemore, who was in the habit of dropping in to tea, and whose

great reputation for conversational brilliancy appeared to rest rather upon his self-satisfied method of enunciation than upon anything that he actually said—were downright repugnant to her.

‘Oh, I don’t know that I particularly like him,’ Clarissa said, in answer to some strongly worded criticisms in which Madeline indulged, after having with difficulty sat him out one afternoon; ‘I dare say your father does not particularly like all the people who profess Tory principles and support Tory organisations. But Mr. Loosemore is in sympathy with the movement, you see, and for that reason one feels bound to show him some civility.’

The ‘movement,’ broadly speaking, was the Emancipation of Woman—nothing less; and with that Madeline also was, or believed herself to be, in sympathy; although, judging by the remarks of the ladies who frequented the house in Cadogan Gardens, it was a little difficult to understand from what species of bondage it could still remain requisite for them to be emancipated. Clarissa, however, did not seem to go quite to the lengths that they did, save with respect to the one subject of marriage, upon which her doctrine was, at all events, intelligible.

‘I think that whatever men claim for themselves we have a right to claim for ourselves,’ she declared. ‘As matters stand, they claim a great deal too much and we do not claim nearly enough. When that is more generally understood and acknowledged, the first blow will have been struck at a vast deal of vice and misery which is now accepted as inevitable.’

She did not always talk nonsense, nor was she always didactic. She was very fond of Madeline, very anxious that the girl’s life should prove a happy one, and not without sympathetic intuitions of which age and commerce with the world had well-nigh deprived the kind-hearted Lady Luttrell. It was, therefore, natural enough that Madeline, who could not unbosom herself to her mother, should slip off to Cadogan Gardens upon every available opportunity. If, in the course of her long talks with her sister-in-law, she never mentioned Raoul de Malglaive by name, that was not (as she herself imagined) because that young man was really nothing to her or because he had given her no sufficient excuse for mentioning him, but because Clarissa did not wish, for the moment, to pronounce any opinion upon a Frenchman of uncertain constancy and morality. What was of primary importance was to dissuade Madeline from hastily engaging herself to some eligible suitor, brought forward by Lady Luttrell, and as a means towards

that end, M. de Malglaise might be utilised, so long as he was not openly alluded to.

‘I have quite made up my mind,’ was the gratifying announcement which Clarissa received at length from her disciple, ‘that I will never marry a man whom I do not love, and I am beginning to think, with you, that love must mean respect. Now, I don’t see how it could be possible for anybody to respect Lord Stoneyhurst.’

‘Lord Stoneyhurst!’ exclaimed Clarissa, with a start. ‘Who is Lord Stoneyhurst? Who asks you to respect him?’

‘Oh, nobody has gone quite so far as to ask that of me,’ answered Madeline, laughing. ‘But I have been asked indirectly, and I suppose I shall soon be asked directly, to marry him. He is rich and a widower and has no children; so, although poor Lady Stoneyhurst only died about a year ago, he is understood to be on the look-out for her successor, and he has flattered me with a good deal of attention lately.’

‘Horrible old profligate!’ cried Clarissa unhesitatingly.

‘Well, he isn’t exactly that: on the contrary, he is said to be very devout and charitable. But he is quite old—forty at least, I should think—and desperately stupid. One can’t feel much respect for a man who never mounts a horse or fires a gun.’

‘Well, I don’t know about that,’ said Clarissa, remembering Mr. Alfred Loosemore and others, whose tastes were not of a sporting character; ‘but the question of respect need not arise, since you say that you don’t love Lord Stoneyhurst.’

Madeline burst out laughing. ‘Oh, no; I certainly don’t love him,’ she replied; ‘but I shall just as certainly be told that I shall learn to love him. It seems that well-conducted wives always do learn to love their husbands in France.’

That no such phenomenon could be expected to occur in England was the theme of an eloquent and impressive discourse to which Madeline listened attentively during the next five minutes. It was hardly necessary to be so emphatic, for she had in reality no intention of espousing the wealthy Romanist nobleman whom both Sir Robert and Lady Luttrell had begun to regard with eyes of fond expectation; still, when battles have to be fought, there is some comfort in being provided with a backer, even though one may place full reliance upon one’s own strength, and a few of Clarissa’s remarks seemed worthy of recollection and repetition.

It was about ten days later that Lady Luttrell, who had been

reasoning tearfully with her daughter, and whom circumstances had given an excellent excuse for shedding tears, was astonished to hear Madeline open the case for the defence with the words: 'If there be such a thing as sin——'

'*If* there be such a thing!' ejaculated the poor lady, aghast. 'My dear child, what can you mean! Is *this* the sort of doctrine that Clarissa teaches you, in addition to all the other absurdities that she professes?'

'Well, I suppose it may be uncertain whether some of the things which are called sins ought not to be known by a different name. But I was only going to say that there can't be much uncertainty about the sin of taking vows which one knows that one would never be able to keep. I told Lord Stoneyhurst the truth, and he quite agreed with me that, as that was the truth, he had better look elsewhere for a wife.'

'I can't think what you can have told him!' groaned Lady Luttrell. 'Something altogether *inconvenable*, I am afraid; for he said to me afterwards that you seemed to have singularly advanced ideas. One sees where they come from, those advanced ideas!—and one sees what they have led to in Clarissa's own case.'

'But, mother dear, I think Clarissa is right,' returned the girl. 'It is a great pity, of course, that she and Guy should not be friends, and perhaps they will make friends again some day; but I think she is right in what she says about marriage. I think it is absolutely essential, in the first place, to love the man whom you marry, and, in the second place, I think there should not be one law for women and another for men. What is considered to make us unworthy of being loved ought to be considered so for them too.'

'Oh, dear!' sighed Lady Luttrell, throwing up her hands, 'what a very ridiculous way of talking! You have adopted Clarissa's very voice and manner, with your "I thinks" and your absurd and rather indecent theories. Poor Lord Stoneyhurst, too, of all people! Why the unfortunate man has been known all his life as a—what shall I say?—a sort of little saint!'

'Well, he declined to answer some of the questions that I asked him, anyhow,' remarked Madeline.

'Wretched child! is it permitted to ask such questions?—for I can easily conjecture what they were. A day will come, I am afraid, when you will bitterly regret having thrown away this chance; but what is still worse is that you will never have a chance

of marrying at all—no, not one; *c'est moi qui vous en répons!*—until you cease to demand the impossible. It is all very fine for Clarissa, who has her own money and can afford to be outrageous; but even she will end by discovering that religion and society, not to speak of commonsense, are not to be defied with impunity.'

Anyone who sets to work to defy these three powerful forces must, no doubt, be a very courageous or a very foolish person, and it may be that Clarissa was both. Warm approval and encouragement awaited Madeline when the latter came to announce Lord Stoneyhurst's dismissal.

'You have acted quite rightly, and your mother must know in her heart that you have,' she was assured. 'If only we are true to ourselves, we need not mind hard words.'

Nevertheless, certain hard sayings of Lady Luttrell's, which had been repeated in the course of the interview, had found their way between the joints of Clarissa's armour, while certain soft sayings which assailed her daily from another quarter had a somewhat similar effect. Netta, it might have been hoped—and, indeed, had been hoped—would scarcely notice Guy's absence, seeing how young she was and how frequent his absences had been in Ceylon; but this expectation had not been fulfilled. Perhaps some instinctive suspicion warned the child that there was a screw loose, perhaps the servants had been less reticent than they ought to have been; at any rate, she was perpetually asking for her father, and the explanation that he was obliged to go away to look after his soldiers did not appease her. Why, she wanted to know, could not they go too? Besides, he had promised to take her to the Zoological Gardens and show her the lions and tigers. She declined, even with tears, to be taken thither by her mother, declaring that, unless father were to be of the party, she did not want to see the lions and tigers at all. The upshot of all this was that Clarissa, urged thereto by a sense of duty and undeterred by a strong sense of disinclination, wrote a letter to her husband, suggesting that he should, if possible, come up to London for a few days.

'Netta,' she wrote, 'is fretting about you. She is too young to understand, and it would not be at all desirable to tell her at present, what our relations are. Some day, of course, she must hear the truth; but in the meantime, I have no wish to keep her apart from you, and I believe our arrangement was that you should see her every now and then.'

Mention was then made of the promised visit to the Zoo, and Clarissa wound up with: 'I myself also, if you have no objection, should be glad to have a short conversation with you upon matters of business, which are more easily disposed of by word of mouth than by correspondence.'

Guy's reply came in the concise form of a telegram. 'All right. Tell little one will call for her Thursday afternoon. See you that evening or next day.'

And at the appointed time he arrived, looking provokingly good-humoured, with a carnation in his button-hole and a smile upon his lips.

'What a capital house!' said he, on being shown into his wife's drawing-room. 'You know how to make yourself comfortable, I see; but your taste in the way of furniture and knickknacks was always irreproachable.'

Then Netta was brought in by her nurse and, with a screech of delight, flung herself into her father's arms. The fact was that Guy and Netta had been sworn allies ever since the latter had been capable of articulate speech, and not the least of Clarissa's grievances against the former was that, although he seemed to recognise no sort of parental duty or responsibility, he had won and returned his child's affection. The couple set off almost at once for the Regent's Park, where, as it subsequently appeared, they spent a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

'Upon my word,' said Guy, when they returned at a rather late hour, 'I was awfully sorry you hadn't come with us. We did a ride on the elephant, and we fed the bears and had a high old time with the monkeys, hadn't we, Netta? Going round the show with a small brat like that is nearly as good as being a small brat again oneself, you see,' he added explanatorily.

Clarissa smiled—not without some suppressed bitterness. Her husband was, perhaps, nothing but an elderly brat, and she could understand how easy it might be for those who did not happen to have suffered from his peccadilloes to pardon them; but the excuse carried its own condemnation with it. A man who scuttles his ship and drowns his crew cannot really be allowed to plead that he only did it for fun.

However, the wreck which Guy had succeeded in accomplishing did not, so far as outward appearance went, look very much like a wreck; and of this she was painfully sensible after Netta, voluble and excited, had been sent upstairs to tea.

‘I suppose,’ she began, ‘you think I am quite satisfied, now that I have a house of my own and that, as you put it, I have made myself comfortable?’

‘Oh, I don’t know about that,’ answered Guy, ‘because I have never yet had the good luck to find out what will satisfy you; but I should think you ought to be.’

‘Yet it seems to me that I have not been so very exacting. But we need not revert to by-gones. What I wished to say now was that I shall never feel satisfied or comfortable so long as you refuse to take what I consider to be justly yours. Anybody, I think, would tell you that in the case of an amicable separation, such as ours, you are entitled to the half of the income which you would have had to spend if we had remained together, and your refusal has the effect of placing me in a false position.’

‘Oh, if it comes to that,’ answered Guy, getting up, ‘I’m afraid anybody would tell you, and a good many people will tell you, that you *are* in a false position. But that’s your own choice, you know; I thought you liked it. Anyhow, I can’t offer to make you more comfortable by accepting quarterly cheques; so, if that was the business matter that you wanted to talk over with me, I’ll wish you good evening. I have said all I have to say upon the subject already.’

Clarissa sat silent for a few moments and brushed her hand once or twice impatiently across her forehead.

‘Do you think,’ she asked at length, ‘that it is quite fair to talk as though you, not I, were the victim?’

‘I didn’t know that I was talking in that way,’ he replied. ‘I haven’t called myself a victim, and you are very welcome to call yourself one, if it makes you any happier to do so.’

‘You must be well aware that I have a right to do so, and you must also, I should think, be well aware that by sentencing me to riches and yourself to poverty, you assume an air of false magnanimity.’

‘Do I really?’ asked Guy, making rapidly for the door. ‘I’m very sorry; but I don’t see how it is to be helped. Well, good-bye, Clarissa; I’m going to send a doll round for Netta in the morning, and I shall see her again before very long, I hope. But it won’t be necessary for you to stay at home to receive me, you know.’

It must be owned that he was a most provoking as well as a most impenitent sinner, and that his wife was scarcely to be blamed for the bitter thoughts in which she indulged after he had left her.

## CHAPTER XX.

## MADELINE MAKES DISCOVERIES.

LIFE is so full of worries and bothers that they end by neutralising one another. It is impossible to think of fifty things at once, and Sir Robert Luttrell, when Parliament was dissolved at the end of June, had so far the advantage over his wife that he really could not spare time to lament the perversity of his heir-apparent or deplore the curtailment of the London season.

'I have no doubt that it is all very unfortunate and very inconvenient,' he told her; 'but I can't help it; the younger generation must look after itself. My present business is to fight a losing battle to the best of my ability; and as this will assuredly be my last battle, I feel a certain melancholy interest in the job.'

Despite the confident utterances of his fellow-ministers and those with which he himself neglected no opportunity of backing them up, he was persuaded that the fight would prove a losing one. His long political experience convinced him that his party had held office for too many years, and although his own seat was safe enough, he was under no illusion as to his chances of ever again addressing the House from the Treasury bench. *Militavi non sine gloria*, he might have said; he had served the Tory party faithfully through thick and thin; a peerage and dignified retirement might have formed no unfitting conclusion to an honourable career, if only he had devoted half as much attention to the management of his private affairs as to those of his country. But, unhappily, his private affairs were in such a terrible mess that he was only too glad to be drawn away from the contemplation of them by public duties, and had Lady Luttrell known how very near an ancient family was to downright ruin, she would probably have been less plaintive over the necessity for quitting Grosvenor Place with Madeline neither engaged nor married, and Clarissa so far from being in a condition of mind to be left to her own devices.

Lady Luttrell, however, had merely a vague, uncomfortable impression that money was no longer so plentiful as it had formerly been, that Guy was in some danger of allowing the handsome income to which he was entitled to slip through his fingers, and that there might be very great trouble with Madeline, unless



the girl could somehow be brought to realise that it is the duty of every woman to marry and, if possible, to marry well. Therefore, on the journey down to Haccombe Luttrell, in which neighbourhood her husband had to meet his constituents, she was somewhat fretful and peevish, grieving aloud over the loss of Lord Stoneyhurst, who had always voted with the Liberals, but who might, under the peculiar circumstances of the present election, have been tempted into the opposite camp, and denouncing the avowed Radicalism of Clarissa, who, she had been informed, was making herself quite conspicuous as a champion of the enemy.

‘I dare say her eloquence won’t affect a very large number of votes,’ remarked Sir Robert.

But Lady Luttrell said, ‘One never knows. An incalculable amount of mischief is done by silly women nowadays, and it is very bad taste, to say the least of it, on Clarissa’s part to oppose her own family. But of course she only does it in order to annoy us, and really, Madeline dear, I sometimes think—but I am afraid it is useless for me to say what I think.’

It was certainly useless; but that did not prevent the poor lady from saying what she thought again and again in terms which were necessarily painful to her daughter. During the period of electioneering and speechifying which followed, and which was not devoid of pleasurable excitement for Lady Luttrell, who enjoyed canvassing and who had plenty of political visitors to entertain, Madeline was by no means in the best of spirits. Neither by her father nor by her mother was she treated with actual unkindness; yet she was made to feel that she was more or less in disgrace. They were clearly of opinion that she had behaved in a very foolish manner, and she herself, now that she was removed from Clarissa’s influence, was not certain that she had acted with complete wisdom or prudence. Why had she rejected Lord Stoneyhurst, who, to be sure, was a dull little man, but who would doubtless have proved himself an indulgent husband? Why had she discouraged one or two others, who were less dull and almost as well provided with this world’s goods? Why, after all, should any girl refuse a really good offer, seeing that the inconstancy of men is proverbial, and that the love matches of England turn out no better than, if as well as, the *mariages de convenance* of France?

It was on a hot, windless afternoon, when she had been about ten days at home, that Miss Luttrell put these questions to her—

self and was so fortunate, or so unfortunate, as to find a conclusive answer to them. She had rowed herself out to the middle of Hacombe Bay in the little open boat which she was permitted to use when the barometer stood at set fair, and now, drifting gently seawards with the ebbing tide upon that still expanse of blue water, she rested on her oars and allowed her thoughts to have free play. This, as good old Father Dormer, who was the keeper of her conscience, had repeatedly warned her, is a very dangerous thing to do; still, one must run occasional risks in a world which is full of hidden perils, and if there was anything specially hazardous in wondering whether she would ever see Raoul de Malglaise again, Madeline was not aware of it. Already, indeed, she had more than once looked back with pleasure and a sort of pensive regret upon her rides and talks with that smart young officer of French cavalry: the only difference was that it had not until now occurred to her to compare him with Lord Stoneyhurst and other suitors, actual or potential. Of course she knew very well that Raoul had admired her; but it was altogether improbable—so she told herself, and so all she had heard from the experienced Clarissa led her to believe—that absence would make his heart grow fonder. Besides which, there was no real likelihood of his being at Pau again during the ensuing winter.

Thus it came to pass that Madeline, preoccupied as she was with the idea of marriage, and inclined as she had always been to a French rather than an English alliance, began to indulge in dim visions which had the grave, handsome, southern countenance of her former playmate for their centre; thus, too, it dawned upon her by degrees that Pau without Raoul would be a sadly disappointing place of sojourn. As the boat floated on, and as, regardless of her complexion, she reclined in the stern, with her hands clasped behind her head, contemplating the hazy, blue horizon, the visions grew less dim and the central figure became more clearly defined. In these closing years of the nineteenth century young ladies are no longer supposed, as they used to be, to be impervious to Cupid's darts; nor, it is said, do they hesitate for a moment to avow to themselves and others that they are 'awfully gone on' this or that member of the other sex whose privilege it has been to win their maidenly affections; but Madeline Luttrell, notwithstanding her acceptance of her sister-in-law's modern theories, was in some respects old-fashioned. She was, at all events, antiquated enough to blush up to the roots of her hair, for the benefit of the circling sea-gulls and the

sleepy cormorants who were watching her, when she had exclaimed aloud: 'Yes; that is the truth! I do love him—and I shall never love anybody else!'

Now, after having committed herself to such an assertion as that—and said it aloud too—there could be no further question of British noblemen or gentlemen, belonging to the ancient faith. So far, so good; it is always a comfort and a relief to know exactly how one stands. But what was considerably less pleasant was to remember that Raoul had committed himself to no definite assertion at all, and that he could not be held to blame if he was at that very moment breathing hints of eternal devotion into the ear of some odious countrywoman of his own. Madeline drew out of her pocket a letter which she had recently received from Clarissa and which contained certain very severe statements respecting the male sex in general.

'They are all the same; I doubt whether one in a thousand is capable of what we call love or can understand that there is anything to be ashamed of in infidelity. Guy, I am sure, thinks me most unreasonable; it seems to him to be a mere matter of course that his loves should be like dissolving views, and, as I say, nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand would agree with him. They have been educated to hold these opinions: all that can be done is to educate the next generation differently.'

It is, no doubt, at once a duty and a privilege to labour for the welfare of posterity; still, when one has not yet celebrated one's own twentieth birthday, one naturally feels a somewhat keener personal interest in the existing generation, and Madeline could not help hoping that the existing generation might be a shade or two less black than it was painted. She did not know a very great deal about it; she was, oddly enough, under the impression that young fellows are, as a rule, more scrupulous, more unselfish, more religious in France than they are in England; it seemed to her reasonable to suppose that so exemplary a son as Raoul de Malglaive would be a true lover and a good husband. And that he was her lover, or had been a very short time ago, she was, after all, pretty sure.

So Miss Luttrell spent a quiet, enjoyable afternoon, with the sea-birds and the sea-breeze and her dreams to keep her company, until the time came for her to pull back to Haccombe harbour and stroll up to the house, where—as so often happens to poor mortals who have been dreaming of peace—a most disagreeable surprise awaited her. Lady Luttrell took in a large number of

French newspapers, and it so chanced that several of these were lying upon the library table when Madeline entered. The room was empty; everybody, it appeared, was out of doors, and the girl carelessly picked up 'Le Petit Voyou des Basses-Pyrénées,' which by ill luck had chanced to catch her eye. Lady Luttrell did not approve of promiscuous reading for young people; but long sojourn in a country where many things of which she did not approve were sanctioned had led to some laxity of discipline on her part, and Madeline broke no rule by perusing the vivacious and not very edifying little print which provided weekly amusement for the inhabitants of Pau.

It provided nothing of that sort for its present reader, who had no sooner curled herself up comfortably in a low easy-chair than her attention was claimed by a paragraph, headed *Charmante Aventure*, which caused her at once to start back into a more erect attitude. The adventure, to tell the truth, was neither charming nor particularly amusing, since it seemed to have consisted merely of an unforeseen meeting between a husband and wife at an hotel where the latter was accepting the hospitality of a cavalry officer; but much interest was, of course, added to the episode by the description of the lady as '*la belle Marquise de C—*,' while the officer was delicately alluded to as '*le jeune R— de M—, représentant d'une de nos plus austères familles béarnaises.*' The details over which the writer of the paragraph chuckled and its reader writhed may be omitted. The cool demeanour of '*le jeune R— de M—*' under circumstances of which it was stated that he was not without previous experience; the audacious explanation which he was said to have offered; the ultimate pacification of the irate husband, who, it appeared, had been called upon by his wife to explain his own presence at the hotel, and had been unable to do so without compromising a fourth person—all these things, which took up a great deal of space and were dwelt upon in a highly humorous style, certainly belonged to the category of literature which Lady Luttrell would have deemed unsuitable for young people. But it is needless to say that Madeline read the narrative from start to finish several times over, and when, with a gesture of disgust, she threw the horrible little sheet away from her, she threw all her foolish dreams away with it.

Of course the dreams had been foolish; of course Clarissa was right, and all men were the same, and she wished she was dead! Or rather, no!—on second thoughts she only wished that she was

married, and she was very sorry that she had refused Lord Stoneyhurst, and, if he would ask her again, he should have a different answer. Lord Stoneyhurst, at least, would not be found entertaining *belles Marquises* at provincial hotels.

Lady Luttrell, who came in presently, accompanied by several ladies who had been assisting her at a Primrose League meeting, would doubtless have pronounced this an extremely sensible conclusion, had it been imparted to her; but no immediate opportunity arose for her admission into her daughter's confidence. Lady Luttrell was very hot, very tired, and, as it presently appeared, deeply discouraged. She held a sheaf of telegrams in her hand, which she had opened in her husband's absence and which brought bad news from many quarters of the United Kingdom.

'The elections are going against us,' she announced, as she sank into a chair and begged Madeline to give her a cup of tea at once. 'How stupid it is to be beaten like this when all the decent people are on our side! Those wretched agricultural labourers!—why were we too honest to promise them things which nobody can ever give them? I almost wish now that Robert would lose his seat, so that we might give up meddling with politics altogether.'

A chorus of protest arose from Lady Luttrell's friends. Things had not come to such a pass as that, they declared; the Radical majority would be but a small one, the Radical Ministry would never be able to retain office, there would be another general election, with another result, ere long, and assuredly it would be impossible to spare so able a man as Sir Robert Luttrell when the next Conservative administration should be formed. But perhaps they did not quite mean what they said; for everybody knew well enough that Sir Robert had had his day.

Nobody, indeed, knew that better than Sir Robert himself. He arrived, just before dinner, from a neighbouring town, where he had been addressing a somewhat hostile assemblage, and with him, amongst others, came Mr. Dent, who had been returned unopposed for his own metropolitan constituency and who had been doing what he could by means of platform oratory in the west of England to help less fortunate candidates. Mr. Dent, ordinarily so placid, was looking worried and uneasy, Lady Luttrell noticed—far more so than her husband, for whose pallor and obvious fatigue she had been prepared, but who seemed to be in tolerably good spirits and who laughed, with a shrug of his shoulders, at the inevitable.

‘It is such a relief to see Robert taking it so well,’ she murmured to her husband’s friend and confidential adviser; ‘I was afraid he would be dreadfully upset by those telegrams.’

‘My dear lady,’ Mr. Dent answered, drawing her a little further aside, ‘he is not taking it well—or rather, it is not taking him well. He is not as young as he was, and nothing but sheer pluck preserved him from fainting in public this afternoon. I came back with him on purpose to tell you so; for I must be off again immediately after dinner to catch the night mail. Don’t be alarmed, and don’t let him know that I have betrayed him; but do your best to keep him quiet now—and perhaps you might be able to persuade him to see a doctor. Oh, no; I don’t think there is anything very serious the matter; only at his age and mine slight indispositions ought not to be neglected. I dare say you know,’ added Mr. Dent, after a momentary hesitation, ‘that he has troubles on his mind unconnected with politics.’

‘You mean money troubles?’ asked Lady Luttrell quickly.

‘Yes, I mean money troubles. Sooner or later they must be faced, I am afraid; but for the time being he should be induced to forget them, if possible. I have done my best in that direction; will you do the same?’

Lady Luttrell smiled and sighed. ‘It is never very difficult to induce Robert to forget money matters,’ she said.

‘Ah, I don’t know! It used to be easy; it is not so easy now. To tell you the whole truth, he has good reason for being troubled. Well—better days may come; though scarcely for him, I fear.’

‘If only Guy and Clarissa would be sensible enough to make friends again!’ exclaimed Lady Luttrell, with ready comprehension of his meaning.

‘Exactly so; but their case, unfortunately, is not one for intervention in its present stage. The present, you see, my dear Lady Luttrell, belongs to sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, and a pretty mess they make of it amongst them! Our sole consolation must be that they grow older every day.’

Not until late that evening, after Mr. Dent had left and the men had retired to the smoking-room, and the ladies, with one exception, had gone to bed, was Lady Luttrell’s attention drawn to ‘*Le Petit Voyou*’ by her daughter, who silently pointed out the obnoxious paragraph.

Lady Luttrell put on her glasses, read the anecdote and was evidently tickled by it; though she felt bound to exclaim:

‘But, my child, you should not look at such things; *c’est du dernier mauvais goût!*’

‘I dare say it is bad taste to write about such things, and it may be bad taste to subscribe to the newspapers that print them,’ returned Madeline; ‘but it is something worse than bad taste to do them.’

Lady Luttrell glanced at the girl’s disdainful countenance, realised quickly what had occurred and struck her hands together with a sudden gesture of despairing impatience. She was unhappy about her husband, she was frightened at the impending pecuniary disaster which had been foreshadowed by Mr. Dent, she was beginning to doubt whether the family would ever benefit by her daughter-in-law’s fortune, and here, to crown all, was Madeline turning up her nose at another eligible suitor!—a suitor less eligible, to be sure, than Lord Stoneyhurst, yet by no means to be despised, and one, moreover, who, as she now perceived, had had a very good chance of being accepted.

‘Decidedly,’ she cried, ‘you are losing your senses! It is ridiculous and improper for a girl to have such thoughts as yours! You look as if that poor Raoul had committed some horrible crime, instead of ——’

‘You think that the story is true, then?’ interrupted Madeline.

‘True!—and supposing it were true? As if all young men were not the same!’

‘Clarissa says they are all the same,’ remarked Madeline.

‘Oh, Clarissa—Clarissa! I am sick and weary of hearing of all the silly things that she says. I will admit that sometimes, by accident, she may be right as to her facts; but the conclusions which she draws from them!—*ça n’a pas le sens commun*. I must take care that you see no more gossiping newspapers, and I do implore you to believe that your mother knows a little more of the world than Clarissa does. As for Raoul de Malglaise, his youthful indiscretions are really no concern of yours.’

‘None whatever,’ agreed Madeline, moving towards the door. ‘So far as I am concerned, his indiscretions may know no bounds.’

Poor Lady Luttrell might have been more sympathetic and might certainly have been more judicious; but she was at the end of her patience, and she let the girl go. Least said soonest mended, she thought. After all, as Mr. Dent had sagaciously observed, young people do grow older every day.

*THE FINANCIAL BOOM OF THE  
LAST CENTURY.*

THE present phenomenal activity on the Stock Exchange—the great gold gamble, as an unkind one has called it—when millions of money have been within the past few months invested in South African and West Australian mining shares, when, as the report goes, an ex-strolling player has added one more to his millions before breakfast-time, and to be a friend of the chief actors has been worth a competency, is not, in some ways, without a parallel, though it must be sought in the last century, and its disastrous results were such as, it is to be trusted, will be spared the present-day investors.

The voyages of Sir Walter Raleigh and others in 'good Queen Bess's' and succeeding reigns seem to have begot an ardent spirit of trading and colonisation, and to have turned the thoughts of all to dreams of wealth beyond the seas. As early as 1695 the Bill of the Scotch Parliament to carry out a scheme for the planting of colonies on the Isthmus of Darien to trade with the two Indies created such enthusiasm that half of the entire circulating medium in Scotland was invested in the stock. Sir Walter Scott's glowing words bring this rush for gold graphically before the eyes. 'Many subscribed their all; maidens threw in their portions, and widows whatever sums they could raise upon their dower, to be repaid a hundredfold by the golden shower which was to descend upon the subscribers.'

Their neighbours across the border were no less captivated by the reports of the wealth of Spanish America; and Robert Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, who came into power as Chancellor of the Exchequer and head of the Government in 1710, formed the idea of tapping the supposed fabulous resources of the Southern Seas, and in this way paying off the National Debt, which had only been created in the previous reign, and, largely from its novelty, was regarded as particularly burdensome. With these objects in view the South Sea Company was formed, and a number of eminent merchants took over the burden of the floating National Debt, then amounting to nearly ten millions. The Government promised interest at the rate of six per cent., to be obtained from



certain import duties which were rendered permanent, and the Company was granted the monopoly of trade to the Spanish coasts of America. These privileges, however, were anticipatory, and were never fully realised. The Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, only won from Spain the right to engage in the negro slave trade, to found a few factories, and to trade with the American coast by means of one ship annually, and these concessions naturally came to an end when we soon afterwards engaged in war again with Spain.

The Company, however, flourished exceedingly. In the Session of 1714 an Act was passed to enable the Bank of England and others to lend money upon South Sea stock; and in the succeeding year another Act followed for enlarging the capital stock and yearly fund of the Company, and so obtaining for public use a sum of 822,000*l.*, and for raising 169,000*l.* by the sale of annuities.

Further assistance to the nation was proposed by the Company in a resolution of May 15, 1717, to lend the State two millions at five per cent. for paying off the lotteries of 1711 and 1712. The Bank at the same time came forward with a beneficial offer of two and a half millions at a like percentage for redeeming funds and Exchequer bills carrying a higher rate of interest. These offers were accepted, and an Act was passed for redeeming the yearly fund of the South Sea Company at the rate of six per cent. and paying on the whole of the now increased amount borrowed five per cent. per annum.

The good services of the Company were again accepted when, in the Session of 1719, the Royal assent was given to an Act for redeeming the fund appropriated for the payment of the lottery tickets of 1710 by a voluntary subscription of the proprietors into the stock of the South Sea Company.

The Company had up to this time been conducted with honesty and success, and had been worked largely with a view to performing good services to the public purse. The Prince of Wales was made a Governor in 1715, and three years later the King (George I.) himself accepted a place on the governing body. But the remainder of the history of the Company is a deplorable tale of dishonesty and deception and of shameless behaviour of men in high positions.

One of the directors, Sir John Blunt, who had been a scrivener, a man of greater ability than character, suggested to the Company to make an offer to take over the whole of the nation's debt,

amounting to thirty millions, on being guaranteed five per cent. for seven and a half years and given certain additional trading privileges. This proposal was also further baited to catch the Government and the people by agreeing to accept a reduction of one per cent. interest after the lapse of that period or to allow the State to redeem its debt. The offer gave the Company such a position that the Bank itself saw a dangerous rival in the field, and felt called upon to make an offer to the House of Commons at the same time (January 27, 1720) of a scheme for discharging the national obligations.

The proposals of the South Sea Company, however, were regarded by the Commons as the more attractive, and it was resolved in the House that they should be accepted (February 1). The annuitants were given the option of retaining their securities, but the affairs of the Company appeared to be so promising that most made an immediate exchange for South Sea stock.

The South Sea Bill, passed in April, empowered the Company to increase its capital, and when the directors called for subscriptions the money came in by millions. Every effort was made by the Company to inflame the public mind. The rumour was spread that Gibraltar and Port Mahon were to be exchanged for a part of Peru. In this way the whole nation fell under the spell of speculation, and became stock-jobbers. All kinds of projects sprang up and were foolishly accorded support; many for objects that in calmer times would have been recognised immediately as impossible, such as a wheel for perpetual motion. Many of these schemes were the plainest of daylight robberies, and on June 11 a proclamation was published that all new projects or bubbles—the word had now come out—the number of which was then about a hundred, should be deemed common nuisances, and that any broker dealing in them should be subject to a penalty of 500*l.* It was computed at this time that a million and a half of money was won and lost by these transparent swindles.

The South Sea scheme, however, held on its way and daily increased in public favour. At the passing of the South Sea Act the Company's stock rose to 340. A few days afterwards a subscription was issued at 300. On the same day (April 12) the Royal assent was given to a loan of a million to the Company. On the 28th of the same month another subscription was opened at 400. The stock was worth 550 on May 20, and was selling at 890 on June 2.

The thorough and complete way in which all classes were deceived can be judged from a speech of the King to Parliament on June 11, when he thanked the Commons for the good foundation they had prepared for the payment of the national debts and the discharge of a great part of them without the least violation of public faith.

The King went abroad to his dominions in Germany four days later, and many of those who accompanied him withdrew their money, and the stocks sunk considerably; but the directors came to the rescue by offering prodigious dividends and other benefits, and so managed to raise it again, and even advanced it to its maximum price of 1,000, and held it up during the whole of July between 900 and 1,000.

During this time of the greatest boom the proclamation against bubbles had no effect, and innumerable bogus companies with foolish ideas were being placed on the market, so that it was found necessary to issue an order of council (July 12) for dismissing seventeen petitions that lay before the Privy Council for patents to raise stocks for various purposes, for the exploiting of which many had been drawn in to part with their money, on the pretence that their petitions would be granted. This ruined the several projects for carrying on the fishing trade, insurance against fire, manufacturing sail-cloth, curing tobacco for snuff, and others. The sums proposed to be raised by other bubbles afloat at this time did not amount to less than 300 millions sterling. The Lords Justices gave orders on August 15 to the Attorney-General to issue writs against the York Buildings Company, the Lustring Company, the English Copper, and the Welch Copper and Lead Company and other companies that had exceeded the powers granted to them.

The exposure of these swindles caused the South Sea stock to fall to 830, including the midsummer dividend on August 17, but the directors held their stock up by buying largely, and it returned to 880. It fell again, however, immediately, and the directors were driven to make another bold move. They accordingly closed the transfer books on the 24th of the month, and the next day opened other books for taking in a subscription of one million at the rate of 1,000*l* for every 100*l*. capital stock. This had the desired effect, and the amount was subscribed within three hours. Men and women flocked to Change Alley in such numbers that tables had to be set in the streets with clerks. The

tale is told of one hunchback whose deformity brought him gold by letting out his hump as a writing-slope. On the 26th the transfer books were opened again, but the unreasoning passion of the people commencing to yield place to common sense, the stock fell to less than 800*l.*, and the directors were driven to adopt further measures. They offered to lend their proprietors 4,000*l.* upon every 1,000*l.* stock for six months at four per cent. The annuitants were still uneasy and clamorous, and the directors committed their crowning sin. They passed a resolution that the Christmas dividend should be at the rate of 30 per cent., and that thenceforward the yearly dividend should be not less than 50 per cent. This raised the stock to 800*l.* Breakers, however, were ahead of the directors, and a rumour in the early part of September that the Spaniards were assembling troops to invest Gibraltar added to the 'slump,' and the stock fell on the 8th to 640, to 550 on the following day, and by the 19th it was as low as 400. The Bank of England came to the rescue of the Company on the 23rd, and agreed to take their stock at 400 per cent. in lieu of 3,775,000*l.* the South Sea Company were to pay them.

When the books were opened at the Bank for subscriptions to support the public credit a great crowd at first assembled, and it was expected that the three millions would have been subscribed that day; but the fall of the Company's stock and the ill odour of its bonds caused a run upon the largest bankers, who were obliged to close their establishments, having already lent great sums upon the stock. The Sword-Blade Company also, the chief financiers of the South Sea Company, were forced to stop payment, and a great run upon the bank ensued. By the end of the month the stock had fallen to 150.

The storm of the people's anger now burst forth unrestrained, like a swollen torrent, carrying all before it, and Parliament was compelled to act to satisfy the demand of the country for vengeance on the evildoers who had wrought this disaster.

A select committee of thirteen Commoners was appointed to examine into the Company's transactions; and the sub-governor, the deputy-governor, the directors, and Mr. Robert Knight, their cashier, were examined by the House of Lords. As a result of this inquiry their Lordships came to the resolution that the officers of the Company had prevaricated with them in giving false representations of several matters of fact, that by lending money on stock and subscriptions they were guilty of a notorious

breach of trust, and that they ought to make good the losses the Company had sustained by their fraudulent management. The secret committee of the Commons repaired to the South Sea House on January 14, 1721, and took possession of it and of all the books. Mr. Knight, the cashier, now felt that he would be safer abroad, and absconded on the 22nd, and took vessel to Calais. The violence of the swing of the pendulum was shown luminously in Knight's case. He acted on the House of Commons like the red rag on the bull. A proclamation was issued on the following day offering a reward of 2,000*l.* for his arrest. He was stopped by the Marquis de Prie and committed prisoner to the castle of Antwerp on February 3, and a few days later the Commons addressed His Majesty to procure Knight's surrender. Accordingly the King despatched Colonel Churchill to Vienna, instructed to make most pressing instances to the Emperor that he might be at once delivered up together with his papers, but the King's messenger was refused his prayer. The Emperor, however, wrote a letter to his Majesty, which was read in the House of Commons (March 27), and in it he expressed his inclination to deliver up Knight, but his powerlessness to do so without the consent of the States of Brabant. This letter appears to have greatly incensed the members, for, three days later, three hundred of their number with their Speaker attended upon his Majesty to express their dissatisfaction at the obstacles raised by the Emperor under cover of the pretended privileges of the Brabant States, and they besought him to press for Knight's surrender. Eventually this individual escaped from Antwerp, and was never proceeded against by the Company's creditors.

During this time the Commons committee and the House of Lords had been accumulating information which disclosed gross breaches of faith in high quarters, and on the Houses meeting on January 23, Sir Thomas Jansen, Sir Robert Chaplin, and Messrs. Sawbridge and Eyles, members, were expelled the House and taken into custody, and several other directors were ordered to be seized with their papers. Two days later the Lords extracted the information from witnesses under examination that large sums in South Sea stock had been given to several persons, both in the administration and the House of Commons, for procuring the passing of the South Sea Act. Mr. John Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was incriminated, and he found it necessary to resign his seals.

Sir John Blunt, the chief projector of the scheme, was called upon by the House of Lords, but refused to be examined (February 4). This occasioned some severe reflections to be cast upon the Ministry, and was the cause of a tragic occurrence. Earl Stanhope grew so warm under the aspersions and so vehement in the defence of himself and colleagues that he was seized with a pain in his head of a severity to force him to proceed home, and his illness terminated fatally on the following day.

The Committee of Secrecy made a report (February 16) that connected several members of the Government with a direct interest in the Company. It was discovered that 50,000*l.* worth of stock had been bought in at prices from 150 to 180 for the Earl of Sunderland, the Premier, at the request of the Postmaster-General, Mr. James Craggs. It also appeared that Mr. Aislabie had had great quantities of stock given him, and that a great deal of stock had been bought for members of both Houses at favourable prices. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer was heard in his defence by the Commons, but it was proved against him that he had caused the accounts between himself and a Mr. Hawes to be burnt, and had given him a discharge for the balance, amounting to 842,000*l.* He was committed to the Tower and his estates alienated. Another member, Sir George Caswall, was at the same time treated in like fashion.

The royal assent was given on March 23 to the first attempt to undo or alleviate the misdeeds of the Company. The Act was to enable the Company to ingraft part of its capital stock into the stock and fund of the Bank and another part into the stock and funds of the East India Company, and to give further time for payments by the South Sea Company to the public. It was largely owing to the judicious and level-headed measures of one man that the country overrode its calamity. This man—Robert Walpole—became Chancellor of the Exchequer at this time (April 2), and Prime Minister in the succeeding year.

Now poured in petitions from the City of London and other places demanding of Parliament justice on the directors and officers of the defaulting Company.

The late Postmaster-General, James Craggs, was the next member found guilty of corrupt and scandalous practices, and the House of Commons resolved that all his property should be applied to the relief of the sufferers from his criminal actions.

The House met on May 17 to discuss what proportion of

their estates, which had been seized, should be given back to the directors. It was proposed that an eighth should be refunded; but eventually it was decided to consider each case separately. The values of their estates, as given upon oath, amounted to 2,014,000*l.*, and of this 334,000*l.* was returned to them, in amounts varying from 800*l.* to 50,000*l.* The Royal assent to the Act for realising the estates of the officials of the Company and of John Aislabie and James Craggs was given on July 29.

Parliament was called together by the King two days later to consider the state of public credit. The results of the deliberations were embodied in an Act that passed through all its stages within many days. During this term of the House of Commons hundreds of holders—of both sexes—of public stocks assembled at the doors of the House as members went in and created a great tumult and disturbance, demanding justice of their representatives. In this extremity members had to apply to the justices for protection. The reading twice of the Riot Act had the desired result, and the people dispersed.

The judicious measures that had been taken to wind up the estates of the Company, to alleviate as much as possible the burden of the loss on the people, and to restore the national credit were working wonders in pacifying the King's subjects and rehabilitating the finances of his realms. In his speech to both Houses on August 10, the King was able to say that it gave him great comfort to observe that the public credit was beginning to recover, and that he hoped it would be entirely restored when all the provisions they had made to that end were in operation.

On March 7 of the following year (1722) an Act received the Royal assent extending further clemency to the Company by relieving it of some of its obligations and giving further time for the repayment of the million lent to it. At the same time the Company received additional assistance by being invested with powers to dispose of the effects in hand by lottery or subscription if necessary. Eventually the disposal of the wealth of the Company enabled a dividend of thirty-three per cent. to be declared, and so one of the most disastrous social epochs in our history closed.

There is probably no parallel in the records of the country of such unrestrained and shameless speculation in high places and such unreasoning gullibility on the part of the people. A

thoughtless mania, quite unintelligible to their descendants, enveloped the whole nation, and when it is considered that it covered great and small, high and low, and even those who, by the ordinary standards of judgment, would always be considered of the highest intellect, it can only be concluded that, living in other times, apart from the sensations of that particular age, we are incapable of entering into its spirit or of judging or appreciating it. Even the poet Gay, who flourishes still in print, fell under the intoxication of the times. A competency was within his grasp if he had only sold out at the top prices the stocks given to him by patrons in the early days of the Company, but he held on, with blind faith in the scheme, against the better judgment of many friends.

During this time our neighbours across the Channel had been passing through a similar period of financial fever and then of all-engrossing disaster. The means by which the debt of France was to be wiped off the slate and the financial salvation of the country achieved was the Mississippi scheme of John Law. The proposals of this individual to the French Government were that he should become the sole creditor of the nation, and be allowed to issue paper money to ten times the amount of the National Debt, that is, to the extent of 2,080 million pounds. The scheme was so attractive in outward guise that the necessary permission was given to Law to found the Royal Bank of France and to issue his notes. The Bank carried on all the usual business in paper, such as the receiving of deposits, the discounting of bills, and the issuing of promissory notes. It was at first amazingly successful, and the Royal Bank was given fresh powers. The exclusive right of coining money was entrusted to it, the trade of the old French East India Company was transferred to it, and its directors were further conceded the monopoly of trading with the littoral of the Mississippi. Its history is widely that of the South Sea Company. A 500*l.* share was at one time worth 18,000*l.*, and Law was then made Comptroller-General. In 1720 the bubble was pricked, and a sovereign would have purchased ten thousand pounds' worth of the Bank's notes; and, as in this country, so in France, universal ruin overtook the nation for a time.



*MY UNCLE'S PICTURES.*

'WELL, sir, go your way; but remember that as you make your bed, so you must lie upon it.'

When an elderly uncle addresses his nephew as 'sir,' the expression betokens what diplomatists call 'strained relations' between the pair; and, in point of fact, Uncle Ned and I had, like the immortal Betsy and her mate, 'quarrelled and told each other facts.' Uncle Ned and my father had been the typical lucky and unlucky members of their family; everything had prospered with the former and failed with the latter. At length, about ten years after his marriage with an amiable but penniless orphan, my father died suddenly, bequeathing his widow and child (and a few debts) to his wealthy bachelor brother. In justice to Uncle Ned I must own that he accepted this bequest far more graciously than relatives often receive similar legacies; he made my mother a small allowance, paid liberally for my education, and promised to take me into his business as soon as I was old enough to enter the counting-house, with a view of my ultimately becoming his partner—and his heir. Never did better prospects open before any young man, as all my mother's friends assured her; for Uncle Ned's Manchester business was an excellent one, but, unfortunately, I was doomed to disappoint everyone's hopes. A very brief trial of commercial life showed me that I had neither taste nor aptitude for business; while my boyish love for sketching grew daily stronger, until I resolved to embrace the profession of an artist. It may be imagined how Uncle Ned received this intimation. An artist, in his eyes, was the embodiment of poverty and Bohemianism; and that any sane person should turn his back upon a lucrative business to embrace such a 'beggarly calling' was inexplicable to my uncle. We had many stormy scenes together before the matter was finally decided.

'I cannot help my tastes, sir,' I pleaded; 'I have no gift for commercial pursuits, and if you take me as your partner I believe I should ruin your business in a year.'

I had, in fact, made blunders enough during my brief occupancy of a stool in the counting-house to justify this remark.

'Go your own way,' growled Uncle Ned, 'but don't come to

me for help when you are scrawling pictures on the street flags for pence.' And so we parted.

I did 'go my own way.' Uncle Ned was not revengeful enough to carry his resentment so far as to withdraw my mother's allowance; and she, dear soul, with that faith in her boy's abilities common to all loving mothers, cheerfully pinched herself for some years to defray the expenses of my artistic training and apprenticeship. I am glad to think that after events justified my choice of a profession. I was speedily described as 'promising;' and, though no great triumphs at first fell to my lot, I soon began in a modest way to earn my bread and butter—of course, after several years of hard work and unremitting industry. Indeed, Uncle Ned himself was so far mollified by my improving prospects as to readmit me to a sort of grudging intercourse; though he ceased not to marvel openly that 'the lad could be fool enough to work as he did for the sake of making less than a head clerk's salary.' In point of fact, it was long before my professional earnings exceeded the salary which Uncle Ned had offered me in his own employ; but, then, I loved my pencil, and I loathed the counting-house, and I looked forward to better days to come.

Strangely enough, chance threw in my way one of the chief advantages coveted by all young artists, viz., a tour in Italy and the opportunity of studying in the art galleries there. Uncle Ned, for nearly the first time in his life, had a serious illness, which left his lungs in a somewhat weakened condition, and it was imperative that he should spend the winter in a warmer climate. Looking back, I think I had scarcely realised how sorely my choice of a career had disappointed the old gentleman, or how greatly he had built upon seeing the business which he had so largely improved and developed carried on under the title of 'Martin and Nephew.' I know now how he had looked forward to initiating me into all the small details and peculiarities of his business, which he loved as sincerely as I did my art, and what a shock it was to him to find that, after him, it must pass away into the hands of strangers. The old man had always been kind and liberal to me, and I was sincerely sorry to disappoint his hopes; but one cannot help one's mental bias, and I comfort myself by reflecting that, had I stifled my own inclinations and joined Uncle Ned as he desired, I should have wrung his heart even worse by the injury my utter incompetence in commercial matters would have inflicted on the business. Still, I think the disappointment

of his cherished schemes told on my uncle, and now he was ill he fell into a very low and melancholy condition, which the prospect of a six months' banishment from home did not diminish.

'Why don't you winter in Italy and take Mr. Robert with you?' said the kindly old doctor, who was a family friend as well as medical adviser. 'It will be better for you, Mr. Martin, than travelling alone, and the tour will be of advantage to Mr. Robert in a professional point of view.'

'Oh, of course I don't expect the young gentleman would set aside his artistic studies for the sake of looking after a poor old man like me,' growled Uncle Ned, cynically; to which Dr. Armstrong promptly retorted—

'You do your nephew great injustice, Mr. Martin; mark my words, the young man will make you proud of him yet.'

Though, for my own pleasure's sake, I should not have particularly cared to join my uncle in his foreign tour, duty as well as self-interest bade me accept his not very graciously worded invitation to accompany him. I believed I could be of use to him; it was a dreary idea for the old man to go abroad alone and ailing. I only stipulated that I should be allowed time to pursue my professional studies while we were away.

'You don't suppose I wish to see you idling and loafing away your time for six months,' said my uncle, sharply; 'if you'd taken up a chimney-sweeper's calling you should have been free to sweep all the chimneys you could while you were in Italy.' Which, by the way, would not have been a very arduous occupation in a land where sea-coal fires and open ranges are almost unknown.

I had not expected a great deal of pleasure from our travels, Uncle Ned himself being about as happy as an elderly gentleman whose whole life has been passed in commercial pursuits, and whose tastes are English to the core, was likely to find himself amid foreign surroundings. From the time he awoke in the morning until he retired to his bed at night, my uncle's existence was one series of 'missings' of home comforts and conveniences, and his conversation one enumeration of these losses. He sighed for his morning tub, his cup of strong tea, his toast, his beef-steaks, his draught beer, his snug open fireplace, his business occupations, his game of whist with his pet cronies in the evening, his visits to his club—lost joys for which all the attractions of Rome and Florence failed to compensate. Indeed, so thoroughly

miserable was the old gentleman during our first month abroad that I began to question the wisdom of the doctors in divorcing him from his home and to doubt whether the mental fret and worry was not as bad for him as the English winter climate. We had settled at length in a handsome suite of rooms in Florence, with such counterfeits of 'English comforts' as are procurable abroad; and here, to my great satisfaction, Uncle Ned attained what he had long been pining for—some interest and occupation for his superabundant leisure.

An old friend—and rival—in Manchester had lately retired from business, and was amusing himself by collecting a picture gallery. I fancy Mr. Selby's art knowledge was about on a par with my uncle's; but the former gentleman had taken the fancy to pose as an art patron, and had been lending some of his 'valuable collection,' as the local papers described it, to various picture exhibitions in different parts of England, and gaining much repute thereby. Now, although my uncle and Mr. Selby had been on friendly terms for thirty years, and played whist together on most week-day evenings, during all that period they had also been, in a civil way, rivals. Selby's goods ran my uncle's closely in both home and foreign markets; Selby's hothouses produced as fine grapes; Selby's gardener took as many prizes as my uncle's man; and both gentlemen drove equally good horses. But now Selby had, as it were, shot ahead in the race for distinction, for had not royalties themselves 'honoured Mr. Selby's famous pictures with a visit;' and museums and exhibitions voted thanks for 'Mr. Selby's generous loans' of certain masterpieces?

All these notices in the English newspapers awoke a spirit of rivalry in Uncle Ned. He was as rich, perhaps even richer, than Mr. Selby. Why should not he, too, have his picture gallery? And here, resident in the very land of art, with a member of the painting fraternity at his elbow, should he not possess peculiar advantages for picking up pictures cheaply? Uncle Ned had all a commercial man's business instincts, and knew his rival possessed the same. Picture against picture, he was aware that it would score a triumph could he prove that he had acquired his 'collection' at a less cost than Mr. Selby had done. My uncle imagined himself walking blandly through his rival's gallery, and remarking, 'Beautiful picture that—paid so much for it? You don't say so. Why, I only gave so much for one by the same master, which I am told is even superior in merit.' Uncle Ned knew that, how-

ever he might affect to conceal it, such a speech would drop gall into his rival's cup of satisfaction. So one day Uncle Ned announced that he, too, meant to set up a picture gallery, and that he required me to assist him in his selection by the aid of my professional experience. I was too glad to see the old gentleman occupied and amused to quarrel with the task imposed upon me, although it had its trials. My uncle had sense enough to distrust his own judgment regarding the choice of the pictures with which he proposed to adorn his mansion. I believe, in his secret heart, he infinitely preferred the gaily coloured 'wall posters' of his beloved native town to any of the works of art which are treasured in the Pitti; but he was now buying for fame, not for personal gratification. He was willing to purchase any painting which would be sought for by loan committees or visited by great personages; to purchase such, at least, *at a price!* Here was the rock upon which we struck. I was not so conceited a youth as to imagine that my own artistic experience and judgment entitled me to guide my uncle in the formation of an art gallery; but I possessed introductions to abler professionals than myself, and also had obtained the addresses of various respectable dealers, who, if they charged amateurs highly, at least gave them what they paid for. Uncle Ned, however, nearly had a fit when he heard the prices these dealers placed upon some of the paintings he coveted—for the sake of their painters' names! He haggled with and browbeat the picture-sellers till I was ashamed of being in his company; and matters were even worse when he came into direct contact with the artists. I had, after some trouble and diplomacy, obtained an introduction to a distinguished English R.A. who was wintering in the City of Flowers, and who chanced to have a small picture unsold upon his hands, its commissioner, a wealthy American, having unexpectedly failed (or, as he phrased it, 'clean bust up'). I thought this would be a good opportunity for Uncle Ned to secure a fine specimen of Sir ——'s work, but I bitterly rued the day I brought the pair together. Sir —— was all graciousness as I explained my uncle's desire to form an art gallery, and good-naturedly gave us some hints for our guidance in picture buying. Then came the question of the acquisition of his own painting, and the little picture was placed upon the easel, our interview taking place in the great man's studio. I saw that Uncle Ned was rather disappointed at the small size of this painting, his taste always running to acquiring a good many square

inches in each canvas, but he stifled his feelings until the price of the work was mentioned. Then he shrieked aloud. I vainly attempted to control him.

'Sir,' said the old man, facing the astounded artist, 'I know that all the painting folks expect me to pay outrageous sums for pictures by the "Old Masters," as they call them; and, as a business man myself, I can understand that a limited supply must raise prices in any market. Dead men can never do any more paintings, so of course one expects to pay handsomely for particular pictures when the output is restricted. But for a *living* artist—and a man in the prime of life, too, with many a good year of work in him yet—to ask such a figure. Why, reckon up the cost of your canvas and paints, and hire of your room, and say of your time——'

The amazed R.A. here recovered breath.

'Say no more, sir,' he said, bowing stiffly; 'we will not discuss the question further; I have the honour to wish you a very good morning,' and I dragged Uncle Ned away, cursing my own folly for ever having brought him.

Of course the story went the round of all the English society in Florence, and I was ashamed to show myself in any fellow-countryman's drawing-room for weeks. Even at the studio where I was working the tale became known, and my own student friends would murmur in my hearing, 'A limited output must raise any market,' 'A man in the prime of life with years of work before him,' &c. I believe Sir —— charitably concluded that my uncle was mad, but the story of this interview was a delightful *bonne bouche* to the Florentine gossips and scandalmongers for many a day.

Finding that I was very unwilling to be further mixed up with his artistic transactions, Uncle Ned took to picture buying on his own account, not unsuccessfully from certain points of view. He had now become the mark of various dealers in art as 'a rich milord' who was forming a picture gallery, and spent much time—not disagreeably to himself—in visiting and examining pictures in all manner of out-of-the-way nooks and corners in the city, occasionally making purchases. On the whole, this amusement proved less expensive than might have been anticipated; for, like a prudent gamester at Homburg, Uncle Ned never risked more than a certain sum in one day; and though, as works of art, the pictures he purchased were usually valueless, their acquisition afforded him much amusement and occupied his days agreeably,

and he derived the keenest pleasure from the fancied good bargains he made. Once or twice it happened that, in a small way, fortune favoured him; and my uncle was lucky enough to acquire a work of some merit cheaply, because it was painted by an artist as yet unknown to fame. My approbation of these one or two respectable pictures amid his collection of daubs increased my uncle's belief in his own art judgment; and he now often remarked that he believed, after all, 'he knew a good picture as well as any man.' I foresaw much disillusion when his self-selected collection was exhibited in England; but, at all events, the price paid for the lot had not been ruinous, and there was all the pleasure of selecting and bargaining to be counted in.

One day Uncle Ned came home excited, but hesitating. One of his new friends among the dealers had told him of a marvellous bargain to be procured at a certain obscure shop in a remote corner of Florence, a genuine 'Old Master,' which was to be sold, to an immediate purchaser, for a nominal sum; the exigencies of a noble family requiring its prompt (and secret) disposal. Uncle Ned had seen the picture and been attracted by it; also by the rather romantic tale by which its sudden sale was explained, and which, as I believe it to be a wholly apocryphal legend, I will not waste time in repeating. I did not conceal these doubts from Uncle Ned, but the old gentleman was beginning to place some faith in his own judgment as an art critic, in consequence of a lucky accident which had befallen him a few days previously. My uncle had bought a little picture by an unknown artist, whom he had lighted upon in the course of his rambles; chiefly, I believe, induced to make this purchase by the modest price placed upon the work by its painter, who has since attained a European reputation, but was then very near actual starvation. Uncle Ned displayed this picture to some visitors, one of whom discerned the merit of the work, and at once offered my uncle double what he had originally paid for it; an offer readily closed with by the old gentleman, who, like many other wealthy men, delighted in making a profit.

'And I dare say I may do as well with this other picture if I don't feel disposed to keep it,' added my uncle, still, however, hesitating a little in this case, as the price asked was not such a small one as he had paid for his earlier acquisition.

'Of course, if the picture be genuine, it is cheap enough' I replied; 'but, as I have said before, sir, I think it is always risky

to patronise wholly unknown dealers. There are several respectable firms.'

'Hang your respectable firms!' said Uncle Ned, testily. 'I know their prices of old. And, pray, did I ever pick up a bargain at any of their shops as I did last week, when I went about my own business in my own way? You may come with me and see this picture, if you like, though I begin to think I know as much or more about the trade than you do, for all your prate.'

I was silenced but unconvinced. It is doubtless possible to obtain cheaply a picture by an unknown artist, who may or may not rise in after days to fame, but paintings by a well-known hand must always bear their value. Uncle Ned had now become more familiar with the 'slums' of Florence than was I; and piloted me, with great dexterity, through a network of shabby little by-streets until we halted before a very dingy old curiosity shop, whose owner came out to greet us with effusion.

'A decent fellow who can speak a little English,' whispered Uncle Ned, as he went up the rickety stairs.

The dealer certainly was able to eke out his flow of Italian with a polyglot of odd French and English phrases; but I was not particularly impressed by the honesty of his countenance, nor, I fancy, would Uncle Ned have been so, had he met with him in Manchester. I was, however, much surprised when the vaunted picture was produced; for, unless I was greatly deceived, it was a very fine specimen of the Master whose name it bore, and the price asked, therefore, extraordinarily reasonable.

'Well,' said Uncle Ned, triumphantly, 'what do you say now, eh?'

'It *looks* all right, but of course I may be deceived. Had you not better have an expert's opinion before purchasing?'

'And lose the picture altogether. You know I explained to you why the Marchesa must have the money to-night. No, I'll risk it; I see you like the picture, and you ought to know something of your own trade by this time'; and Uncle Ned turned to the dealer and began that animated chaffer over a few odd soldi without which no self-respecting Italian ever appears to conclude a bargain.

'Had we not better take the picture away with us?' I whispered, for I still had my doubts about the dealer's integrity.

The man overheard me and struck a theatrical attitude. Why



insult him with such a suggestion? Never, never, would he permit the noble, the illustrious signori to burthen themselves in their carriage with a heavy painting. At once—instantly—should their purchase be despatched to their hotel, and the money for it only paid on its delivery. And, to ensure us against any trick—for, alas! he perceived that the poor Giuseppe was distrusted by his noble patrons—would one of the illustrissimi sign the back of the picture with his name or his seal, and thus mark the canvas unmistakably?

'A good idea! Best perhaps to be on the safe side,' muttered Uncle Ned aside to me, and pulled up the large seal which hung to his watch chain.

My grandfather was a wholly 'self-made' man (arrived, I believe, in Manchester with even less than the typical 'half-crown' in his pocket). Therefore, when he had amassed a fortune and wished to place a crest upon his carriage, he was obliged to apply to Herald's College for information regarding what 'armorial bearings' he could fitly assume. That obliging body soon either found or granted him 'a coat,' and, though their fees were heavy, I never see Uncle Ned use the seal on which our 'family arms' are engraved without thinking that the College, after all, did well by us; for the 'coat' is a fine-looking one, and makes a very noble and imposing appearance in sealing-wax. Uncle Ned now impressed its massive proportions on some red wax dropped on the back of the canvas, making a half-apologetic remark to Signor Giuseppe for the precaution; and the picture was to be sent home speedily, and paid for upon delivery. I parted from my uncle in the street, as I was just starting on a week's sketching expedition with some friends, but was surprised, a couple of days afterwards, to receive a furious letter from the old man, abusing me for 'my bad advice, which had induced him to throw away his money upon a worthless daub.'

I fear many of the gems of Uncle Ned's 'collection' might thus have been described, but I certainly had believed in the genuineness of his last acquisition, which, however, Uncle Ned had bought rather upon his own judgment than by my advice, for I had urged him to take an expert's opinion as well as mine.

I cut short my excursion to return to my uncle, and then learnt what had taken place while I was away. On looking over his bank book, Uncle Ned was rather startled to find how even the moderate amounts he had paid for his pictures ran up in the total,

and bethought him that he would now be economical and sell this last acquisition—which, after all, was not quite in the florid style he chiefly loved—and no doubt make double what he had paid for it, as in the case of the other picture. He, therefore, wrote to request a well-known dealer in art, to whom I had previously introduced him, to call and make an offer for this painting. It may be imagined with what indignation Uncle Ned learnt that his supposed Correggio was but a copy of the real picture—and not even a good copy. Unwilling to believe himself deceived, my uncle submitted the painting to several picture sellers and experts, but all unanimously declared that the painting was but an imitation. One dealer remembered the original painting having figured in a sale of art treasures some months ago.

‘But this,’ said the polite dealer, ‘is a very poor copy, and no person who understood the elementary rules of art could possibly have mistaken it for a work by the master whose name is given to it.’

Signor —— had engaged in several passages at arms with Uncle Ned in bygone times, when I had supposed my uncle would have been a purchaser of his wares, and the art dealer was not sorry for this opportunity of showing that the amateur who acts on his own artistic, as well as on his own legal, opinions may often discover that ‘he had a fool for his client.’

‘And you exposed me to all this, sir,’ roared Uncle Ned, furiously, ‘induced me to throw away my money and be laughed at into the bargain. Anyone might know it for a forgery, they say. I begin to think that you are as great an ass in your own beggarly calling as you were in my counting-house, and know no more about paintings than you did about soft goods.’

‘You are *sure* you have the same picture we saw?’ I asked.

Uncle Ned pointed disdainfully to a corner of the apartment, where stood the unfortunate picture, turned face to the wall, and with the red seal conspicuous on its back.

‘I don’t set up to be a great artist like some of my family,’ he said, ‘but I have eyes and sense to know my own seal when I see it.’

I looked carefully at the familiar impression, then turned round the painting, and gave a cry.

‘This is not the picture I saw at the dealer’s. This is indeed a poor affair—a very bad copy!’

‘Then why did you let me buy it?’

'I am *positive* this is not the picture you purchased.'

'There's my seal on it, anyway,' growled Uncle Ned.

I carefully and silently examined the picture and its plain heavy gold frame, then an idea occurred to me.

'You have been tricked and cheated, sir, but it might be difficult to prove this at present. Had this dealer any other "Old Masters" on sale?'

'Yes,' grunted Uncle Ned. 'He wanted me to buy a dingy thing—a Velasquez, I think he called it—just a man's head on canvas. I didn't care for it, but he said it was a gem; and I told him I'd take a day or two to think about the matter.'

'Then you have a definite refusal of this picture?'

'Yes, the man was to keep it for me till to-day; if he did not hear from me by this evening, he was to understand that I would not buy it.'

'Then I think I see my way to recover part of your losses,' I said enigmatically, and ran downstairs before Uncle Ned could ask further questions.

It was a desperate game to play, but I fancied my newly formed suspicions were correct. I speedily found my way to Signor Giuseppe's little emporium. It might have been fancy, but I thought the man surveyed me with some anxiety, and looked relieved when I announced, in an offhand manner, that I had called to purchase the picture of which my uncle had the refusal, and which he had now decided to buy. The little signor became all graciousness; certainly, there was the picture at the service of his esteemed patron as promised, and a fine Velasquez was duly produced.

'I will pay for the picture at once, and take it away with me,' I said, carelessly, producing a handful of notes and gold. I had drawn out my total worldly wealth from the bank on my way to the shop, and was risking all I possessed on my experiment.

'By no means, by no means,' expostulated the polite signor, but I was deaf to all his blandishments.

With me should that picture depart.

Then the dealer changed his tone, and regretted to remember that there had been a little mistake about its price, until I reminded him that he had himself written this down on a scrap of paper, which my uncle still possessed. Then he began to talk of the time for its purchase being overpast, of having accepted another offer for it, until I lost patience and said sternly:

‘Look here, Signor Giuseppe, either I take this picture away with me for the price you originally set upon it, or I communicate with the police—do we understand each other?’

The man turned livid, and muttered maledictions under his breath, but wrote me a receipt without more ado, and I marched downstairs with my spoil; triumphant now, for I knew my suspicions had been correct.

‘Have you been fool enough to buy another daub?’ cried my uncle, as I staggered in under my burthen. ‘Is the boy mad outright?’

‘Wait a moment, sir.’

I laid my purchase on the table, carefully removed the canvas from its frame, and there, just as I had anticipated, *underneath the real picture was a neatly painted facsimile*. Suspicious buyers who marked or signed the back of the canvas, of course only marked this copy; the original in front was then removed by the astute Signor Giuseppe, and the copy beneath it sent home in its frame, one real picture thus sufficing to sell any number of counterfeits. The trick was alike simple and effective, but I cannot lay claim to originality of thought in its detection, as I had, only a day or two before, been reading an account of an English nobleman’s travels in Italy during the last century, and of a similar device being attempted upon him in his transactions with a dealer. This peer, who was a shrewd man, had rejected all suggestions to seal or otherwise mark the back of the canvas, but had wisely himself carried off his purchase, with the result that, on attempting to reframe the painting, its purchaser found himself possessed of a real picture above and a counterfeit beneath it! I suspected that some similar trick had been played by Signor Giuseppe as soon as I saw the imitation Correggio, but thought it wisest to obtain clear proofs before taxing him with the fraud.

Contrary to my advice, Uncle Ned, hot with anger, insisted on communicating with the Florentine police, but, as I had anticipated, Signor Giuseppe was not to be found at his shop, probably having left the city to practise similarly ingenious frauds on other amateur picture buyers elsewhere. He was, in fact, only a lodger at, not the owner of, the curiosity shop—at least, so the individual who now claimed to be its lawful proprietor swore; and I suspect the signor was a Proteus-like personage, trading in different places under different names; and doubtless finding it a paying business

to palm off a succession of worthless copies under cover of one genuine picture. However, Uncle Ned was decidedly the gainer in this last transaction, for the Velasquez was a valuable painting, and readily sold for a price which covered his loss on the counterfeit Correggio.

Personally, I had cause to bless Signor Giuseppe. My detection of the imposture more than restored me to my old place in Uncle Ned's favour; he began to look upon me as a person of decided abilities, even of genius.

'Maybe you knew your own line best, lad,' he said reflectively, 'and, anyway, I'm bound to own there's more in your skull than I gave you credit for. It was a very neat trick to get the better of that rogue as you did.'

My uncle's approbation was not confined to words; he made me a handsome allowance during his lifetime, and at his death, which occurred some ten years later, I found he had reinstated me in my promised place as his sole heir, for all which good fortune I had, in a sense, to thank the dishonest Italian picture-seller.

I may mention that Uncle Ned's famous picture collection never came to England. He had begun to tire of his new hobby before we quitted Florence, and the news of Mr. Selby's death and the sale and dispersion of the pictures by his executors deprived Uncle Ned of his strongest reason for forming an 'art gallery' of his own. His rubbish sold for pretty much what he had given for it; as, singularly enough, the tale of my detection of Signor Giuseppe's trick had gained me an undeserved reputation for art knowledge in our social circle; and a few amateurs were ready to buy from my uncle pictures regarding which he had presumably taken my opinion before purchasing. This idea was scarcely complimentary to my professional abilities, but it spared Uncle Ned some disappointment.

Two of his pictures, however, I asked him to bestow upon me—the counterfeit Correggio and Velasquez. They are hanging in my studio still, and on 'show days' my wife is rather fond of relating to our visitors the reason why a successful artist, who is also a picture buyer, admits two such daubs into his collection. It is to those two counterfeits that I owe my present prosperity.

*THE EARLY DAYS OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL.*

THE spirit of adventure which led the navigators and explorers of the early half of the sixteenth century to face the unknown perils of distant seas is also to be traced in the habit of travelling on the Continent which then became prevalent among the richer classes. For in those days a European tour, even of the simplest character, was not lightly undertaken, and needed a well-lined purse. As to the benefits to be derived from a sojourn in foreign lands opinion was somewhat divided. Lord Bacon devotes one of his essays to the subject of travelling, and there gives much sensible advice as regards things worth seeing. The formidable list he draws up would indeed satisfy the most insatiable sight-seer of to-day. With an eye to the improvement of his mind, the tourist is advised to visit the courts of princes, colleges, and 'Courts of Justice while they sit and hear causes'; attend disputations and lectures; take a general survey of shipping and navies; besides witnessing fencing, training of soldiers, and 'comedies such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort.' Lighter forms of amusement are, however, not to be neglected, though as regards 'triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows men need not to be put in mind of them.' He concludes his remarks with a warning against aping foreign fashions. 'Let his travel,' he writes, 'appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture . . . and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country.' Many writers did not regard travelling in so favourable a light. Even Purchas, the author of 'The Pilgrimage,' says: 'Many gentlemen coming to their lands sooner then to their wits adventure themselves to see the fashion of other countries, whence they see the world as Adam had knowledge of good and evil, with the loss and lessening of their estate in the English paradise, and bring home a few smattering terms, flattering garbs, apish carriages, foppish fancies, foolish guises and disguises, the vanities of neighbour nations.' Bishop Hall wrote against foreign travel as useless and probably mischievous, and Roger Ascham argued to the same effect in his 'Scholemaster'—

with some reason, as in his time it had become proverbial that an 'Italianate Englishman was an incarnate devil.' Shakespeare in 'As you Like it' strikes the same note: 'Farewell, Monsieur Traveller; look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are.' Lord Bacon advised the traveller to 'carry with him some card or book describing the country where he travelled,' which would be a good key to his inquiry. But the guidebook of the period was a rather treacherous friend, and was to be relied upon rather for sound moral disquisitions than for practical purposes. A good example is furnished by Howell's 'Instructions for forreine Travel,' printed at the 'Prince's Armes in Paule's Churchyard' in the year 1642. The author has no love for folk who never leave the parish in which they are born: 'Such slow and sluggish people may be said to bee like Snailles or Tortoises in their shells, crawling always about their own home, or like the Cynique shut up always in a Tub.' The first country we islanders should become acquainted with is France, 'and the younger one goeth to France the better, because of the hardnesse of the accent and pronounciation, which will hardly be overcome by one who has passed his minority, and in this point the French Tongue may be said to be like Fortune, which, being a woman, loves youth best.' It might seem strange to a modern tourist to gather information from a chat with 'some ancient nunne.' These ladies, however, appear to have had no objection to being interviewed. 'They speak a quaint dialect,' Howell informs us, 'and, besides, they have most commonly all the Newes that passe, and they will entertain in discourse till one bee weary, if he bestow on them now and then some small bagatels as English gloves, or knives, or ribands.' The conversation with these nuns must have been carried on under certain disadvantages, as the ladies were behind a grating. The author allows a period of three years and four months for a tour including France, Spain and Italy, Venice, Germany and the Low Countries. The trip was undoubtedly expensive. Fifty pounds per annum for the servant and three hundred for the master for a like period is the author's calculation, in which he includes 'Riding, Dancing, Fencing, the Racket, coach hire, together with his apparell.' The reader is advised to bring home something 'that may accrue to the publique benefit and advantage of his country, and not draw water to his own mill only.' With this aim in view the traveller

is exhorted to 'pry into the policy and municipall lawes of other states and cities'—an undertaking which, in certain cases, might have been attended with some amount of danger. So long as the traveller's dress was of a fashionable cut, it mattered not that it was plain, it being 'a ridiculous vanity to go gaudy among Strangers'—a piece of advice surely not needed by the modern tourist, male or female. On reaching Spain his English apparel was to be discarded in favour of that of the country, on the principle of 'when at Rome do as the Romans do.' The reputation of Genoa at this period would appear to have been at rather a low ebb, as it had become proverbial, according to our author, that its mountains were without wood, its sea without fish, its women without shame, and its men without conscience—a pretty heavy indictment against the proud city. In spite of his didactic vein, Howell had, in fact, an intimate acquaintance with the countries and cities he described. In his capacity as steward of a glass manufactory in Broad Street, he was sent by his employers to the Continent to obtain materials and workmen. While on this errand he passed through Holland, France, Spain, and Italy, engaging competent workmen at Venice—that home of the artistic crafts—and at Middelburg. On his return to London he had become an accomplished linguist, and, severing his connection with the glass business, he became henceforward devoted to literature and travel. While at Madrid he had come across the Royal party—Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham—as well as such well-known men as Sir Kenelm Digby and Endymion Porter. In the 'Instructions' he had recommended Madrid as a halting place for the traveller. 'I know no other place,' he says, 'secure enough for a Protestant gentleman to lie in, by reason of the residence of our Ambassador.' A later edition of this early guide-book contained an appendix on 'travelling into Turkey and the Levant parts.' A spice of danger, an element of possible romance, entered into the details of travelling in those times. The adventures of Prince Charles and Buckingham, in their incognito visit to France, read like a chapter from a modern historical novel. For when Baby Charles and Steenie had obtained King James's reluctant permission to start on this expedition, they took the precaution of disguising themselves with false beards and assuming the names of Tom and John Smith. It was flight on horseback that alone saved them from being stopped on their way by the suspicious ferryman at Gravesend, and it must have been with a



sense of relief that they found themselves on board the vessel which Cottington and Porter held in readiness at Dover. While at Paris they caught a passing glimpse of the King and Mary de' Medici, and managed, on a plea of being strangers, to obtain admission to the rehearsal of a masque in which the Queen and the Princess Henrietta Maria were to take part. 'There danced,' wrote Charles, 'the Queen and Madame with as many as made up nineteen fair dancing ladies.' But of his future wife he seems to have taken little notice. The next day the travellers were up at three in the morning, riding hard for Bayonne.

It was at this period that art collecting became fashionable. Some knowledge of painting and skill in the selection of bric-à-brac was considered part of a gentleman's education. Thus Thomas Howard, the second Earl of Arundel, made purchases in every country in Europe, employing agents when he could not buy in person. This 'father of vertù in England,' as Horace Walpole styles him, writing from Frankfort in the year 1636, says: 'I wish you sawe the Picture of a Madonna which the Bishoppe of Wirtzberge gave me last weeke as I passed by that way; and though it were painted at first upon an uneven board and is vernished, yet it is more worth than all the toyes I have gotten in Germanye, and for such I esteeme it, having ever carried it in my owne coach since I had it,' and so forth.

Not content with securing the Albert Dürer painting, we find him in the same year at Nuremberg, buying the Pirkheymer library, which had belonged to the Kings of Hungary. He always chose the shortest sea route for the conveyance of his purchases to England. Inevitable delays, however, occurred. Sir William Russell, writing from the Hague, mentions that 'the ship wherein his goods were fraughted (amongst which are many thousands most excellent pieces of painting and Books which his Lordship gathered in his journey) is still at the Rotterdam, kept in with the ice ever since his Lordship parted.' The wonderful collections—including the marbles which bear his name—were arranged in the galleries of Arundel House in the Strand.

When, at the close of the seventeenth century, Misson wrote his 'Instructions to Travellers,' a good deal more was known of the Continent than in the days of Howell, though every traveller was still perforce an explorer rather than a tourist. This guide was of a practical character, and was in general use for many years, Addison rejoicing in its accuracy on his visit to Italy. The

author, a French refugee, who had been chosen as tutor to the grandson of the Duke of Ormonde, recommends those who visit Italy to go singly, or only in small numbers, owing to the limited accommodation. They were to carry, if not a bed, at least bed-clothes, as well as a small iron machine to close doors. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu appears to have followed this advice, for, writing about the wretched accommodation to be found at Stramel near Cologne, she says: 'I was forced to pass the night in my clothes in a room not at all better than a hovel, for though I have my bed with me I had no mind to undress where the wind came from a thousand places.' Misson, as Howell before him, advises travellers to take as little luggage with them as possible—all his own effects being carried in 'portmantles.' The accounts left by the pioneers of European travel are often meagre enough. How gladly we should welcome fuller details of Milton's journey to Italy and of his stay in Paris, where he arrived in the spring of 1638. Lord Sligo, the English Ambassador, welcomed him with every courtesy, and obtained him an introduction to the learned Grotius. But beyond this we have little but Anthony Wood's opinion 'that the manners and graces of the place were not agreeable to his mind.' Doubtless, he preferred Florence, the home of letters and of art, and the scholarly debates of its academies. Nice and Genoa he also saw, and his taste for music must have been gratified by hearing Lenora Baroni, the greatest Italian singer of the day, at the palace of the Barberinis at Rome. On his second visit to the city on the Arno he sought out the blind and aged Galileo, who had been long a prisoner of the Inquisition. From Venice Milton sent home a collection of rare and curious books and a chest or so of music. He had intended to visit Sicily and Greece, but this project had to be renounced, for he tells us 'I considered it dishonourable to be enjoying myself at my ease in foreign lands while my countrymen were striking a blow for freedom.' Thus, after a brief stay at Geneva, he returned home in August 1639.

Another traveller who left our shores with his mind fully equipped with the treasures of classical knowledge was Addison. When he crossed from Dover to Calais at the close of the seventeenth century there was something like an organised system of packet-boats in time of peace. Every Tuesday and Friday evening three vessels sailed from Dover to Calais if the wind served. There were also fortnightly sailings from Falmouth to Corunna, and

boats left Harwich for Helvoetsluys twice a week. It was also possible to go from Dover to Nieuport in Flanders. Five shillings was the usual charge for the Channel passage, but an extra sum of five shillings was charged for the use of the master's cabin. Then there were various extra payments to be taken into account—customs officers, clerks of the passage, water-bailiffs, and landing boatmen, all wishing to be remembered. Addison spent nearly eighteen months in France. Thence he started for a tour in Italy, twice crossing the Apennines, and in December 1701 passed over Mont Cenis to Geneva and other Swiss towns, and extended his tour to Vienna. After visiting the Protestant cities of Germany, he spent some time in Holland before returning to England. When he reached Paris, which Howell had styled 'that hudge though dusty theater of all nations,' Louis XIV. was in a devotional frame of mind, and Addison found French literature reflecting a similar spirit. 'There is no book comes out a present,' he writes, 'that has not something in it of an air of devotion. Nay, y<sup>e</sup> humour is grown so universal that it is got among y<sup>e</sup> poets, who are every day publishing Lives of Saints and Legends in Rhime.' Of his impressions of the gay city we know little, as in the case of Milton. He remarks, however, on the beauties of Fontainebleau. 'There is an artificial wildness in the meadows, walks, and canals,' he writes to Congreve, 'and y<sup>e</sup> garden, instead of a wall, is fenced on the lower end by a natural mound of rock-work that strikes the eye very agreeably.' He gives an amusing description of Le Brun's paintings at Versailles, where His Most Christian Majesty was represented 'under y<sup>e</sup> figure of Jupiter throwing thunderbolts all about the ceiling and striking terror into y<sup>e</sup> Danube and Rhine that lie astonished and blasted a little above the cornice.' In Paris he met Malebranche, who was anxious about the adequate rendering of his works in English; and Boileau, the old poet and critic, who was presented with a copy of the 'Musæ Anglicanæ.' He made a long stay at Blois, and remarks with a good deal of shrewdness on the national manners as seen in that city. The French, in his estimation, are the happiest nation in the world. Nothing was to be met with in the country but mirth and poverty. 'Every one sings, laughs, and starves.' Their women he deems to be perfect mistresses in the art of showing themselves to the best advantage. Always gay and sprightly, they set off the worst faces in Europe with the best airs. With all their lucidity and charm of conversation, however,

he does not think they improve upon acquaintance. In Italy he felt more at home.

Poetic fields encompass me around,  
And still I seem on classic ground,

he writes in his poetic epistle to Lord Halifax. As regards a sense of the picturesque he was ahead of most travellers of that age, as we gather from the account of the journey from Loretto to Rome, when at times the traveller was shivering on the top of a bleak mountain, and a little while afterwards basking in a warm valley covered with violets and almond trees in blossom, the bees already swarming over them though but in the month of February. When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu started on her travels she chartered a yacht to convey her to Rotterdam, but to avoid the tediousness of the stormy crossing she went in the long boat to Helvoetsluys, where she tells us 'we had voitures to carry us to the Briel.' At this period all who could do so secured a passage in one of the Royal yachts which made regular crossings to Briel in the reigns of William III. and Anne. To recompense her in some measure for the difficulties and hardships of her journey to Ratisbon, there was the charming experience of being rowed down the Danube to Vienna in one of the little vessels 'called wooden houses,' fitted up with every convenience then known. Each of these barges was propelled by twelve men, and accomplished the journey with incredible swiftness. One of the most disagreeable incidents in a tour was the mishap of finding the gates of a city closed on arrival. Thus we have an account of a Yorkshire gentleman and his tutor arriving one night at Bordeaux at 11 P.M. and finding the gates shut. They were forced to stay in the suburbs, 'in a dirty celler where were neither meat nor beds fitt to lay in,' as they indignantly complained. The poet Gray spent three years abroad, which were destined to affect his character to a considerable extent. On arriving with Horace Walpole at Calais, they started in the then newfangled invention—a postchaise—for Boulogne, noticing on the road the windmills, the statues of the Virgin Mary, dressed in flowers and sarcenet robes, and here and there a strolling friar, a countryman with his great muff, or a woman riding astride on a little ass, with short petticoats, and a great headdress of blue wool. In Paris we find him dining with Lord Holderness to meet the Abbé Prévot d'Exiles, of 'Manon Lescaut' fame. The comic actress Jeanne Quinault is merely

accorded a passing mention as reminding him of Mrs. Clive. He adopts the latest fashion in dress, his tailor covering him with silk and fringe, and widening his modest figure with buckram a yard on each side. He wears a vast solitaire round his neck, ruffles at his fingers' ends, and carries a muff. Thus, with the aid of Crébillon the Younger and Horace Walpole, he enjoys the sights of the capital in the reign of Louis XV. For three months in summer the friends cultivated the quiet and peace of Rheims, where the *vie champêtre* was varied with card-playing and rather solemn assemblies. In view of their projected trip to Italy, the friends made elaborate preparations against the cold, sufficient, indeed, for an Arctic expedition. They started from Lyons equipped with beaver bonnets, beaver stockings, beaver gloves, muffs, and bearskins. At the foot of Mt. Cenis their chaise was taken to pieces, and they themselves were transferred to low matted legless chairs, carried on poles. While yet in their chaise the incident of Walpole's favourite spaniel 'Tory' being seized by a wolf led to the estrangement with Gray. While staying at the Grande Chartreuse the poet installed in the Album of the Fathers his well-known alcaic ode beginning 'O tu severi religio loci,' the book in which it was written perishing during the French Revolution. Very different from Gray's comfortable mode of progression was that of Goldsmith, who had but a guinea in his pocket when he started on the grand tour, and, according to Boswell, 'disputed his way through Europe,' perhaps even, like his own 'Traveller,' cheering the peasants on his path with the music of his flute. When foreign travel came to be considered an indispensable part of the education of a 'complete gentleman,' the numerous tutors who conducted their pupils abroad seem to have followed very similar methods in the instruction of their charges. It was usual, in the first instance, to settle in a French provincial town to learn the language and how to enter a room, how to carry the head and hands, and, how to turn the toes out, it being apparently considered that they order these things better in France. Dancing, fencing, and riding were also in the curriculum, and in order that the pupil might become adept as a lover or courtier he was generally taught one stringed-instrument—lute, guitar, or violin. On leaving France, the next step was Italy, and the Low Countries were not to be neglected. Finally, the youth was to put the finishing touch to his career of improvement by passing a few

months in Paris. Such was the 'young Æneas' spoken of by Pope, who

Tried all *hors-d'œuvres*, all liqueurs defined,  
Judicious drank and greatly daring dined,  
Dropped the dull lumber of the Latin store,  
Spoiled his own language and acquired no more.

The Continent and Paris in particular has rarely seen a more brilliant succession of visitors than in the years 1762 and 1763. In January of the former year Sterne reached the French capital and was at once received within the charmed circle of the philosophic *salons*. 'My head is turned,' he writes to Garrick, 'with what I see and the unexpected honour I have met with here. Tristram was almost as much known here as in London. . . . I have just now a fortnight's dinners and suppers on my hands.' Wintering in the South of France in those days was no light undertaking, as we can gather from the minute directions which Sterne gives to his wife and daughter when setting forth for this purpose. 'Give the Custom House officers what I told you, and at Calais more if you have much Scotch snuff,' he writes, and complains that the French 'have bad pins and vile needles.' He thinks also that it would be advisable to bring with them a strong bottle screw and a good stout copper tea-kettle. In the midst of these minute particulars he pauses constantly to commend them to the care of Providence. 'Pluck up your spirits—trust in God, in me, and yourselves,' is a specimen of his exhortations. It is satisfactory after all this to know that these ladies arrived safely at Toulouse, after a three weeks' journey. A couple of years later on Sterne set out on his Sentimental Journey through France and Italy. Two other Englishmen of note visited Paris at this time, Hume and Gibbon. The author of the 'Decline and Fall' does not tell us all that we should like to know about the men and manners of the capital at that interesting period, though he was a frequent visitor at the houses of Madame Geoffrin, Madame Helvétius, and the Baron d'Holbach. During his stay there Louis Racine died, and also the novelist and poet Marivaux, whose works were such delightful reading to Gray. Hume entered with zest into the life of the *salons*, then at the height of their reputation. Among his closest friends he counted Turgot and D'Alembert. Flattery was shown the philosopher on all sides, and the children of the Dauphin learnt by heart little polite speeches about his works. Gibbon, meanwhile, was studying various antiquarian works on Italy at

Lausanne, and later on at Rome, while musing amid the ruins of the capital, conceived the idea of writing the work which has made him famous. A few years later the passion for travelling greatly increased. Where one Englishman travelled in the reigns of the first two Georges, ten now went on a grand tour. 'Indeed,' says a contemporary writer, 'to such a pitch is the spirit of travelling come in the kingdom that there is scarce a citizen of large fortune but takes a flying view of France, Italy, and Germany, in a summer's excursion.' Gibbon wrote from Lausanne describing the crowd of English who were already thronging the beautiful shores of Lake Lemán. An interesting series of hints to 'Persons travelling from Britain into France' appeared in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for the year 1786. From them we gather that no such thing was to be had in France as ready furnished lodgings, and that it was impossible to board in a 'genteel family,' and extremely difficult to get into 'genteel company.' The author adds the remark that this keeping of good company is attended with some expense—a man must game, he must keep a carriage, and he must dress according to the fashion. Misson, indeed, many years before had recommended persons who intended staying long in one place to hire lackeys, couriers, and interpreters, and put them into livery. The writer goes on to explain that many North Britons wish to get into good company, but do not wish to spend their money idly, 'either because they have it not to spend'—an apparently unconscious Irishism—'or because they wish to make a better use of it.' There is only one advice to be given to these gentlemen: they must either resolve to part freely with their money or to keep out of good company. From a contemporary work we learn that the packet-boats crossed daily between Dover and Calais, ten shillings being the usual charge. But extra expense was often incurred by the necessity of getting into a boat a mile from the shore whenever no arrangement was made with the captain to land the passenger at his own expense and risk. The rich could have a little vessel to take them over for five louis and land them at the harbour without further charge. The sailors of the packet-boats expected half-a-crown for drink, without which portman-teaux, night-caps, pistols, eatables, and, above all, bottles of Burgundy, became invisible. A good deal of interesting information is contained in the account of a tour in South Holland, made by a Leicestershire clergyman in the year 1793. Starting from Harwich, he had first of all to obtain a permit from the post-office

agent at the cost of twelve shillings and sixpence. After which came an interview with an officer of the Customs who was awaiting his return to the inn 'to rummage his portmanteau.' The next step was to lay in stores for the voyage, among which are mentioned a 'couple of small neat's tongues,' which cost the sum of eight shillings. Finally the *Diana* schooner got under way with a crew consisting of a mate, two stewards and thirteen sailors. The boat was armed with four four-pounders, a couple of two-pounders, and six swivels. There were fourteen passengers, including an English family who were going to spend a few years in Switzerland. After setting sail the Government dispatches for the Minister at the Hague were fastened to a heavy weight of lead that they might be instantly sunk in case any of the enemy's ships should appear. Most of the unfortunate passengers succumbed to seasickness early in the evening—they had started at half-past three in the afternoon—and must have been rejoiced to land at Helvoetsluys between eleven and twelve o'clock the following day. For the passage one guinea was paid, the steward receiving half-a-crown and every sailor a shilling in addition. Into his subsequent adventures it is needless to follow him, but he makes a curious remark about the Dutchwomen wearing 'black patches stuck upon their temples, which I was told were not regarded so much in the light of beauty spots as amulets against the head-ach.' Monsieur D'Arblay, in the first year of the present century, had a somewhat eventful journey to France. Setting off for Gravesend on October 28th, he was unable to sail till November 1st. Ill luck still pursuing him, the ship anchored in stress of weather off Margate and Deal, where some of the passengers managed to land. Finally a flag of distress was hoisted. His wife tells in her diary how 'poor M. D'Arblay's provision-basket (was) flung down, and its contents demolished, his bottle of wine broken by another toss and violent pull, and he was nearly famished,' added to which he had to lend his services to the pump. A pilot at length came out from Dover and conveyed them ignominiously to that port for a consideration of seven guineas. His second attempt at reaching France, however, was crowned with success. Madame D'Arblay herself, on returning from the Continent in the early years of the century, was obliged to spend six painfully wearisome weeks at Dunkirk, the captain of the vessel postponing the voyage from day to day and from week to week in the hope of obtaining more passengers. When she finally



started the vessel was becalmed, and was eventually seized as American booty—war having been declared against America the preceding week. The early period of continental travelling may now be said to have closed. The peace which followed the battle of Waterloo caused large numbers of Englishmen to go abroad. Paris was the first point of attraction, where the first English guide to that city—Galignani's 'Picture of Paris'—had recently appeared. Mariana Starke's 'Letters from Italy' were indispensable at this time, and a few years later her 'Guide for Travellers on the Continent' was published by Mr. John Murray, and led to the subsequent issue of the famous guide-books of that name. Since then a 'Murray' or a 'Baedeker' has become a necessary part of the tourist's equipment.

## THE IMAGE.

À MME LOUIS ORMOND.

‘ I BELIEVE that’s the last bit of *bric-à-brac* I shall ever buy in my life,’ she said, closing the Renaissance casket—‘ that and the Chinese dessert set we have just been using. The passion seems to have left me utterly. And I think I can guess why. At the same time as the plates and the little coffer I bought a thing—I scarcely know whether I ought to call it a thing—which put me out of conceit with ferreting about among dead people’s effects. I have often wanted to tell you all about it, and stopped for fear of seeming an idiot. But it weighs upon me sometimes like a secret; so, silly or not silly, I think I should like to tell you the story. There, ring for some more logs, and put that screen before the lamp.

‘ It was two years ago, in the autumn, at Foligno, in Umbria. I was alone at the inn, for you know my husband is too busy for my *bric-à-brac* journeys, and the friend who was to have met me fell ill and came on only later. Foligno isn’t what people call an interesting place, but I liked it. There are a lot of picturesque little towns all round; and great savage mountains of pink stone, covered with ilex, where they roll fagots down into the torrent beds, within a drive. There’s a full, rushing little river round one side of the walls, which are covered with ivy; and there are fifteenth-century frescoes, which I dare say you know all about. But, what of course I care for most, there are a number of fine old palaces, with gateways carved in that pink stone, and courts with pillars, and beautiful window gratings, mostly in good enough repair, for Foligno is a market town and a junction, and altogether a kind of metropolis down in the valley. Also, and principally, I liked Foligno because I discovered a delightful curiosity-dealer. I don’t mean a delightful curiosity shop, for he had nothing worth twenty francs to sell; but a delightful, enchanting old man. His Christian name was Orestes, and that was enough for me. He had a long white beard and such kind brown eyes, and beautiful hands; and he always carried an earthenware brazier under his cloak. He had taken to the curiosity business from a passion for beautiful

things, and for the past of his native place, after having been a master mason. He knew all the old chronicles, lent me thereof Matarazzo, and knew exactly where everything had happened for the last six hundred years. He spoke of the Trincis, who had been local despots, and of St. Angela, who is the local saint, and of the Baglionis and Cæsar Borgia and Julius II., as if he had known them; he showed me the place where St. Francis preached to the birds, and the place where Propertius—was it Propertius or Tibullus?—had had his farm; and when he accompanied me on my rambles in search of *bric-à-brac* he would stop at corners and under arches and say, "This, you see, is where they carried off those nuns I told you about; that's where the cardinal was stabbed. That's the place where they razed the palace after the massacre, and passed the ploughshare through the ground and sowed salt." And all with a vague, far-off, melancholy look, as if he lived in those days and not these. Also he helped me to get that little velvet coffer with the iron clasps, which is really one of the best things we have in the house. So I was very happy at Foligno, driving and prowling about all day, reading the chronicles Orestes lent me in the evening, and I didn't mind waiting so long for my friend who never turned up. That is to say, I was perfectly happy until within three days of my departure. And now comes the story of my strange purchase.

'Orestes, with considerable shrugging of shoulders, came one morning with the information that a certain noble person of Foligno wanted to sell me a set of Chinese plates. "Some of them are cracked," he said; "but at all events you will see the inside of one of our finest palaces, with all its rooms as they used to be—nothing valuable, but I know that the signora appreciates the past wherever it has been let alone."

'The palace, by way of exception, was of the late seventeenth century, and looked like a barracks among the neat little carved Renaissance houses. It had immense lions' heads over all the windows, a gateway in which two coaches could have met, a yard where a hundred might have waited, and a colossal staircase with stucco virtues on the vaultings. There was a cobbler in the lodge and a soap factory on the ground floor, and at the end of the colonnaded court a garden with ragged yellow vines and dead sunflowers. "Grandiose, but very coarse—almost eighteenth-century," said Orestes as we went up the sounding, low-stepped stairs. Some of the dessert set had been placed, ready for my

inspection, on a great gold console in the immense escutcheoned anteroom. I looked at it, and told them to prepare the rest for me to see the next day. The owner, a very noble person, but half ruined—I should have thought entirely ruined, judging by the state of the house—was residing in the country, and the only occupant of the palace was an old woman, just like those who raise the curtains for you at church doors.

‘The palace was very grand. There was a ball-room as big as a church, and a number of reception rooms, with dirty floors and eighteenth-century furniture, all tarnished and tattered, and a gala room, all yellow satin and gold, where some emperor had slept; and there were horrible racks of faded photographs on the walls, and twopenny screens, and Berlin wool cushions, attesting the existence of more modern occupants.

‘I let the old woman unbar one painted and gilded shutter after another, and open window after window, each filled with little greenish panes of glass, and followed her about passively, quite happy, because I was wandering among the ghosts of dead people. “There is the library at the end here,” said the old woman, “if the signora does not mind passing through my room and the ironing-room; it’s quicker than going back by the big hall.” I nodded, and prepared to pass as quickly as possible through an untidy-looking back room, when I suddenly stepped back. There was a woman in 1820 costume seated opposite, quite motionless. It was a huge doll. She had a sort of Canova classic face, like the pictures of Mme. Pasta and Lady Blessington. She sat with her hands folded on her lap and stared fixedly.

“It is the first wife of the Count’s grandfather,” said the old woman. “We took her out of her closet this morning to give her a little dusting.”

‘The doll was dressed to the utmost detail. She had on open-work silk stockings, with sandal shoes, and long silk embroidered mittens. The hair was merely painted, in flat bands narrowing the forehead into a triangle. There was a big hole in the back of her head, showing it was cardboard.

“Ah,” said Orestes, musingly, “the image of the beautiful Countess! I had forgotten all about it. I hadn’t seen it since I was a lad,” and he wiped some cobweb off the folded hands with his red handkerchief, infinitely gently. “She used still to be kept in her own boudoir.”

“That was before my time,” answered the housekeeper.

"I've always seen her in the cupboard, and I've been here thirty years. Will the signora care to see the old Count's collection of medals?"

'Orestes was very pensive as he accompanied me home.

"That was a very beautiful lady," he said, shyly, as we came within sight of my inn; "I mean the first wife of the grandfather of the present Count. She died after they had been married a couple of years. The old Count, they say, went half crazy. He had the image made from a picture, and kept it in the poor lady's room, and spent several hours in it every day with her. But he ended by marrying a woman he had in the house, a laundress, by whom he had had a daughter."

"What a curious story!" I said, and thought no more about it.

'But the doll returned to my thoughts, she and her folded hands, and wide open eyes, and the fact of her husband's having ended by marrying the laundress. And next day, when we returned to the palace to see the complete set of old Chinese plates, I suddenly experienced an odd wish to see the doll once more. I took advantage of Orestes, and the old woman, and the Count's lawyer being busy deciding whether a certain dish cover which my maid had dropped, had or had not been previously chipped, to slip off and make my way to the ironing-room.

'The doll was still there, sure enough, and they hadn't found time to dust her yet. Her white satin frock, with little *ruches* at the hem, and her short bodice, had turned grey with engrained dirt; and her black fringed kerchief was almost red. The poor white silk mittens and white silk stockings were, on the other hand, almost black. A newspaper had fallen from an adjacent table on to her knees, or been thrown there by some one, and she looked as if she were holding it. It came home to me then that the clothes which she wore were the real clothes of her poor dead original. And when I found on the table a dusty, unkempt wig, with straight bands in front and an elaborate jug handle of curls behind, I knew at once that it was made of the poor lady's real hair.

"It is very well made," I said shyly, when the old woman, of course, came creaking after me.

'She had no thought except that of humouring whatever caprice might bring her a tip. So she smirked horribly, and, to show me that the image was really worthy of my attention, she proceeded in a ghastly way to bend the articulated arms, and to cross one leg over the other beneath the white satin skirt.

“ Please, please, don't do that ! ” I cried to the old witch. But one of the poor feet, in its sandalled shoe, continued dangling and wagging dreadfully.

‘ I was afraid lest my maid should find me staring at the doll. I felt I couldn't stand my maid's remarks about her. So, though fascinated by the fixed dark stare in her Canova goddess or Ingres Madonna face, I tore myself away and returned to the inspection of the dessert set.

‘ I don't know what that doll had done to me ; but I found that I was thinking of her all day long. It was as if I had just made a new acquaintance of a painfully interesting kind, rushed into a sudden friendship with a woman whose secret I had surprised, as sometimes happens, by some mere accident. For I somehow knew everything about her, and the first items of information which I gained from Orestes—I ought to say that I was irresistibly impelled to talk about her to him—did not enlighten me in the least, but merely confirmed what I was aware of.

‘ The image—for I made no distinction between the portrait and the original—had been married straight out of the convent, and, during her brief wedded life, been kept secluded from the world by her husband's mad love for her, so that she had remained a mere shy, proud, inexperienced child.

‘ Had she loved him ? She did not tell me that at once. But gradually I became aware that in a deep, inarticulate way she had really cared for him more than he cared for her. She did not know what answer to make to his easy, overflowing, garrulous, demonstrative affection ; he could not be silent about his love for two minutes, and she could never find a word to express hers, painfully though she longed to do so. Not that he wanted it ; he was a brilliant, will-less, lyrical sort of person, who knew nothing of the feelings of others and cared only to welter and dissolve in his own. In those two years of ecstatic, talkative, all-absorbing love for her he not only forswore all society and utterly neglected his affairs, but he never made an attempt to train this raw young creature into a companion, or showed any curiosity as to whether his idol might have a mind or a character of her own. This indifference she explained by her own stupid, inconceivable incapacity for expressing her feelings ; how should he guess at her longing to know, to understand, when she could not even tell him how much she loved him ? At last the spell seemed broken : the words and the power of saying them came ; but it was on

her death-bed. The poor young creature died in childbirth, scarcely more than a child herself.

‘There now! I knew even you would think it all silliness. I know what people are—what we all are—how impossible it is ever *really* to make others feel in the same way as ourselves about anything. Do you suppose I could have ever told all this about the doll to my husband? Yet I tell him everything about myself; and I know he would have been quite kind and respectful. It was silly of me ever to embark on the story of the doll with any one; it ought to have remained a secret between me and Orestes. *He*, I really think, would have understood all about the poor lady’s feelings, or known it already as well as I. Well, having begun, I must go on, I suppose.

‘I knew all about the doll when she was alive—I mean about the lady—and I got to know, in the same way, all about her after she was dead. Only I don’t think I’ll tell you. *Basta*. The husband had the image made, and dressed it in her clothes, and placed it in her boudoir, where not a thing was moved from how it had been at the moment of her death. He allowed no one to go in, and cleaned and dusted it all himself, and spent hours every day weeping and moaning before the image. Then, gradually, he began to look at his collection of medals, and to resume his rides; but he never went into society, and never neglected spending an hour in the boudoir with the image. Then came the business with the laundress. And then he sent the image into a cupboard? Oh, no; he wasn’t that sort of man. He was an idealising, sentimental, feeble sort of person, and the amour with the laundress grew up quite gradually in the shadow of the inconsolable passion for the wife. He would never have married another woman of his own rank, given *her* son a stepmother (the son was sent to a distant school and went to the bad); and when he *did* marry the laundress it was almost in his dotage, and because she and the priests bullied him so fearfully about legitimating that other child. He went on paying visits to the image for a long time, while the laundress idyl went on quite peaceably. Then, as he grew old and lazy, he went less often; other people were sent to dust the image, and finally she was not dusted at all. Then he died, having quarrelled with his son and got to live like a feeble old boor, mostly in the kitchen. The son—the image’s son—having gone to the bad, married a rich widow. It was she who refurnished the boudoir and sent the image away.

The daughter of the laundress, the illegitimate child, who had become a kind of housekeeper in her half-brother's palace, nourished a lingering regard for the image, partly because the old Count had made such a fuss about it, partly because it must have cost a lot of money, and partly because the lady had been a *real* lady. So when the boudoir was refurnished she emptied out a closet and put the image to live there; and she occasionally had it brought out to be dusted.

'Well, while all these things were being borne in upon me there came a telegram saying my friend was not coming on to Foligno, and asking me to meet her at Perugia. The little Renaissance coffer had been sent to London; Orestes and my maid and myself had carefully packed every one of the Chinese plates and fruit dishes in baskets of hay. I had ordered a set of the "Archivio Storico" as a parting gift for dear old Orestes—I could never have dreamed of offering him money, or cravat pins, or things like that—and there was no excuse for staying one hour more at Foligno. Also I had got into low spirits of late—I suppose we poor women cannot stay alone six days in an inn, even with *bric-à-brac* and chronicles and devoted maids—and I knew I should not get better till I was out of the place. Still I found it difficult, nay, impossible, to go. I will confess it outright: I couldn't abandon the image. I couldn't leave her, with the hole in her poor cardboard head, with the Ingres Madonna features gathering dust in that filthy old woman's ironing-room. It was just impossible. Still go I must. So I sent for Orestes. I knew exactly what I wanted; but it seemed impossible, and I was afraid, somehow, of asking him. I gathered up my courage, and, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, I said—

"Dear Signor Oreste, I want you to help me to make one last purchase. I want the Count to sell me the—the portrait of his grandmother; I mean the doll."

'I had prepared a speech to the effect that Orestes would easily understand that a life-size figure so completely dressed in the original costume of a past epoch would soon possess the highest historical interest, &c. But I felt that I neither needed nor ventured to say any of it. Orestes, who was seated opposite me at table—he would only accept a glass of wine and a morsel of bread, although I had asked him to share my hotel dinner—Orestes nodded slowly, then opened his eyes out wide, and seemed to frame the whole of me in them. It wasn't surprise. He was weighing me and my question.



““Would it be very difficult?” I asked. “I should have thought that the Count——”

““The Count,” answered Orestes drily, “would sell his soul, if he had one, let alone his grandmother, for the price of a new trotting pony.”

“Then I understood.

““Signor Oreste,” I replied, feeling like a child under the dear old man’s glance, “we have not known one another long, so I cannot expect you to trust me yet in many things. Perhaps also buying furniture out of dead people’s houses to stick it in one’s own is not a great recommendation of one’s character. But I want to tell you that I am an honest woman according to my lights, and I want you to trust me in this matter.”

“Orestes bowed. “I will try to induce the Count to sell you the image,” he said.

“I had her sent in a closed carriage to the house of Orestes. He had, behind his shop, a garden which extended into a little vineyard, whence you could see the circle of great Umbrian mountains; and on this I had had my eye.

““Signor Oreste,” I said, “will you be very kind, and have some fagots—I have seen some beautiful fagots of myrtle and bay in your kitchen—brought out into the vineyard; and may I pluck some of your chrysanthemums?” I added.

“We stacked the fagots at the end of the vineyard, and placed the image in the midst of them, and the chrysanthemums on her knees. She sat there in her white satin Empire frock, which, in the bright November sunshine, seemed white once more, and sparkling. Her black fixed eyes stared as in wonder on the yellow vines and reddening peach trees, the sparkling dewy grass of the vineyard, upon the blue morning sunshine, the misty blue amphitheatre of mountains all round.

“Orestes struck a match and slowly lit a pine cone with it; when the cone was blazing he handed it silently to me. The dry bay and myrtle blazed up crackling, with a fresh resinous odour; the image was veiled in flame and smoke. In a few seconds the flame sank, the smouldering fagots crumbled. The image was gone. Only, where she had been, there remained in the embers something small and shiny. Orestes raked it out and handed it to me. It was a wedding ring of old-fashioned shape, which had been hidden under the silk mitten. “Keep it, signora,” said Orestes; “you have put an end to her sorrows.”

VERNON LEE.

*THE ART OF NOMENCLATURE.*

WHICH is it, as the logic books used to ask in our college days, a science or an art? Let us answer, as the schoolmen did, that it is both—the science in this case of the laws of euphony, the art of selecting such names as shall be at once grateful to the ear and appropriate to the objects to be named. ‘What’s in a name?’ demands our greatest art master. Little of consequence, perhaps, so that it be borne with becoming grace and honesty; yet a harmonious and fitting name is a thing of beauty, and a joy, if not for ever, at least while social life lasts with its necessity for distinguishing one individual from another.

The art of nomenclature obviously concerns itself in the case of human beings merely with the Christian name, since the surname is determined (not seldom, it would seem from the frequent desire to change it, to our personal dissatisfaction) by circumstances over which we have no control. It would be interesting, perhaps, to observe what names would command the highest suffrage were people permitted to choose their own. Would they, ignoring La Rochefoucauld’s maxim that great names debase rather than raise those who know not how to use them, invest themselves in the giant’s robe by assuming names which the genius of some former owner, or a long line of distinguished ancestry, has rendered illustrious; or would society be inundated with a flood of fancy creations, the pet names of the popular novelist—*Brabazons*, *Effinghams*, *Strathmores*, *Chaloners*, and *Vavasours* in place of the more homely cognomens to which we are accustomed? Few seem to be thoroughly content with the surname supplied them, and various are the artifices employed to evade the dictation of an arbitrary fate in this direction. The most usual, and it may be said the most transparent, is the modern ‘double-barrel’ device. Thus Jones, supposing his savour will be sweeter in the delicate nostrils of society (which possibly have been tip-tilted in ungenerous scorn of poor Mrs. Jones), calls in the aid of the useful hyphen, with which he prefixes his second Christian (if haply it be of more grandiloquent character) to his inadequate surname, and blossoms out a Willoughby- or Montague-Jones, to the harmless delight of him-

self and family. Another plan is to boldly lift such name as a refined taste may suggest and quietly substitute it for one's own. This (it requires nerve) has actually been done, not merely in the historical instance of the Norfolk-Howard family—in which, by the way, a terrible retribution was inflicted by an outraged nation by the simple process of completing the transfer; but also it is on record that a family named *Pratt* did, without further justification than the satisfaction of mere personal predilection, suddenly and arbitrarily exchange that name for the more magniloquent one of *de Montmorency*. On the other hand, persons in a humble rank of life are often singularly careless as to the preservation of a nice-sounding name. The degeneration of D'Urberville into Durbeyfield, as in *Tess* of that ilk (or, as the writer has known it, into Turberville), is true to fact. Moreover, he has observed a good name in actual process of decay. 'Meredith is our proper name,' a labourer's wife once explained to him, 'but folks do call us Redding.' Gradually they took to calling themselves Redding, and thus the more euphonious Meredith will in subsequent generations be lost, so far as this family is concerned. Should some future Redding rise in the world and wish to resume his legitimate patronymic, his resumption of it will probably be regarded as a gratuitous piece of affectation.

A dactyl and spondee (thus, - ∪ ∪ - -) chosen on account of their melodious cadence for the ending of the hexameter verse, as also for the fourth line, or *versus adonicus* of the Sapphic metre, make generally a pleasant-sounding name: as, for example, *Ella Trelawny*, *Beatrice Fanshawe*, *Arthur Carlyon*, *Julian Harcourt*, which combinations also are equally satisfactory in signature. How often, by the way, a good signature is marred by the insertion of a redundant initial! How tamely, for instance, sounds 'Yours sincerely A. K. Carlyon,' as compared with the two names in full, *Arthur Carlyon*! The American plan of writing the first name at length, the second only in initial (as *Hiram B. Power*) is no improvement upon the bald British custom of signing both initials. The second Christian name is indeed in itself a mere redundancy, one serving the purpose equally well, and affording generally a more agreeable sequence of sound. *George Henry Smith*, for instance, has no possible advantage over *Henry* or *George Smith*; while the two ordinary prænomens tend to accentuate the extreme ordinariness of the cognomen. *Smith*, a fine old English patronymic, by the way, is

reputed of all surnames to be the most common; *Davis*, with its variant of *Davies*, the next; *Williams* a good third, and *Brown* fourth.

The trochee (- ∪) makes a popular feminine Christian name, as *Hilda*, *Vera*, *Lena*, &c.; but let the sponsor beware that names ending in *ra* are generally ineligible with surnames which commence with a vowel, the liquids in such combinations, unless the enunciation be very delicate, being apt, as it were, to run. Working-class mothers love to invest their offspring in fine names as much as they delight in decking them with fine clothes. This practice is to be deprecated: there is a fitness in all things which should be observed. Molly and Patty were charming in the clean simplicity of their white caps and aprons, but we confess that our sense of proportion is injured when we tumble over *Vera Hilda* as she whitens the doorstep, or encounter *Gwendoline Ethel* surmounted by her parody of a fashionable hat on her Sunday out. A clergyman of my acquaintance is annoyed by the frequency with which he is called upon to bestow superfine or redundant names upon the children of girls who have been (to avail oneself of the euphemism politely used by a generation which never does anything wrong) 'unfortunate.' *Errol* and *Mabel Irene Edith Annie* were names which he was required recently to bestow upon a brace of unauthenticated infants. My clerical friend, who appears to be overmuch of a purist in the matter of nomenclature for his unsophisticated flock, objects further to their persistent practice of tendering at the font abbreviated and pet names in place of the original and authorised forms. An infant being proffered to him with the proposed abbreviation of Bert (always a great favourite in bucolic communities), he demurred, suggesting an unmutilated form—as Herbert. 'We're all Bert, sir,' explained the mother, meaning that those of the family who bore the name were so christened. 'That will do nicely,' the clergyman said, and baptized the child Albert, which was certainly an improvement upon the sponsorial design.

If it were possible to look ahead a few years how much better a child might be fitted with a name! How inappropriately, for instance, is a brunette termed Lily; and how still more inappropriately, by the way, does Lily often insist upon spelling her name Lillie! Gladys is a beautiful name; yet what is the use of bestowing it upon a child who by all the laws of heredity is bound to grow into a palpable Polly? It is here that sponsors might be

of real use by checking the vanity of fatuous parents. *Dorothy* has hardly descended yet to the lower strata of the conglomerate called Society, but she is positively rampant in the middle classes. So is *Harold*; indeed, it is computed that for the last decade these two names have far outnumbered any others. The semi-fashionable and æsthetic mother now, therefore, strives after something equally *recherché*, but a little less hackneyed; and accordingly there is an increasing run upon such names as *Barbara*, *Beryl*, *Doris*, *Eric*, *Alec*, and *Alan*, all which appear to have great attraction alike for sponsors and story-tellers. It is curious, by the way, that while *Dorothy* has become so extremely popular that we may expect her presently to be entirely barred by parents of polite pretensions, *Theodore*, which bears the same meaning, has not gained ground at all, but remains as it always has been, extremely rare. Does the suggestion that, the name having been borne erstwhile by one of our country's most relentless foes, it is considered more un-English than *Dorothy* (both being essentially Greek) in any way account for its inferior popularity? After all, the popularity or unpopularity of a name should have little weight with sponsors as compared with its accord with the surname to which it is to be coupled; a neat concatenation of Christian and surname being always, as we have remarked, a pleasure and comfort to the possessor; an awkward or ill-sounding combination a perpetual source of discomfort.

Turning to the animal world, we find a fine field for the exercise of neat and appropriate nomenclature, particularly in regard to man's chief friends, the horse and dog. A friend of mine, whose business in life it is to train racehorses, showed me the other day a pretty little timepiece conferred upon him by a well-known sporting paper, as a prize for the best list of names for some two-year-olds running unnamed. It was interesting to me, engaged upon this paper, as an instance of the pains which are being taken in this one direction. The old saying that a horse with a bad name never wins the Derby would verily seem to have something in it. I do so well remember discussing the prospects of a certain Derby with some young ladies, whose particular fancy for the race was a horse who rejoiced in the name of *Minting*. The writer protested that no horse with such a ridiculous name could possibly win the Blue Riband, and quoted the familiar saying. In the same race were two other famous colts, *Saraband* and *Ormonde*, either of which he offered to back (for gloves)

against his fair opponents' selection. The result of that race everybody knows; how that *Minting* (a splendid colt, but handicapped out of that particular race by his ugly and inappropriate name) did not even appear at the post, and the more euphoniously named *Ormonde* won a good race from the gallant little *Bard*. The young ladies' father, a prominent member of the Jockey Club, considered it rather a case of *post hoc propter hoc*, and maintained that when a horse had won, then his name sounded a good one. This explanation, though reasonable enough, failed to convince the writer, who still considers that Trollope erred in making a horse called *Fish-knife* win the Derby which was so disastrous to the young Lord Silverbridge; while Thackeray was most happy in his *Podasokus*, the winner of that which was equally so to Sir Francis Clavering, Bart. *Podasokus* may be an ugly name in itself, yet how finely expressive of speed, being the epithet of the swift-footed Achilles! *Common*, a recent winner, had, it is true, an ugly name, yet what a happy one for the offspring of *Isonomy* and *Thistle*! Nearly all the most expressive names have been borne by animals who were as successful on the Turf as they were happily styled in its calendar; and in the very sound of *Flying Childers*, *Eclipse*, *Bay Middleton*, *West Australian*, *Canezou*, *Thormanby*, *Fille de l'Air*, *Formosa*, *Wheel of Fortune*, *La Flèche*, and countless others we could recall, we seem to hear the thud of their quick-glancing hoofs, beating in rhythmic cadence to the syllables of their famous names.

Coming to horses used as hunters, one naturally aims at names which shall be to some degree descriptive of their special vocation. Such names as *Nimrod*, *Harkaway*, *Topthorn*, *Di Vernon*, *Fencer*, *Lady Gay Spanker*, and *Tally-ho Jack* are obvious, and would readily suggest themselves. Ingenious spirits have, however, sometimes shown remarkable ability in devising names for their favourites. *Filter*, because he clears the water, may pass; but to call a light-grey Irish hunter *Gehazi*, because he was a lepper white as snow, though equally ingenious, hardly strikes us as being in the best taste. A certain M.P. of my acquaintance had a favourite cob which he called *George Mitchell* (one from the plough), because he bought him while helping to draw that useful implement, to which occupation he had been degraded for some temporary unsoundness. This, and *Free-and-Easy* for a perfect park hack, are admirable specimens of horse nomenclature.

Turning to the other of man's most intimate friends in the

brute creation, the by no means always harmless, and as some few extremists consider, the entirely unnecessary, dog, the reasonable desire of persons properly regardful of their sponsorial responsibility is to choose names which shall be characteristic of the breed and idiosyncrasies of the animal. To call a poodle *Neptune* or a pug *Rover* is obviously to invite contempt for one's capacity as canine sponsor. A terrier, for instance, which is a dog of unique temperament, the exact counterpart of which is not to be found in any other phase of creation, requires a name which shall characterise the little rascal's natural disposition, alert, quick, courageous, resolute, true till death; the difficulty nowadays, of course, being to find names which shall be appropriate without being worn to rags; the most characteristic, such as *Venom*, *Vixen*, *Nettle*, *Sting*, *Trap*, &c., having all been used over and over again. A properly conscientious family will sometimes deliberate for months before selecting a name for a new puppy. Two admirably expressive names for two beautiful little fox-terriers, which some ten years ago used to occupy the show benches side by side, and were as good for work as they were to show, were *Brockenhurst Rally* and *Raby Tyrant*. *Bendigo*, for a hard-fighting, generous-hearted, white bull terrier, and *Caliban*, for an atrociously ugly and powerful bull-dog, with the shortest of faces and bandiest of legs, the writer considers his own happiest efforts at canine nomenclature. Being somewhat fastidious in the matter, he was not a little disgusted when, upon one occasion, a dainty but game little *smooth-coated* terrier which he had presented to a lady under the name of *Skittles* was reintroduced to him by the name of *Floss*! Huntsmen, of course, though they have generally a fine regard for fitness in hound nomenclature, obviously cannot be eternally supplying new names; so they ring the changes on the old, and the badger-pied *Ringwood*, who wakes the echoes of the dewy wood with his jangling music, to-day, succeeds to the mortal designation of the fine old hare-tan ancestor who went to the happy hunting grounds a dozen seasons ago. It is instructive, by the way, to remark that, as we learn from an extremely interesting article which appeared recently in *Macmillan's Magazine*, entitled 'A Day with Xenophon's Harriers,' the names of his hounds flow naturally into our English equivalents, *Active*, *Bustler*, *Ravager*, *Reveller*, *Cheerful*, and the like. 'Give your hounds short names,' he says, 'that it may be easy to call them.'

To turn to things inanimate (yet to those who love, and whose

office it is to handle them, they seem something more than that), what a scope for skilful nomenclature is afforded by the wide range of shipping! When the owner's wife, or maybe the royal princess, breaks the bottle of wine against her prow, how significant is the name which those fair lips pronounce as the dog-shores are knocked away, and the beautiful hull of the new-built craft slides down into the water-way. With an uncouth or inappropriate name she seems to lose half her grace when she comes to walk the waters like a thing of life. But let the name be consonant with the character of the craft, and the *cachet* of completeness is given to the work of man which, if it lacks the absolute finish and perfection of the least living organism, presents, nevertheless, in this instance a fair semblance of them.

'Build her straight and build her truly,' then—what shall we call our ship? The name which so aptly designates the great black-hulled, beetle-browed monster of an ironclad is manifestly absurd applied to the swift ocean steamer or graceful yacht. There is considerable skill shown in the naming of some of these monsters of the deep. The *Bellerophon*, the *Minotaur*, and the *Polyphemus* are as expressive of ponderous strength and fighting force as the *Agincourt* and *Northumberland* are of the stately majesty and symmetry exhibited in every line of those noble ships of war; while in the old days, the fighting *Téméraire* and the saucy *Arethusa* used to speak, and that with no uncertain voice, for themselves.

Happy, too, are the names chosen by many of our ocean lines. The Orient's custom of initialing their ships with an 'O' has given us some nice-sounding names, as the *Ophir* and *Ormuz* (the Persian sun-god). The South Pacific boats also are aptly styled with such names as *Iberia*, *Orotava*, *Cotopaxi*, *Magellan*, and *Sorata* (Anglicè, Little Sister), all expressive of their commerce with Spain and her erstwhile colonial settlements in South America. We do not altogether like calling a ship *City* or *Castle*, with due deference to the great lines whose brave vessels bear such names; but the names of rivers, as the *Thames*, *Severn*, *Elbe*, *Amazon*, and *Garonne* are generally satisfactory; while such names as *Arizona* and *Alaska* are worthy the craft which bear them, suggesting as they do in sound the speed and grace of a yacht with the power and carrying capacity of larger vessels.

Yacht-owners, too, have a fine scope for the exercise of a nice taste and discrimination in the nomenclature of their beloved



craft, which, as we have remarked, they regard and handle almost as though they were living, sentient creatures. Here, again, stand out from the past, and in the present, names which defy the ingenuity of future owners to excel. The very sound of the *Arrow* and *Alarm*, the *Iona*, *Fiona*, *Cambria*, and *Galatea* serve to recall the swell of snowy canvas and the tearing race through Channel seas; while of modern boats, *Vanessa*, *Volante*, and *Valkyrie* equal in aptness of sound and sense the best named of the older yachts. As an example of good and bad yacht nomenclature may be mentioned two pleasure boats turned out about the same time by a once well-known yard (the cradle of some famous flyers) on the south coast. One was called the *Arab*, the other the *Earthquake*. What better name could be devised for a cruising yacht than the *Arab*, a wanderer on the ocean desert; while how overpowering a name for any kind of yacht was the *Earthquake*!—however it might fit a torpedo-boat, which, I believe, are merely numbered. The poorest name which was ever devised for a yacht is perhaps that of the latest challenger for the America cup—*The Distant Shore*. How can a yacht be a shore? It is as feeble as to call a horse *Cavendish Square*, which was the name of one running a few years ago, who might as fitly have been called *Westminster Abbey* or *Aldgate Pump*. The American yachts which have successively retained the cup have all been fairly named, if hardly so prettily as the challengers. The *Puritan*, *Mayflower*, *Vigilant*, *Volunteer*, and *Defender* will all pass muster; though the last is only apt in this particular connection, and the third would suit better a cruising corvette or torpedo-catcher.

It is remarkable how a name, and especially a characteristic name, serves to endear, as well as to distinguish, an inanimate thing. Most of us, I suppose, love a fine locomotive engine, however we may yet regret the romance of the old coaching days when the wheels of the *Tally Ho*, *Tantivy*, *Quicksilver*, and other famous coaches went humming along the great north or western roads. When there is a five minutes' wait of the express, we generally stroll forward to watch the mighty iron steed as it stands simmering beside the platform, its sleek skin glistening with oil, while the water hisses through the hose into the thirsty boiler, and the great driving-wheel has a brief space for its glowing axle to cool. But I think we took more interest in it when it had a particular name of its own (a custom still retained on one or two lines), and one would certainly fancy that the driver, who evidently loves his

huge machine as the sailor loves his ship, must have loved it still more when it was the *Vulcan*, the *Mercury*, the *Firefly*, or the *Iris* that he drove, instead of No. 204 or 176.

There are many other regions of nomenclature into which, did space allow, we would fain conduct the reader, and, were it possible, compare his fancies with our own. Let those of us upon whom the onerous duty of sponsor devolves remember our obligations both in regard to the subject to be named and also to society at large; since to many of its more fastidious units a harsh or unsuitable name not merely jars upon the ear, but actually detracts from the conception formed of the person or thing in the mind; while nothing is more certain than that in the mental estimate which must be formed of each and every subject, whatever of grace or beauty it may possess will be appreciably enhanced by an appropriate and euphonious name.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE DRIFFELL.<sup>1</sup>

BY JAMES PAYN.

PART II.

THE first year, as freshmen of the same year usually do, Laurence and I saw a good deal of one another; but after a while, though when we met it was always with a mutual pleasure, we drifted away, as men in different sets must needs do. He, of course, as a reading man, attached himself to those who intended to gain university honours, took 'constitutionals' along the Trumpington Road, and to those towering eminences, Gog and Magog; while I mixed with (what was somewhat rare at that time) a semi-literary coterie ('gin-punch and Shelley men,' as Miniver, the wit of our year, called them, though we drank no punch), who paddled on 'the Backs,' or, 'downed in the purple of our railway wrappers,' lay smoking in our skiffs in the still water, and drinking claret from the glass-bottomed 'pewter' which less lazy arms than ours had won. In time I became a pretty frequent orator at the Union, to which men of my class naturally gravitate, though it is common to all.

Here I met the two best friends I knew in my college career, Braidwood and Miniver. To the former, I am afraid, I was attracted at first less by his merits than by the fact that his father was the proprietor of a literary newspaper, to which I had once or twice sought admission for my contributions in vain. It was called the *Crescent*; not that it was a Mahommedan publication, but so named, I believe, because it was started in opposition to the *Circle*, at that time a very powerful organ of criticism. But criticism was not the chief feature of the *Crescent*, which was a mixture of everything, though mainly of poetry and fiction, and was also illustrated. It seemed to me that a person in possession of such an 'organ' was in a very high position, wielding great powers, and exercising great influence upon the public mind,

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1896, in the United States of America.

whereas I found Braidwood rather ashamed of his father's connection with it. He had made his money in other ways, and had started it rather as an occupation, or even a hobby, than a source of profit—which, indeed, to any great extent at least, it never attained. Full of my own affairs, it struck me at first that Braidwood, to whom my literary ambition was not unknown, was reticent about his connection with the *Crescent*, for fear I should endeavour to make use of his influence (which was the very notion I had in my mind) to procure me admission to its columns, whereas, as a matter of fact, he could not conceive of anybody wanting to write in it, or anywhere else, unless from stress of circumstances. To him Paternoster Row was Grub Street, while to me it was Heaven. He was a kind, honest fellow, prejudiced, indeed, and somewhat conventional, but frank and generous, and true as steel. His oratorical efforts, though far from ponderous, were severe, for it was his ambition (in which he afterwards succeeded) to become a member of the Legislature.

My other friend, Miniver, was of quite a different type. His slight and boyish frame consorted well with his nature, which was the brightest conceivable; he always reminded me—except that he did not 'dearly love a lord,' for he was our chief Radical orator—of Tom Moore, a duodecimo democrat, and of an irrepressible gaiety. It was said of him that though he knew the laws of gravity he did not obey them. He played with the tall and dignified Braidwood much as a fox-terrier romps with a St. Bernard, but occasionally administering as sharp a thrust as the swordfish gives the whale. Where, I wonder, dear little fellow, are his gibes and flashes of merriment now? If austerity is necessary to our Christian life, his case must be deplorable; yet he gave more innocent pleasure to those who knew him than any man I ever met. It was curious how universally popular he was, since one would have thought his witty sallies must have discomposed persons of the graver sort. I had always dreaded his meeting with Laurence Driffell on account of a chance observation he once let drop about Laurence's ignorance of the fate of his father. 'It is not a unique experience,' he remarked. 'Beau Brummell was in a similar position. Some one asked him if his father was alive, and he replied he did not know for certain, but feared he was not, as the last time he saw him he was eating peas with a knife.' I could not help smiling, though 'with alien lips,' but shuddered to think what pain such an observation would have given to Laurence; and though of course Miniver could

never have quoted such an anecdote in Driffell's hearing—for his wit, even in the combat, 'never carried a heart-stain away on its blade'—I thought he would never have made an acceptable companion for him. Yet, strange to say, he became intimate with him, and was one of the few persons who could rouse him from his somewhat sombre and indifferent moods. Braidwood and Laurence, as I had expected, were much to each other's liking.

In one sense, for the undergraduate all his days are May days; 'May it is with him from head to heel' during the whole time (except, perhaps, during the college examinations) he dwells with *alma mater*; but the May term at Cambridge is simply snatched from Paradise for him, where there must needs be a blank space somewhere where it was. When it verges upon June he lives in the open air on the river, or in the gardens that slope down to it, where he reclines like the gods in undying bliss, but with tobacco instead of ambrosia. Moreover, that delightful time is the only one in which he has ladies' society. Men invite their aunts, and their sisters, and their cousins, and introduce them to their friends. In other terms, ladies are at a ruinously high premium; even old ladies then count for something, and the university does them all the honour in its power by sometimes making them the Heads of Houses. Laurence could not persuade his mother to come up to Cambridge, even to see her son. It was too much like a pleasure—though such a very innocent one—to be indulged in; the shadow on Driffell House forbid it. Laurence himself was nothing moved by the immigration of the Fair Sex; mathematics with him brooked no such rivals. He was asked here and there to meet them by a friend or two, but they made little difference in his daily life. As for me, I had no female belongings, but was glad enough to mix with those of others; my not being related to a pretty girl in no way spoilt the pleasure of her company, but rather the reverse.

Braidwood had several lady visitors that term, a cousin, one Mrs. Argent, who brought with her *her* cousins, a Miss Gilderoy and her sister Lucy. Mrs. Argent herself was only just old enough to be considered a chaperon, and the two young ladies were respectively nineteen and eighteen. The elder, Grace, was a fine girl, a daughter of the gods, divinely tall but of an exquisite figure, very fair, with chestnut hair and large brown eyes. Miniver, who saw her before I did, at once fell in love with her, though he was half a foot shorter. Lucy was a sort of pocket edition of her, with nothing high about her except her spirits. She appeared to

me to be made for Miniver, but even when, for good reasons of my own, which moreover he guessed, I represented that to him, he clung (of course metaphorically speaking) to Grace. It is, I fear, true that young men are dreadfully selfish. Grace Gilderoy (the elder) was gracious to him, I am bound to say, and was amused by him as by the gambols of a kitten. Lucy was gracious to everybody, and, like a good fairy with a magic wand, dispensed happiness all around her. She had an unusual knowledge, for one of her age and sex, of modern English literature, and had Tennyson and even Browning at her fingers' ends; she also drew from nature with great skill. The pride her sister took in her was delightful to witness; it never seemed to strike her that she had still more reason to be proud of herself. The girls had never been to Cambridge before, and enjoyed themselves beyond measure. They were staying at the hotel, but were almost always in Braidwood's rooms, who was an excellent host. We all, of course, did our best to entertain them, and I believe they thought that undergraduates lived in an atmosphere of feasts and flowers and were supplied by the authorities with pianos. Braidwood's rooms at Trinity had the advantage of looking out upon 'the Backs,' and it is no wonder the girls thought they were in Paradise. Even at Oxford, which in respect to the picturesque throws Cambridge into the shade, there is nothing to be compared with 'the Backs.'

The lower part of the river has no attraction save when the races take place. We took the ladies, of course, to hear 'the measured pulse of racing oars beside the willows,' their strokes together and the bending backs together, as the corn bends before the wind; but the men on the bank made such a row with their 'well pulled, well pulled,' and 'now you're gaining,' with other cries fortunately more or less inarticulate, that we could not hear each other speak. At least Grace could not hear *me* speak, which must have naturally annoyed her; and, indeed, it was evident that the river was not suitable to her quiet and dignified nature. I was sorry to see that Mrs. Argent—who, though as I have said, still young, was old enough to know better—enjoyed it. It was a pretty sight, indeed, to see Lucy clap her little, neatly gloved hands when one boat overlapped another and set up its flag in sign of triumph, but it helped to interrupt conversation. Not that Miniver was put out by it in the least; he seemed to me to talk incessantly, though I never heard him less worth listening to. I am sure Miss Gilderoy saw nothing to smile at in his conversation, but,

though I was loth to attribute a fault to her, the fact was she was too good-natured. Braidwood was well content enough to be anywhere in the society of his lady friends, but, for my part, I was very glad to get back to his rooms, where we all dined afterwards. It was an entertainment to be remembered.

In the evening we went on the water. What I should have liked would be to have taken three skiffs, when Braidwood could have rowed Mrs. Argent, Miniver Miss Lucy, and I her sister; it would have been delightful to have been 'in the same boat alone' with her even for an hour. Instead of which, Braidwood took the largest boat he could find, and packed us all into it. The ladies were put, of course, in the stern, on scarlet cushions, and Miniver and I rowed, while, as there was no room for him elsewhere, Braidwood lay reclined in the bows. I managed to get the stroke's place, so as to be as near our fair guests as possible, and I am happy to say pretty well intercepted Miniver's view of them; but it was very far from being so nice as—what I had, perhaps unreasonably, hoped—a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Gilderoy. Still it was something to look at her, sitting like a queen, all pleased with the spectacle her faithful subjects had provided for her. It was worthy even of *her* approbation.

Dropping down the river,  
Down the glancing river;  
Through the fleet of shallows,  
Through the fairy fleet;  
Underneath the bridges,  
Carv'd stone and oaken,  
Crowned with sphere and pillar.  
Linking lawn with lawn;  
In the summer even  
While the winds were heavy  
With the blossom odours;  
While the birds were singing  
In their sleepless nests.

Musical as the song of the birds was, the young ladies' low-toned laughter surpassed it, excited, as it seemed to me, by the manner in which Mrs. Argent steered us, which could only be described as 'anyhow,' so that we did not collide with twenty boats was solely owing to the skill and politeness of their coxswains. But Lucy laughed even when her cousin steered straight, and sometimes, I must say, a little inopportunately, as when, for example, I made a particularly pretty speech to her sister. That she did the like when Miniver attempted to make himself agreeable in the same

quarter, over my head, as it were, and in necessarily louder tones, was not to be wondered at. I never saw a man—or at least, a clever man, as Miniver undoubtedly was—press his attentions where they were so obviously undesired. Of course he seemed ridiculous to them all, poor fellow, though Mrs. Argent strove to hide her mirth, and Grace—or, as I suppose I should have written, Miss Gilderoy—generally vouchsafed him but a smile of unmistakable commiseration. It was indeed pitiful to see a man of intelligence make what I cannot but describe as a fool of himself. I thought I could hear even Braidwood far away in the bows gurgling through his pipe.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the little voyage was like a trip to Fairyland. Later on we saw the ladies back to their hotel, and here again was some mismanagement, for Braidwood escorted Grace, whereas it was clear that he ought as host to have done that office for Mrs. Argent, who fell to my share. I told her, of course, how delighted I was that the matter had been so arranged, though I felt I had not so much right to her as to Miss Gilderoy, at which she laughed more, I thought, than the little joke demanded. It might have been nervousness—for, to say truth, I was over head and ears in love, and for the first time in my life—but I could not help an uneasy suspicion that my unfortunate condition was suspected by Mrs. Argent, but what was there to laugh at about *that*? What amused *me* was that Miniver remarked to me afterwards he thought it queer that Braidwood had not escorted Mrs. Argent and left Miss Gilderoy to *him*, as my senior—by about six months at most.

It was impossible to entertain any real jealousy of Miniver, he did not take himself seriously enough to be taken seriously by any one else; but a day or two afterwards there arrived upon the scene one who, I felt, might prove a much more formidable rival. I had been invited to what, if it had been a male party, would have been called 'a wine' at Braidwood's rooms, but was, in fact, a little dessert at which the ladies were to be introduced to the delights of sherry cobbler, and, rather to my surprise, found Laurence one of the party. He was not much attached, as I have said, to ladies' society, but Braidwood, walking with his visitors, had, it seemed, met him accidentally and asked him to join them. Grace was talking, or, rather, listening to him as I entered the room, with unusual attention. The reason, as I afterwards discovered, was that Braidwood had told her of the



elder Mr. Driffell's mysterious disappearance, and this had interested her in the young man. But the reflection which at once struck like an arrow to my heart—a metaphor which I prefer to the Scriptural one, 'like a dart to the liver'—was that, superficially speaking, these two seemed formed for one another. Both for their years grave in manner as in aspect, tall, and deliberate in movement, with character already formed, and in somewhat similar mould. Also, though I knew Grace to be altogether free from considerations of material advantage, her people (she had a father and other relatives, but no mother) might not be so, and Laurence (supposing his father to be dead, as was almost certainly the case) was a rich man. It was the first time that I had ever envied his possessions, but I was obliged to own to myself that he was a far better match than I was. I thought I had never seen the sisters more beautiful. I could not have imagined that the imbibing of sherry cobbler could have rendered them so picturesque; as Miniver afterwards observed, 'Those girls, each with a straw in her mouth, reminded one of doves about to build'—I need not say which I thought the lovelier. I confess I felt a little sore that Laurence had been so easily admitted to Grace's confidence; they were already talking to one another, as I could not help hearing, about their respective home affairs. She had never spoken of such matters to *me*. It was only reciprocity of course; he had talked of his missing father, and she told him about *her* father, who was not missing, but no doubt possessed a certain amount of interest for *her*—and also, as it seemed, for Laurence.

He was an iron merchant, I gathered, or something of that kind; his daughters were devoted to him. Of late, with failing health, the domestic sceptre had become loose in his grasp, but his will was still their law. She had a brother-in-law, to whom the daughters (including his wife) were also devoted. Why did she not tell all this to *me*? I should have sympathised with her; but how is it possible for a man who meets a girl for the first time to sympathise with her about her belongings? It is all affectation and pretence. I was really quite angry with Laurence, and found myself sucking savagely at my straw. There is this peculiarity about sherry cobbler, that you can never have enough of it. I mean exactly enough of it. At first it is too strong, and you put more ice in it; then it is too weak, and you put more sherry in it; and then it is too strong again, and so on, and so on. Upon the whole, and after a great number of

permutations and combinations, as Laurence would have called them, I think it has a tendency to be too strong. If this had been the case on the present occasion, which it certainly was not, it would have accounted for what I saw when, after a particularly savage suck at my straw, I beheld Braidwood in Laurence's place, and Laurence sitting next to Lucy, and apparently in confidential communication with *her*. I turned to my neighbour, Mrs. Argent—and I confess I had not been doing my duty to my neighbour—with a look of amazed interrogation, and I really thought she would have suffocated herself; if you have ever been compelled to laugh while you were imbibing sherry cobbler, you will know the danger of it. If she had been a man I should have slapped her back, and for the moment I was tempted to do it. What *could* there have been to laugh at in my very natural expression of astonishment at Laurence's proceedings? The way in which he had transferred his attentions from one sister to the other was simply scandalous; we were living in a Christian land, not in a Mahomedan country where such conduct is permissible. For when I say 'transfer,' it did not at all strike me that he had left the elder for the younger—that I should not have minded, on the contrary, I should have welcomed it—but his object, as it seemed to me, was to monopolise them both.

Lucy, like Grace, was obviously interested in the man, doubtless on account of his father having gone a-missing; but I had lost *my* father, hopelessly and irremediably—he had, in fact, been dead these ten years—they both knew it, and yet I had never won such a look of sympathy from either of them as they had each bestowed upon Laurence. Why was this pity given to one in his comparatively superior position, and denied to the orphan? I had been accused by my friends of making 'copy' out of them (though, as it had never been printed, the charge seemed hypercritical), but that was a venial offence compared with making capital out of a domestic misfortune. I was really quite ashamed of Laurence; still, I was very willing to find excuses for my old friend. It was only natural, perhaps, that Lucy should have hailed him with welcome after Miniver, who was sitting on the other side of her, had been (for him) the whole evening as mum as a mouse. He, too, had been watching Laurence make play, so to speak, with Grace with speechless indignation, though of course he had no right to entertain any such feeling.

Later in the evening, when I found myself in a skiff alone

with Mrs. Argent, the other five being in a larger boat, I could not help saying a word or two—out of pity—about that infatuated young man. After agreeing with her as to his being such a bright and pleasant fellow, whom everybody liked, I hinted that it was to be regretted that he could not always be satisfied with liking, but sometimes—though I only knew of one time—placed his affections where they were obviously unlikely to be returned. Mrs. Argent laughed (and this time I could hardly blame her), and inquired whether I was thinking of any particular case, and when I said ‘Yes’ she laughed again, and said she thought she could guess, and then did guess: ‘It is my cousin Grace.’

‘A hopeless attachment for him, I am afraid,’ said I, smiling.

‘Oh yes,’ she answered, ‘for him or for anybody. She has been engaged these six months to Mr. Braidwood.’

I thought I should have dropped the sculls. An earthquake could scarcely have shaken me more; indeed King’s College Chapel—to which we were opposite at the time—did actually seem to rock, and the skiff most certainly did, for my companion gave a little scream at it. I should not have been sorry if she had been still more frightened; what did it matter (at least to *me*) if we had both been upset and drowned? This, then, was the reason why this woman, old enough to have known better, and Lucy, to whom youth should have given a more tender heart, had so often smiled when my attentions to Grace had been especially pronounced. My hopeless passion had been a target for their scorn. I expressed myself to this effect to Mrs. Argent, with what, I thought, not unreasonable indignation.

‘My dear Mr. Gresham,’ she replied, ‘the secret was not mine, but Mr. Braidwood’s; if he did not think proper to reveal it to his friends, what right had I to do so? As to laughing at you and Mr. Miniver——’

‘Never mind Miniver,’ I put in impatiently, and certainly it was most absurd thus to speak of us as if we were on the same plane. But women have no tact.

‘I am afraid both Lucy and I must plead guilty. We did not think it so very serious, you see.’

‘Serious!’ I cried. ‘You were playing upon my heart-strings. My whole life is now a blank.’

Mrs. Argent turned her head aside, no doubt to avoid witnessing my emotion. ‘I am so sorry, Mr. Gresham,’ she murmured; ‘but everybody does fall in love with Grace.’

‘But not as I did, not as I did, Mrs. Argent.’

‘Not as you did, perhaps,’ she answered, smiling, ‘but still something like it. The symptoms of the disorder are pretty much the same in all cases, and when the patient is your age he recovers.’

‘Never,’ said I; ‘it will not be so with me.’

‘Yes it will. You will have the malady again, perhaps more than once, and sooner or later it will be reciprocated. I should not wonder if, old as I am, I shall still be young enough to dance at your wedding.’

Mrs. Argent was by no means old, and had a very pleasant manner with her; she leant forward and just touched my hand; her eyes, I am almost sure, had tears in them. When one’s affections have received a wound, there is nothing like a woman’s sympathy to heal it. I had, I felt, been mistaken in supposing Mrs. Argent to be heartless. She had not understood the depth of my devotion to Grace; now she was sincerely sorry for me. From that moment I entertained a regard for my companion which was destined to endure; and she, on her part, got to confide in me and ceased to treat me as a boy.

When I left Braidwood’s rooms that evening I felt, thanks to her, more tranquil than an hour or so before I should have thought possible. On our way home I told Miniver, as a piece of intelligence that might perhaps interest him, though to me it was indifferent, of Braidwood’s engagement. He was silent for some time, then exclaimed, with great indignation:

‘Then that was what she told Driffell, which made him leave her to flirt with Lucy so abominably; it was pique, mere pique.’

It was curious that, while neither of us had a word to say against Braidwood, we both resented the slight and short-lived indulgence with which Grace had received Driffell. That he should have made his way to her favour so easily when we had found it so difficult was in itself a humiliating reflection, but in addition there was his character; averse to female society, and presumably unadapted for it, how could it have come to pass that in an hour or two such a revolution could have been effected in it? This, however, was only the beginning of wonders, for from that day forth Laurence attached himself to Braidwood’s guests with even a greater assiduity than I had done, and to one of them in particular. With that incomprehensible taste for one’s opposite that so often belongs to the sexual passion, he fell deeply, despe-

rately in love with Lucy Gilderoy. I little dreamt at the time what a serious matter it would turn out to be, and associated with what amazing consequences; but, even as I observed it, never was a man more in earnest. As for Lucy, it was more difficult to speak, for she was hardly ever in earnest. A more light-hearted, buoyant creature—though she was far from frivolous—I never knew, or one in more complete contrast to her adorer.

Laurence's spirits, however, were vastly improved by his new condition, and if he did not share her liveliness he thoroughly appreciated it. It was strange to see his grave face softening, like a Scotch landscape in the sunshine, as he listened to her artless talk; strange to see him reading Tennyson—though, unlike his father, he had been no admirer of that poet, nor indeed of any poet, before—with an especial leaning towards 'The Miller's Daughter,' or playing on a wet afternoon at backgammon with one dice-box, the other having been purposely mislaid in order that his hand might meet hers after every throw. He would hang upon the simple story of her school life as though it had been a recently discovered biography of Shakespeare, and laugh almost as loudly as herself as she described its oddities. It must have been a very severe establishment, to judge by the rules of what she called its *code maigre*; one of them was 'to eat two pieces of bread-and-butter at breakfast and tea.' The pieces 'as thick as that,' as Lucy would explain by separating her hands, and 'the butter as thin as that,' when she would bring them close together, and somehow or other Laurence's hands would always get mixed up with hers. Other rules were 'not to speak more than was absolutely necessary to a servant' and 'not to kiss the governesses.' Thus amusingly she discoursed upon these social prohibitions, and explained how they arose from the exalted rank of the pupils. Another was 'not to have any matches.' 'What, *no* matches? Not even love matches?' Laurence would slyly inquire; and she would answer, 'No, sir, because there was another rule, "never to wear white gloves."' The *code maigre* closed, I remember, as it were with a snap, 'never even to *look* at a boy's school.'

This transformation in Laurence took place as if by magic in a very short time, but it could hardly have occurred but for Mrs. Argent's prolonging her stay at Cambridge beyond the period that she had intended. Like most of her sex, she had a passion for match-making. She was warmly attached to Lucy, she liked Laurence, and thought he would make her a good husband; his

character appeared to be more formed than that of most young men of his age; he was, she knew, an excellent match from a pecuniary point of view, and on the whole she congratulated herself on having done a good stroke of matrimonial business. As to opposition from Lucy's family she apprehended none, though a year or two ago, as she informed me, she would not have been so confident about that matter. Mr. Gilderoy until recently had been what is called 'a bit of a Tartar.' A fond and even indulgent father, he had nevertheless sometimes 'put his foot down,' apparently for little cause, and denied his children what had seemed harmless requests. In these matters Cousin Gilderoy, as she called him, had shown himself obstinate as a mule, and, though she both loved and respected him, had aroused her bitter indignation. But of late years both body and mind had given way with him; from a very active and intelligent man of business he had gradually become a valetudinarian.

This had softened his iron will, and what had also greatly conduced to this agreeable change in his character was the influence of his son-in-law, Charles Parker—Uncle Charles, as the girls all called him—who had always been on their side, as it were, in any little disagreement with their father, and invariably carried their point with him. He had married their eldest sister, and had several children of whom they were especially fond, and whom grandpapa adored. The Gilderoy's, in short, were a very pleasant family, to whom nobody could object, and, as I felt certain, least of all Mrs. Driffell, who would have welcomed any nice girl on whom her son had bestowed his affections, and Lucy was a nice girl and something more. She was not only undeniably beautiful and of a sweet disposition, but clever, well read, and possessed of that rare gift in women, humour, in which Laurence was unhappily deficient. I say unhappily, because either that or some other deficiency of his seemed to me, now and then, to strike Lucy with some sense of disappointment. I mention this with hesitation, because being always at that period of my life on the look out for the peculiarities of my fellow-creatures—what at a later time took the shape of subjects for 'copy'—I think I may have exaggerated the matter. But notwithstanding they were much of the same age, she appeared to regard him as a girl regards a much older man who has won her love. She loved him, but certainly not with the same devotion with which he worshipped her; but occasionally I thought I saw a look in her face—not of disappointment, indeed, but of a sense

of shortcoming in him—which so young a *fiancée* should not have worn. It was certainly not jealousy that caused me to imagine this; for, though I thought Lucy delightful, my heart was still elsewhere, though all hope was dead; I would rather believe it was owing to my lifelong friendship and regard for Laurence, whose devotion I should have been better pleased to see more reciprocated. However, as I have said before, this uneasy feeling may have had but a fanciful foundation, and it was certainly not shared by those who had an equal interest in the young couple with myself. Braidwood was naturally pleased that the man he had liked as a friend bade fair to become a connection, and was too much occupied with his own love affairs to observe very closely how Laurence went on with his. It went on so fast and so smoothly that the young people became engaged, subject to the approbation of their respective parents. Lucy, of course, wrote to her father on the subject, and Mrs. Argent supplemented the letter with one to Mr. Parker, whose good offices, even though no opposition was apprehended, it was thought politic to secure. Laurence wrote to his mother, and never shall I forget the loving reply that came back to him; for, in his pardonable pride and in consideration of our lifelong friendship, he permitted me to read it.

‘Whatever happens,’ she wrote—a strange and uncalled-for phrase, as it struck me, referring I knew not to what, unless it were to the possible re-appearance of her husband—‘in me your wife, dear Laurence, will ever find a mother.’ Of the wisdom of his choice she did not express the shadow of a doubt.

Braidwood’s guests stayed a day after their intended departure, which had been already long adjourned, in order to have Mr. Gilderoy’s answer before the two young people parted from one another; but it did not arrive. This very little disturbed the ladies, who set it down to accident; the girls knew their father and feared nothing, but Laurence was very much put out. He was like a man who has set his heart upon something too good to be realised, and sees clouds in a clear sky. With our lady friends departed all his newly found good spirits, and all our efforts to rouse him were in vain. I called at his rooms the next afternoon, and found him in a wretched state. He had been unable to bear a suspense which must certainly have been terminated within a few hours, and had telegraphed to Lucy, as he expressed it to me, ‘to know the worst.’ She had wired back, ‘Bad news, alas! Am writing by the afternoon post.’

'It is all over,' he moaned; 'I ought to have known as much.'

'But why?' I asked; 'what can Mr. Gilderoy possibly have to object to?'

'To *me*,' he cried, 'to *me*, of course. The uncertainty concerning my father's existence is at the bottom of it. How can this man be sure that there was not something disgraceful about it? What explanation could Lucy give him, or, indeed, could I? It has spoiled my life.'

In vain I strove to reason with him, and it was with some apprehension I left him that evening with his own morbid thoughts and forebodings. I took care to be at his rooms before the post came in next morning. He presented a miserable spectacle, not having had a wink of sleep, nor even, as I afterwards discovered, been to bed. He seemed, however, glad of my companionship, and pressed my hand affectionately. He was still living in lodgings, preferring them to college rooms, and from his windows he could see the postman coming down the street. Who has been so fortunate as never to have awaited that unconscious messenger of Fate with beating heart? He deals out Death and Ruin as indifferently as his employer herself. It is seldom, alas! that our forebodings are not realised; though they often take some other shape than that which we have prefigured. There was a letter for Laurence, which he took with trembling hand and passed it on to me.

'It is from her,' he said, 'and I dare not read it.'

I murmured something about it possibly being of a private nature, but he waived away the objection. And certainly there was no need to have made it. I read the letter aloud at his request, while he sat at the table, his head leaning on his hands, and his eyes fixed on me, with a look of dumb despair which touched me to the heart.

'Dear Mr. Driffell,' it began.

'Did I not tell you so?' he exclaimed; 'did I not say she was lost to me?'

And indeed this commencement was a strong contrast to 'dearest Laurence,' as she had called him but three days ago.

'I deeply regret to say that my father has strongly opposed himself to our wishes—the dearest wish, I may say, of my loving heart. We have had a sad scene, so sad a one that you must not ask me to endure another. It would indeed be of no use, for when my father has once resolved upon a matter it is impossible



to move him. I need not say that there was not a word of personal objection to yourself. It is owing to no fault of yours, but to that mysterious misfortune which has darkened your home for so many years.'

'There! Did I not say so?' exclaimed Laurence, starting to his feet and striking the table violently. 'That is the curse of my life.'

'It wrings my heart to have to write these words to you, Laurence, but they are final ones. Henceforth, instead of what I had hoped, you must be content with my subscribing myself,

'Your affectionate friend,

'LUCY GILDEROY.'

It was upon the tip of my tongue to say 'This is dictated,' to comfort Laurence; but though it seemed a natural observation enough, I dared not make it. It might have given him false hopes, and besides, in my heart of hearts I did not believe it. That very strong arguments—or, at all events, very firm language—had been used to Lucy, that she had been borne down and over-persuaded was likely enough; but when I called to mind what I had observed of the relations of these young people to one another, how much deeper had been the devotion upon one side than the other, I thought it by no means improbable that Lucy had written this letter out of her own head.

He accepted her words as though they were her own words, and felt that they were, as she had described them, final. He gazed at me with a dumb despair that made my heart bleed for him, but at the same time was so far a relief that it did not ask for the comfort that I could not with honesty have given to him.

'I shall go home,' he said presently, in a tone inexpressibly touching. 'I cannot stay here where she has been.'

I know well what he meant, though 'the summer pilot of an empty heart unto the shores of nothing' might have been a line applied by some to my case: for the present, at all events, the scenes with which my recollections of Grace Gilderoy must be forever mingled; the college gardens with their old-world flowers and slumbrous bowling greens, in which we had sat together; and, above all, the many-bridged and lawn-fringed river, were spoilt and emptied of their joys for me: how much more, then, would Laurence, in whose eyes they had been associated with a

love returned suffer. It might well seem to him that the chances of a university career weighed but slightly in the balance, and that the best thing he could do for himself would be to leave Cambridge and forget all this. Still, it was not a thing to be decided upon on the instant; his mother's wishes ought at least to be consulted for one thing, and I told him so.

'My poor mother,' he sighed; 'she has not much to gladden her; and she will be sorry for me.'

'And others are sorry for you,' I said; 'it seems to me you have been very hardly treated.'

'But not by Lucy,' he put in quickly; 'it is not her fault; she had no alternative, or thinks she had none, since her duty seemed to point but one way. My darling, oh my darling!' He covered his face with his hands and groaned. His nature was stirred to its very depths. I could not have believed that he was capable of such intense emotion. It is often the way with reticent and reserved men; they have no outlet for their ordinary feelings, and when some overmastering grief compels them to give way, it bursts out as it were in a flood.

Here there was a knock at the door, and I rose with the intention of forbidding the person, whoever it might be, to enter; but Laurence signed to me not to do so, with a 'What *does* it matter?'

Not a little to my comfort, for the responsibility I felt to be on my shoulders was something too much for them, it was Braidwood. We both thought that he had come to know what was the news from London. He took a very warm interest in Laurence, as was only natural in one who was likely to be so nearly connected with him, and had a kindly nature beside. Laurence gave him a grateful smile, inexpressibly sad, and silently handed him Lucy's letter. He read it, as it seemed to me, with less astonishment, not to say displeasure, than he might have been expected to exhibit.

'This is very unexpected,' was his only comment. 'I deplore it more than I can say.'

'It is final,' said Laurence, not interrogatively, but with a certain lingering hope in his tone, nevertheless.

'One does not know exactly,' replied Braidwood evasively, 'what amount of pressure has been put upon her.'

'It has at all events been sufficient,' said Laurence. It was the first touch of bitterness that he had manifested.

‘You will nevertheless agree with me, Braidwood,’ I observed, ‘that for Driffell to take it for granted that all is over, and at once to leave Cambridge, which has on this account become distasteful to him, would be premature.’

‘It would indeed,’ he answered gravely; ‘that is surely not a matter to be decided on hastily.’

It did not strike me that he had much hope of Laurence’s affair coming to a different conclusion; but, not having himself lost the girl he loved, he could hardly understand the distaste his friend had suddenly taken for the place, and the manner in which all other considerations were dwarfed by his disappointment.

‘If you will have a little patience,’ he continued, ‘I will immediately go up to town, and see what can be done.’

It was not perhaps an act of much self-sacrifice, since in making it he would see Grace; but Braidwood was just then reading hard, and would not have thought of intermitting his studies but for some very urgent reason. Laurence held out his hand in silent thanks for the other’s offer; he was deeply moved by it, as indeed he well might be.

‘You are a good fellow,’ he murmured, ‘but it will be labour in vain.’

‘It will, at all events, be a labour of love,’ replied Braidwood. ‘You forget,’ he continued, smiling, ‘that it will be an excuse for seeing Grace.’ Then he stopped and flushed to his forehead; as he afterwards said, ‘I felt as if I should rather have cut my tongue out than have reminded the poor fellow, by such an inopportune remark, of the difference of our positions.’

But Laurence only said: ‘God bless her, and you too, Braidwood.’

‘I have just time to get leave from my tutor, and catch the express,’ observed the other. As he turned to leave the room, he made a sign that I should follow him.

I was not displeased at this, for I thought Laurence would like to be alone for a little; his feelings, I felt, could not just now be shared even by the most intimate friend.

Braidwood’s face when we reached the street together grew even graver than it had been. ‘This business is a very bad one,’ he said. ‘I have had a long letter from Grace this morning which quite prepared me for Driffell’s news. Mr. Gilderoy is in one of his obstinate fits—heaven knows how long it will last; even Parker has no influence over him, though he has done his best.’

‘But, after all,’ I said, ‘Lucy is old enough to know where her own happiness lies, and as to money, Driffell has enough for both of them. One may push filial duty too far.’

‘That is very true; but, strictly between ourselves, I do not think Lucy’s love for Driffell is of that overpowering kind that it can defy authoritative opposition. However, I shall do my best, and, if I can get back in time, will see you to-night about it.’

This was indeed a confirmation of my worst suspicions, for Braidwood’s views of Lucy’s feelings had of course been derived from her sister, who probably knew all about them. I struggled against this view, which was fast growing to be a conviction, in vain, and though of course the circumstances might have been wholly independent of the belief in question, the fact that I found Laurence later in the day packing his books and other baggage served to emphasize it. It was only a proof, of course, of the hopelessness he had already shown; but if he had had entire belief in Lucy’s love for him, would he, I thought, have thus thrown up his hand while a card remained to play? He was calmer even than before, but, as it seemed to me, it was no longer the calmness of despair—it was not resignation, far from it—but the acknowledgment of an accomplished fact.

‘I have written to my mother, to break it to her,’ he said; but what he had also written, as I afterwards discovered, was to inform her of his coming home.

Braidwood did not return till the next morning, when he at once came to my rooms. I saw by his face at once that his news was bad. Mr. Gilderoy was ill, or professed to be so, and had positively declined to see him. But he saw Grace, of course, and Lucy. The latter he had found in a state of despondency, which, contrasting with her usual high spirits, was very marked, and she had shed bitter tears; yet, strangely enough, he had not altered his opinion as regarded her feelings towards Laurence.

‘I will not go so far as to say she is resigned,’ he said, ‘but I think she will soon get over it. There is no chance of her making further resistance to her father’s will.’

‘And what on earth,’ I asked, ‘is his objection to the match?’

‘Well, I have had a long talk with Parker—my brother-in-law that is to be, you know—and it seems that the disappearance of Driffell’s father is what sticks in the old gentleman’s throat, or, at all events, that is the material point insisted upon. There are no

doubt other reasons ; Lucy is his favourite daughter, and he hates the idea of losing her.'

'But what a selfish old brute he must be,' I said.

'Well, you see,' replied Braidwood, drily, 'he is my father-in-law that is to be, so that I can hardly endorse that very frank description of his character ; but there is no doubt about it that he is of a very obstinate disposition, though also very impulsive. I have had trouble with him myself, but I was not so ready to throw up the sponge as Driffell. If I could not have got the parental permission, I should have married Grace without it.'

'And she would have married *you*,' I said—an observation that was without the least feeling of bitterness, for as respected that young lady, though I still admired and revered her, I had already acquiesced in the inevitable.

'Yes,' he replied, 'she would not have thrown me over so easily' (he meant, of course, 'as Lucy'), and I quite agreed with him.

'But does Mr. Gilderoy suppose that Driffell's father disappeared on account of anything discreditable?' I asked. 'A more upright, respectable man it is impossible to imagine.'

'Well, you see, you knew him and Mr. Gilderoy didn't. Besides, there is the money question. While it remains doubtful whether the lost man is dead or alive, Driffell can settle nothing upon her with security. Moreover, as I gather from what he has told Lucy—who has not much of a head for business, however—there is a certain document that requires the signature both of father and son when Laurence is twenty-five years of age, which will make a great difference in his position. It was indiscreet of him to tell Lucy anything about it, but he had no secrets from her, poor fellow, and she appears to have mentioned the matter under the mistaken impression that it was to his advantage. However, let the cause be what it may, I fear all is over as regards the young people, which I for one extremely regret.'

'And I also, from the bottom of my heart,' said I. 'Nothing remains, then, but to break the news to him ; though there is not much breaking in the matter since he is thoroughly prepared for it. But it will not be a pleasant business.'

'It is my business, not yours,' said Braidwood, generously ; 'he was to have been my relative.'

'Nay, but I am his oldest friend,' I argued.

'Well, then,' said he, 'let us go together.' And we did so.

There had been no need for our apprehensions as to how poor Laurence would take our news, for on arriving at his lodgings we found that he had left Cambridge by an early train.

Braidwood took honours at the university, whereas Miniver and I, who thought ourselves much cleverer fellows, went out in the 'poll.' Before I left College I had, however, two other distinctions. I had written a long story in the 'Family Feuilleton' (for which I received *1l. 2s. 6d.*), and also some poems in the 'Parnassus' Magazine, for which I got nothing at all. Still, it enabled me to append to the productions I sent freely elsewhere the words, 'Author of the "Red Bandit" in the "Family Feuilleton,"' as a sort of *cachet* of my position in the world of letters; though I afterwards discovered this was an error. The young aspirant to literary fame is so pleased and astonished to find himself in print, that he is apt to lose his sense of proportion in that matter. Miniver, too, who had caught the *cacoëthes scribendi* from myself, had written an amusing tale which, with my later information on such subjects, I should call flippant, for 'Punchinello,' and had been invited to write more at the same handsome rate—namely, a promise of remuneration if the journal in question should ever make a profit. These successes put us both in high spirits, and, though we could afford to wait till fame crowned our brows, we gave her every opportunity of doing so. She was very slow in taking advantage of them. It was quite curious with what persistence and in what numbers my MSS. came back to me; they must have materially increased the revenues of the Post Office. They were sensational stories, too, with a very liberal allowance of startling incidents and striking situations. I had murdered more people within a year or two after I came of age than Sawney Bean during his long and misspent life.

One day, rather disgusted with the want of appreciation shown to these melodramatic efforts, I wrote some letters instead of my usual tale of fiction. Among them quite a long one to Braidwood, who was on a tour with a friend in the Lake Country, recalling some humorous incidents that had taken place at the Union, with other college memoranda. I thought little of it, but doubtless the genius that would have otherwise found an outlet in crime unconsciously expressed itself in that familiar communication, for after a day or two I got a reply with this unexpected paragraph in it:

'I am travelling about here with Gledson, the editor of the "Crescent," and as it struck me that your letter was worth reading

I showed it to him. He was very pleased with your description of myself and Miniver as orators—most abominable caricatures, by-the-bye—and observed, “Why does your friend shoot such cartloads of gory rubbish into my office when he can write like this upon matters of which he has knowledge and experience? Tell him to burn all his manuscripts, and write an account of ‘A Night at the Union’ for the ‘Crescent.’” Then he mentioned that Grace Gilderoy was staying at Grasmere with some friends (as if he had just discovered it, whereas I was well aware he had gone to the Lakes for that very reason) and that she desired him to give me her kindest remembrances.

It was extraordinary how little this roused me in comparison with the previous paragraph. I sat down at once, pen in hand, and never looked up, except when it missed the ink-bottle, till I had written what Mr. Gledson had recommended. Then I wrote it all over again in my best handwriting (there was no typewriter in those days), and posted it to the editor of the ‘Crescent.’ In process of time, which to a young author under such circumstances means a very long time, I received a reply—almost the first I had ever received unaccompanied by the manuscript. It was accepted. There are several kinds of acceptances, not all of them nice ones. But even of the nice ones there are none more gratifying than that first ‘Yes’ of an editor. From the lips of love—well, comparisons are odious, but about *that* ‘yes’ there is always the possibility of recall. It is not in black and white, and never accompanied by a cheque, as this one was.

The ‘Crescent,’ it seemed, was exceptionally liberal in its dealings. I spoke to Braidwood a few days afterwards upon this admirable trait in his father’s periodical, and, according to his usual custom of depreciating that excellent work, he said he didn’t believe it.

‘Your contribution was evidently very good, my dear fellow, and old Gled thought it worth his while to make a good impression on you. He doesn’t want you to go elsewhere; you are henceforth one of his discoveries.’

I thought to myself he might have discovered me earlier; but of course I felt flattered, and believed this explanation. I hardly liked Braidwood speaking of a man of such critical discernment as ‘old Gled.’ How reverently does the acolyte of literature regard his priest—that is, his first priest! With what readiness he swings his pot of incense! But I must add in fairness to human

nature—or, at all accounts, to literary nature, which is a very superior article as regards sentiment—that he seldom quite forgets his obligation to the hand that helped him up the first round of the ladder.

In a very few days I received the proof of my article (like the realisation of some delightful dream) and with it a short note from the editor.

‘Dear Sir,—If you are passing this way at any time between 10 and 4, I shall be glad to see you.’

No invitation for her first ball was ever received by a young *débutante* with half the rapture. I happened to be passing ‘that way’ that very same afternoon. Perhaps this was imprudent, as showing a too eager desire to cultivate relations with the ‘Crescent.’ Braidwood, indeed, said as much; but he was altogether out of sympathy with me in the matter, and I verily believe thought his daily visit to Grace, to whom he was shortly about to be married, an infinitely greater attraction. Some people have no sense of proportion. He could not conceive why a man who could afford to live in chambers in Piccadilly, and ride in the Row on his own horse, could want to be connected with ‘a twopenny-halfpenny periodical.’ As the ‘Crescent’ was his father’s property, this seemed to me nothing less than disrespectful, and besides the price of the paper was threepence. There was a reason, however, of which I was at present unaware, for Braidwood’s depreciation of this respectable organ.

The offices of the ‘Crescent’ were in Paternoster Row. They occupied the whole house, which nevertheless was not a palace. The rooms were low and dark; but that on the ground floor, which was a very large one, was to my eyes illuminated by piles of the paper, the wrapper of which was of a brilliant red. Whether it was a sign of its popularity that there were so many of them is doubtful.

If a young writer does not see several copies of his work upon the bookstalls he is dissatisfied. He buys one in order to have an excuse for asking how they are going, and is generally informed that they are ‘quiet’; if he sees none he is made miserable. The life of an anxious author is not a happy one. At first I was informed that Mr. Gledson was not in, and invited to leave my MS. Being quite in park costume, with a moss-rose in my buttonhole (which I thought would conciliate my editor), they probably took me for a would-be contributor of fashion, which is the least welcome



kind of literary applicant. When I took out my card, however, as a memento of my visit, a clerk who glanced at it said, 'This gentleman may be shown upstairs.'

When some military person who had been describing how he had been run through the body was asked how the sword had missed his heart, he frankly replied, 'My heart was in my mouth'; and this was my case on the present occasion.

The editor's sanctum was on the first floor, but I seemed to be ascending to heaven, with very great apprehensions as to the nature of my reception. The staircase was quite dark, and when the door was opened to us not made much lighter, so dim were the windows of the little room. The place seemed full of dusty books and dustier papers, and on a spot that he had cleared for himself sat the editor of the 'Crescent,' in his shirt sleeves and with a short clay pipe in his mouth.

In certain catastrophes and cataclysms of our existence, when life seems to hang on a hair, it is said that the human mind is apt to concern itself with quite insignificant matters—the twitter of a sparrow or the pattern of the wallpaper; thus, in the presence of the Arbiter of my Destiny with his pipe and his scanty attire, the only reflection that for the moment occurred to me was that that moss-rose of mine was very much out of place. The arbiter, who was a shrivelled little man of dark complexion with a face like a death's head on a meerschaum very well coloured, regarded me with good-natured amusement.

'They ought to have put you in the waiting-room,' he said, 'where all the smart people are shown in, and'—here he paused and grinned a ghastly grin—'shown out again. Take a chair; never mind the MSS., shove them off. You smoke, I do hope; well, that's something. So do I, as you see, but in moderation—only one pipe a day, but then I never let it out. Will you have a cigar?'

'If you will allow me,' I said, 'I prefer a pipe,' and I produced one.

'Come, that's better,' he exclaimed approvingly. 'Richard' (by which he meant Braidwood) 'had not prepared me for this splendour. I expected, to judge from your contributions, a man with a Spanish cloak, a sneer, and a dagger.'

It was impossible to be angry with him; his eyes, in their corners, danced with laughter. His voice was kind and melodious, and as cheerful as the notes of a robin.

'Have you brought back your proof corrected?' he added,

encouragingly. 'That's well, and in red ink too! The last relic, I hope, of your murderous productions. What *can* you know, my young friend—at present at all events—of murder and intrigues and revenges? This is what you *do* know about,' and he struck the proof with his emaciated hand; 'it is capital, and we shall be glad of a few university papers of the same kind. Most of those sent to us on the subject are chiefly by young ladies describing the loves of the undergraduates with the daughters of their college tutors; unconscious of the fact that they must needs be illegitimate and full of other little mistakes. Yes, let us say half a dozen papers; reading men, boating men, the Drag and the Dons. Did our honorarium satisfy your expectations? That is well and very unusual. They have all expectations, my contributors'—here his voice became quite gentle—'and some of them, poor souls, very little else. You are fortunate, Mr. Graham.'

'I feel so to-day, sir,' I answered, 'thanks to you.'

'A gentleman, too,' he murmured to himself as he thought, but I caught the words; they were uttered with an emotion that I did not at the time understand. Mr. Gledson was a gentleman, also, if ever there was one; but he had had a hard life, had had to submit to things—to eat the bread of dependence. He was contrasting his lot with mine, or what seemed to be mine. After some more talk about business, the length of my bespoken contributions, and so on, I asked him how Richard and he had enjoyed themselves on their tour.

'Richard, very much,' he said evasively; 'his beloved object was at Grasmere, you know; they are to be married next month. You will be at the wedding, of course?'

I said that I supposed so. Then, having finished my pipe, I rose to go. This was fortunate; for, as I got afterwards to know, as Alfred the Great measured time by candles, so Mr. Gledson measured his interviews by pipes. The folks in the waiting-room were very promptly disposed of, but where discussion was necessary tobacco was the timekeeper.

Upon the whole, I was very much pleased with my new (and only) editor. I felt that I had got my foot into the door of the 'Crescent,' and that it would be my own fault if it were closed against me.

During all this time I had heard nothing from Laurence, though I had written to him more than once, but I had had a very long and kind letter from Mrs. Driffell. It was, I think,

written partly in apology for her son's silence. 'My poor boy,' she said, 'is still very much cast down, and cannot get over his disappointment. Mr. Gilderoy's behaviour is unintelligible to me, though Mr. Sandeman tells me there is some sort of reason for it in connection with business matters, which, as you will remember, I know little about. The shadow of my poor husband's disappearance is doomed, it seems, to darken our lives. Laurence takes no interest in anything except the mill, into the conduct of which he throws himself with marvellous energy. Mr. Baird writes that but for his previous experience with the head of the firm he would have said that no man could have a more able coadjutor. This is perhaps well, since Laurence's constant attention to affairs prevents his mind dwelling upon the sad conclusion of his love affair. The dear fellow has not a word to say against Lucy (how strange it seems to be thus writing of one I have never seen!), but, looking at that matter with a mother's eye, I cannot quite forgive the girl's part in it. She could not, of course, have foreseen her father's objection to the match, but, knowing his obstinate and impulsive nature, she might have warned my poor boy against the possibility of it, and not suffered him to make so certain of success. I think, too, if she had been attached to him with a devotion equal to his own, she might have made a better fight for him.'

Perhaps there was some thought of her own case (though reversed) in this, but, as I have already said, I agreed with her. This idea, conceived by one who had none of the evidence which I had possessed to go upon, corroborated my view of Lucy's feelings quite as strongly as the words that Braidwood had let drop about her. Mrs. Driffell, indeed, had looked at the matter, as she expressed it, with a mother's eye, but also with that of a woman, and women know more about one another than a man can pretend to know. Her letter ended with the information that my old friend and tutor, Mr. Chorley, was coming up to town for a few days in the ensuing week and would give me all the Luxton news. This was very pleasant hearing, and I at once sat down to write to him, and placed what hospitality lay in my power at the rector's service. I could not give him a bed, for there was no spare room at my lodgings, but I hoped to see him, at all events, to dinner at my club all the days he could spare me.

He wrote in the kindest way, and, to my reproach that I had not learned his intention to come to town from himself, replied

that he had been afraid it would have produced this very invitation I had sent to him, and that his old-fashioned ways would have put me out. They were the very ways I liked best, as I hope in his heart he knew; nor could any one have entertained a guest with more pride and pleasure. His was only a clergyman's holiday, the inside of a week, but I think he enjoyed it as much as I did. His account of the inmates of the Hall was but a sad one. Mrs. Driffell was 'cheerful'—that very bad substitute for happy—and did her best, for her son's sake, to conceal her depression; but Mrs. Sandeman and Mrs. Garden, who were her constant visitors, thought her in very bad spirits. Laurence seemed to have grown ten years older, but the rector thought he perceived in him the low beginnings of content.

The disappearance of Mr. Driffell was gradually wearing out in the memory of the neighbours, but at the Hall nothing of its effect had abated. It was especially kept alive with Mr. Sandeman on account of the business which it was so essential to arrange when Laurence attained twenty-five years of age, but which it would be impossible to complete while the question of his father's existence remained unsettled. Mrs. Driffell would not hear of any advantage being taken of his seven years' absence, which, I believe, in the eye of law is equivalent to death.

Our talk upon old times, but for this one shadow upon them, was delightful to me; and it was pleasant to see the interest which my old tutor took in my literary aspirations. When Friday came I think we were both sorry that the next day was to part us from one another. He was to dine with me, as usual, at the club. On previous occasions I had asked other friends to meet him, but that last night we had decided to be alone. As it turned out, this was fortunate. Directly he came into the hall I knew that something had happened to him of a serious nature. He did not deny it when I expressed my sympathy.

'Yes, Frank, something has happened. I have been much upset, but I can say nothing about it till we are quite alone.'

After dinner, therefore, at which he ate hardly anything, though the cook and I had both done our best to please him, instead of going as usual to the smoking-room, we adjourned to my own rooms. As soon as we were alone, over our pipes and coffee, the rector burst out almost hysterically with his news.

'Frank, I have seen Mr. Driffell.'

If he had said 'Frank, I have seen a ghost' I should have been less surprised.

'Mr. Driffell! What, here in London? Where is he? What is he doing with himself? What explanation can he possibly have to give?'

'I said, Frank, that I had seen him, not that I had had speech with him. Don't look at me with such amazement, or you will make me doubt the evidence of my own senses.'

'Then you are not quite sure you saw him?'

'Yes I am,' returned the rector, 'or at least I was an hour ago. Every minute the vision seems less real, less possible; but I did see him. I was walking up Chancery Lane towards Holborn, when he came out of the Lincoln's Inn gateway, and met me face to face. He did not look a day older than when he left us. I should have had no doubt about his identity even if it had not been obvious that he recognised *me*. He started back as if I had struck him, seemed about to speak, but with a great effort restrained himself, and then turned back through the archway and was gone. No doubt I ought to have followed him, but the fact is I was too dazed, too amazed, to have the full use of my faculties.'

'But are you quite sure now, *quite* sure?' I repeated, too overcome with wonder, and even a kind of awe, to grasp at details. The whole story seemed, indeed, incredible, as in Paley's 'Evidences,' which had recently formed part of my compulsory reading. The question occurred to me, was it not more likely that evidence (even of a clergyman of the Church of England) should prove false than that a miracle should have happened?

'A little while ago I could have sworn to what I have narrated to you,' said the rector. 'Now I can only say that it took place to the best of my knowledge and belief. My conviction is that he recognised and purposely avoided me.'

'But did he not also look ashamed?' My thoughts had reverted to his wife and son, and the wrong his disappearance had wrought in their lives; but also to the high character which the man himself had borne, and to the kindness he had always shown to me. His conduct, if he had left home designedly, as Mr. Chorley's scene seemed to imply, was well-nigh incredible.

'No,' returned the rector, 'I do not think he looked ashamed, and only for the moment confused. He must have known, you

see, that a meeting with some old acquaintance must needs occur sooner or later, and he had probably nerved himself for it.'

This was likely enough supposing that the rector had not been mistaken in his man, but the latter alternative seemed to me the most probable.

'Shall you tell them down at Luxton what you have seen, or think you have seen?' I asked.

'I shall tell Sandeman, but no one else, and him only under promise of secrecy,' he answered. 'Of course, as I perceive you are thinking, I may have been mistaken. The man in question might have suddenly remembered something he had forgotten just as he ran up against me, and then returned in haste the way he had come. I do not believe it was any one but Driffell, but I am not so perfectly certain of it as to set neighbours' tongues talking about the matter, and especially to renew poor Mrs. Driffell's trouble.'

So it was settled; but from that moment my life had an element of fear and trouble in it. London is a large place, yet not so large but that men meet in it who have no desire to do so. If Mr. Driffell was really a denizen of it—instead of, as I had hitherto felt confident, having left the world, with its troubles and its pleasures, for ever—I was no less likely to come across him than the rector. What *should* I say, what *should* I do, if this was to happen?

(*To be continued.*)

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*VALE !*

THE saddest word known to our tongue, though it be a blessing in brief, is ' Good-bye ; ' and we have all to say it. There must be pathos indeed about it, since, in my case at least, it moves that synonym for hardness, the heart of an Editor. For more than half my life I have followed that detested calling, and shall perhaps after all die in my bed. It is superfluous to assassinate a tyrant, however hateful, after his abdication. In the thirteen years, however, that I have been privileged to conduct THE CORNHILL, there have been many halcyon days when the Rejected Contributor has abstained from menace and even from complaint. I only wish to state what will be believed, but on some occasions he has actually acknowledged I was right to decline his lucubrations. Now that my little bouts with him are over, I confess that I have a tenderness for him. What patience (up to a certain point) does he exhibit ; what amazing perseverance, what hoping against hope, until despair sets in and he perceives that the return of his MSS. from all quarters of the globe indicates a universal editorial conspiracy ! It is then that he becomes dangerous—a matter, however, which no longer concerns me, but my esteemed successor. I am speaking, of course, only of the Rejected Contributor whose contributions are never accepted, and never will be. The member of every other profession sooner or later finds that he is unfitted for it—a square man in a round hole—and if it be possible he gets out of it ; but he who thinks he has ' a calling ' for Literature remains in that delusion for ever. I have known a man, who could get nothing printed in his lifetime, compose the epitaph to

be engraved on his tombstone, and leave the money for that purpose. It might not have been publication, but it was a permanent record of his literary gift.

The R. C.'s position is a truly pathetic one, and I am thankful to think that, though I have been unable to comply with his requests, I have been as gentle with him, where it was possible, as though I were fanning a sleeping Venus. It was not always possible. When he demands admittance, for example, on the ground that his wife's sister married our second cousin, one is obliged to tell him that one's literary judgment cannot be interfered with by the ties of blood. Even when he states, as the stage direction says, 'with meaning,' that his aunt is a duchess, we can only say we cannot help it, and that she can't help *him*. He is most irritating when he flatters himself he is combining modesty with conciliation, and tells us that though his contribution may not be of a first-class character, he thinks, without vanity, that 'it is at least superior to most of the productions he has seen in our respected periodical.' He may be injudicious, but he is seldom cantankerous, and I doubt if at the bottom of his heart he really believes that his disappointments are caused by malignity. I am well aware that I am henceforth of absolutely no account with him; a Lord Mayor after his year of office, or a Bishop's widow, is not more completely off his or her pedestal than is an extinct editor in his eyes, but I shall always wish him well; there is not a more piteous sight than that of a man struggling with insurmountable adversity. 'Tis not in mortals to command success, nor in some, alas! to deserve it.

The bright side of an editor's life is of course where the Accepted Contributor shines on it. To one who is a true lover of Literature it is a pleasure indeed to see the nugget sparkling in its bed; to be able to tell the worker that he has not toiled in vain, that fame, and perhaps fortune, lie before him. To see the fire of hope kindle in young eyes is a sight to gladden old ones, and it has been my good fortune many times to see it. It is one of the attributes of a generous nature to exaggerate a kindness, but the extent to which this is carried by literary folk is wellnigh incredible. In no other calling are such vast returns of gratitude obtained from so small an investment of assistance. It is not possible in these days for genius to be stifled in the bud, but it is a privilege indeed to encourage it to flower. That is why when 'we' resign our editorships we are not resigned: our life



has lost one of its purest pleasures. There is, however, a noble consolation. The pupils of one generation become our masters in another, but they remain for ever our friends. It is to these, with a sad heart, yet full of pleasant memories, that I bid FAREWELL.

One other word, and I have done. There are two things about my departure that may well console even a sick man. The one, that ill health and not ill humours, no weakening of my long bond of friendship—a cable without a kink—with the founder of THE CORNHILL divorces me from my occupation ; and the other, that of my successor all men have a good word to say. May health attend him, and especially a fine circulation !

JAMES PAYN.

*CLARISSA FURIOSA.*<sup>1</sup>

BY W. E. NORRIS.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## CLARISSA GROWS IMPORTANT.

DURING the fine summer days which ensued, Lady Luttrell declared repeatedly that it made her feel quite ill to read the newspapers, and indeed these had no very cheering information to impart to staunch upholders of the integrity of the Empire. However, it was some consolation to find that, if the perversity of the electorate was injuring her health, it had no deleterious effect upon that of her husband, whom the local practitioner pronounced to be sound in wind and limb. 'A little overworked, perhaps, and the heart's action not quite so regular as one could wish it to be; but a good long holiday will set that right, let us hope.'

Sir Robert was certainly going to have a good long holiday; only before he could begin to enjoy it, it was necessary that he should return to London for the reassembling of Parliament and the anticipated vote of want of confidence which would relieve him and his colleagues of the cares of office. Upon this mournful expedition Lady Luttrell was not desirous of accompanying him; but Madeline, for some reason best known to herself, begged to be allowed to do so, alleging that she wanted to hear the debate, and adding that she would be no trouble, as she had received an invitation from Clarissa to spend a week in Cadogan Gardens. Lady Luttrell doubted the prudence of acceding to this request; but Sir Robert said good-naturedly:

'Oh, let the girl come with me if she likes. Evil communications will hardly corrupt her more than they have done already, and as far as I can understand the matter—which, I confess, isn't very far—our best policy will be to keep upon good terms

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States of America, 1896, by W. E. Norris.

with Guy's wife. In fact, I shall avail myself of this opportunity to be particularly civil to the lady. One hasn't been a Cabinet Minister for all these years without having learned how to be civil to people whose ears one would prefer to box, for choice.'

Sir Robert was, in truth, only too well aware of what important issues depended upon a reconciliation which might be effected by patience and adroitness; he foresaw that Mr. Dent's niece would some day be a very wealthy woman, whereas he neither knew exactly nor wished to know exactly what Guy's probable inheritance would be. Often he said to himself that Guy had been a most infernal ass; but he was conscious that he himself came under much the same condemnation, and if anything was to be accomplished in the direction of atonement by smoothing down Clarissa's ruffled plumage, the least he could do was to undertake that task.

However, he had hardly taken his seat in a reserved railway compartment, with Madeline beside him, when it was borne in upon him after an unpleasantly convincing fashion that his daughter-in-law might prove a hard person to conciliate. For amongst the newspapers and periodicals which he had bought to while away the tedium of the long journey was a certain monthly review, entitled 'Modern England,' which had recently risen into fame, and the first article that caught his eye, as he examined the list of contents, was headed 'The Perjury of Marriage,' by Mrs. Luttrell. That did not sound promising, and Sir Robert turned over the leaves with a frown, expecting to come upon a narrative of personal experience which would do the writer and everybody connected with her infinite harm. But as he read, he was compelled to acknowledge that Clarissa had not only expressed herself with discretion, but had put her case, such as it was, extremely well. It was not, to be sure, much of a case, since all the world has long ago been convinced that, whatever individual instances of hardship may arise out of the institution of marriage, civilisation could not survive the destruction of the family; still, what there was to be urged in favour of a different view was set forth in this article clearly and temperately enough, while the literary style of the composition was, as Sir Robert recognised with surprise, far above the average.

'By Jove!' he muttered, 'this is a clever woman, in spite of her being a fool—and a more dangerous breed than that doesn't

exist. Once let her make herself famous, and there will be the deuce to pay!

Now, whether a woman can be said to have committed perjury by vowing to love, honour, and obey a man upon whom she subsequently discovers that it is a sheer impossibility for her to bestow such sentiments, and whether, as the gifted authoress contended, the only straightforward course for one who has involuntarily made a vow which cannot be kept is to frankly break that vow, may be questions open to dispute; but there was obviously some abstract justice in the statement that no human being should be held bound by a contract of the nature of which he or she is ignorant. Mrs. Luttrell said at once that she had little hope of winning over sincere believers in the Sacraments of the Church, who had firm ground beneath their feet when they took their stand upon an alleged Divine law; but she hastened to add that the number of such persons, even amongst professing believers, was notoriously small and was daily diminishing. It was for the convenience of society in all classes that the present unjust and unfair system was upheld, and her aim was to show that the convenience of society and the well-being of the community at large would, in the long run, be better served by its abolition.

‘Oh, that’s all you want to show, is it?’ thought Sir Robert, with some amusement. ‘I should imagine that it will take you all your time, ma’am.’

It must be confessed that she was not entirely successful; yet she did contrive to show that the existing divorce laws are somewhat one-sided, that a vast number of people are chained together like galley-slaves who would be a great deal happier apart, and that received ideas of what constitutes morality or immorality require some clearing up. But, upon the whole, it was not so much what she said as the way in which she said it that impressed her reader. With a politician’s instinctive knowledge of what, at a given moment, is likely to tickle the public ear, he perceived that there was no small danger of Clarissa’s being accepted as a prophetess. ‘In which case,’ he repeated under his breath, ‘there will be the deuce to pay!’

He replaced ‘Modern England’ in his travelling-bag, without showing it to his daughter, stroked his chin reflectively for several minutes, and finally said to himself, ‘I must have a talk with Dent about this.’ It was perhaps a symptom of decaying powers

that in all troubles and difficulties Sir Robert now turned at once to Mr. Dent.

And indeed it was with Mr. Dent, who met him on the platform at Paddington, that he proposed to take up his quarters for a time, the house in Grosvenor Place having been left in charge of a charwoman. Madeline, for her part, was driven off to Cadogan Gardens in a smart brougham, drawn by a pair of fast-trotting cobs. Clarissa, it seemed, knew how and where to provide herself with the accessories of affluence.

Quite a little crowd of ladies and gentlemen was assembled round the tea-table from which Clarissa rose to welcome her sister-in-law. They had somehow the air of being sycophants, Madeline thought; although they were not in reality precisely that. But they were certainly admirers, and the eulogistic phrases which they addressed at intervals to their hostess were not easily comprehensible to one who had but a vague acquaintance with 'the Movement.' It appeared, however, that Mrs. Luttrell had accomplished some feat or other for which she could not be sufficiently patted on the back; the masculine-looking women, with the short hair and the *pince-nez*, and the feminine-looking men, with the long hair and the low collars, emulated one another in assuring her that she had rendered an epoch-making service to the cause. If the whole crew of them had not worn so very much the appearance of being actors and actresses in a farce, it might have been supposed that they were in deadly earnest. Of Madeline they took very little notice (a method of treatment to which Sir Robert Luttrell's daughter was not accustomed) and she was sincerely glad when they went away.

'What are they making such a cackling about?' she asked, with a touch of excusable irritation, after the door had closed behind the last of them. 'Have you been setting the Thames on fire in the night?'

'Oh, no,' answered Clarissa; 'they are only kind enough to praise a little article of mine in "Modern England," which I thought you might perhaps have seen. I tried to make clear a part of our programme—the part which relates to marriage—in it, and I own to being rather pleased at the manner in which it has been received. Mr. Loosemore tells me that I have a genuine literary faculty, and Mr. Loosemore is admitted, even by those who differ from him, to be a competent critic. But you

shall see the little paper after dinner, if you care to look through it. Come upstairs to your room now and tell me why you have written such miserable, scrappy apologies for letters of late.'

Madeline was not prepared to give the desired information all at once. She had abstained from writing with her customary amplitude because she had not wished to allude to Raoul de Malglaive and because she had found it so difficult to help alluding to him; but she did not even now intend to confess that she had given her heart away to one who was utterly unworthy of the gift. What she believed herself to be in need of was a little moral support in her determination to think no more of the young man; and if that had been really what she wanted, she certainly could not have applied to a better quarter for it. In the course of the evening she casually mentioned the paragraph in the French newspaper relating to M. de Malglaive, 'whom I dare say you may remember as a boy at Pau in the old days,' and since—by a mere chance of course—she had brought '*Le Petit Voyou*' with her, Clarissa was soon in a position to agree heartily with the girl's remark that it was 'a truly disgusting story.'

'I mean,' added Madeline, after a pause, 'that it is disgusting if it is true. But I suppose it may be a mere invention.'

'Clarissa laughed. 'It *may* be: but the chances, you may be sure, are quite a thousand to one the other way. If you had heard half the things that I have heard during the last few months, you would cease to be surprised at any accusation of that kind being brought against any man.'

'I don't think I want to hear them,' said Madeline.

'One doesn't want to hear them; it is horrible and sickening to hear them. Yet to see things as they are is always better than to remain blind. Things must not and cannot go on as they are: of that I am convinced.'

She remained silent for a few moments, and then, meeting with no response from the girl, in whose eyes there was a suspicion of tears, she rose suddenly and, kneeling down beside the latter, threw her arms round her neck.

'Madeline dear,' she said, 'you haven't told me much, and I won't bother you to tell more than you feel inclined to tell; but I can guess how it is with you. Haven't I been through it all myself? Only in my case knowledge came too late, whereas in yours there is no irreparable harm done yet——'

‘I don’t know what you call irreparable,’ interrupted Madeline, who had been made to peruse her sister-in-law’s article before this ; ‘you seem to think that unhappy marriages can be set aside at any moment. Not that I have the slightest idea of ever marrying M. de Malglaive, who has never asked me.’

‘Ah, but you must not think that I separated myself from my husband without a struggle or that my present position doesn’t lay me open to daily annoyances. It is for the sake of others much more than for my own that I am living as I do now. Somebody must begin, you see. But never mind me ; it is about you that I want to talk.’

And she talked kindly and sympathetically enough for the next quarter of an hour, proving that she at least understood her own sex, if she did not know quite as much as she thought she did about the other, and conveying comfort of a sort to a girl who, being both proud and sore, sadly required a little comfort. That it did not happen to be comfort of the right sort was scarcely her fault. She gave what she had to give, and was in a measure successful.

‘But if Frenchmen, as well as Englishmen, are what you say they are,’ Madeline observed at length, ‘one had better make up one’s mind never to marry at all.’

To which Clarissa rejoined : ‘You might form a much worse resolution. Women don’t exist for the sole purpose of marrying somebody and becoming the mothers of somebody’s children. That is just what we want to be understood and acknowledged.’

It was because she and her friends were of opinion that women are every bit as good as men (when they are not better), and not because contemporary politics possessed any special interest for her, that Clarissa had felt constrained to range herself amongst the opponents of her uncle’s and Sir Robert Luttrell’s party. Accordingly, she was quite willing to accompany Madeline to the House of Commons a day or two later and to listen to the debate on the Address which was certain to terminate in the defeat of the Tory Ministry. No orator who is well aware that defeat awaits him can be expected to exhibit himself at his best, nor were the first two days of this somewhat perfunctory discussion productive of any striking displays of eloquence from the occupants of the Treasury bench ; but on the third and concluding day Sir Robert Luttrell rose and delivered what has since been pronounced

to be the very best speech with which he had ever delighted the House. He was not unaccustomed to delighting an assembly with which he had always been popular; he thoroughly understood his audience and knew exactly how to make his points tell; but on this occasion he fairly surpassed himself. The enemy, as it happened, was unusually open to attack; the methods by which victory had been won at the polls had not been precisely patriotic methods; the programme of the victors was understood to be one which they themselves had until recently condemned in no uncertain tones. So Sir Robert, whose quiet good-humour and unforced wit proved far more effective than the diatribes of some of his predecessors in the debate, had it in his power to make them look rather foolish and uncomfortable. In his peroration, which was really fine, and which, unlike the rest of his speech, seemed to have been carefully prepared, he foretold the result of tactics which, he said, had never been resorted to before in his long experience, and warned honourable and right honourable gentlemen opposite that they had established a precedent which must inevitably bring about their own eventual discomfiture. Something of the pathos of a last farewell was infused into his concluding sentences, which were measured, dignified, and free from any suspicion of rancour. For indeed he was an old man, and it was not probable that the variable breeze of public favour would ever waft him back to the seat which he resumed amidst loud and prolonged cheering.

Clarissa sighed, as she looked down upon the scene from the Ladies' Gallery, remembering the only previous occasion on which she had heard Sir Robert address the House and all that had happened to her and others since then.

'Isn't it almost enough to make one believe that he is right and that the nation is wrong?' she whispered to her companion.

'Why shouldn't the nation be wrong? If right or wrong were a mere question of majorities, I suppose the people who write for "Modern England" would be squashed quite flat,' returned Madeline pertinently.

That fate, at all events, could not be prevented by Sir Robert Luttrell or anybody else from overtaking the Tory administration, which resigned office on the following day. The news was conveyed to Clarissa in a note from her uncle, who, rather to her surprise, added: 'Will you give me and your father-in-law some dinner if we knock at your door at 8 o'clock to-morrow evening?'



We have been receiving so many condolences from our supporters that we think it would make a pleasant change to be trampled upon by a triumphant adversary.'

Mr. Dent not unfrequently claimed the hospitality of his niece, with whom he studiously abstained from discussing controversial subjects, and although he provoked her, she enjoyed his companionship. As for Sir Robert, she would of course be very glad to see him, and wrote at once to say so; but she was in some doubt as to whether his intentions in thus inviting himself to her house were of a wholly friendly order.

Whatever Sir Robert's intentions may have been, his manner, when he greeted his daughter-in-law, was friendly in the highest degree, and throughout the evening he took evident pains to make himself agreeable to her. He complimented her upon her article in 'Modern England,' which he had read, he declared, with sincere pleasure and admiration.

'You won't ask a petrified old Tory to agree with your views,' he remarked smilingly; 'but I am sure you will continue to write as cleverly and charmingly after you have modified them a little.'

'I don't think I shall modify them,' said Clarissa.

'No? Yet Tories and Radicals alike are apt to find that some deductions have to be made from the views of youth before middle age has been reached. At all events, by the time that old age has been reached it is possible to enjoy the society of those from whom one differs; and that is why I hope you will be persuaded to give us a little of yours at Haccombe this summer.'

Clarissa had promised to spend the summer at her uncle's country house in Sussex. She thanked Sir Robert, without committing herself, feeling indeed pretty sure that he could not seriously wish her to revisit Haccombe Luttrell. However, he recurred to the subject when Netta came down to dessert and when, after lifting the child up on his knee, he asked her whether she would not like to stay for a time with her grandparents.

'We can offer you sea-bathing and fishing, and I dare say we might find a pony for you to ride,' said he, by way of inducement.

Smiles and dimples appeared upon Netta's round face; but presently she asked, with a sudden accession of gravity and anxiety, 'Will Father be there?'

'Ah, well, I don't know about that,' answered Sir Robert, not

at all disconcerted; 'your father, I suppose, won't get leave before the autumn. The country hasn't told him yet, as it has been kind enough to tell me, that his services can be dispensed with.'

This was the sole reference made to Guy in the course of the evening. At a later hour Sir Robert talked politics, listened with courteous deference to Clarissa's Radical pronouncements, and admitted that there was a great deal to be said in favour of female suffrage. When he rose to take his leave, he declared that he had spent a most delightful evening, while Clarissa replied, with perfect truth, that if the evening had been delightful, it was he who had made it so.

But despite this interchange of amenities, Sir Robert was not a happy man as he left the house. Walking down the broad deserted street with his old friend—for the night was so hot and airless that they decided to return to Portland Place on foot—he remarked:

'Your system of leaving things to right themselves is all very fine, Dent; but the question is whether they aren't as right already as she wants them to be. I should have liked to see her a good deal more angry and a good deal more triumphant. The pleasure of independence, unfortunately, is just one of those few pleasures which grow rather than pall upon one.'

'You speak as a man,' answered Mr. Dent; 'no woman really likes to be independent, whatever it may suit her to assert. Not that I expect Clarissa to climb down from her perch to-morrow or next day: you will have to give her time.'

Sir Robert thought, but did not like to say in so many words, that that was exactly what he could not afford to give. Dent must be well aware that the loss of an actual 5,000*l.* a year and a prospective income very much larger would be a serious matter for the Luttrell family; but this aspect of the matter had not been touched upon in previous conversations, and it was rather difficult to take the initiative in alluding to it. So Sir Robert, after a brief period of silence, only said:

'Well, I shall be dead and buried before the curtain falls, most likely. And after me the deluge, eh? Tell me honestly, Dent—can I carry on for another couple of years, do you think?'

'There will be the proceeds of the sale of your house in Grosvenor Place,' answered Mr. Dent.

'Yes, I know; but they will be claimed at once, will they

not? What I want you to tell me is this: can these people be prevented from foreclosing?’

‘Well, yes,’ answered Mr. Dent, ‘I may say now that foreclosure can be avoided for the present. I think, considering the pass to which matters have come, you can’t do better than leave them to me. Later in the year we must see what can be done.’

‘Can anything be done?’

‘One hardly knows: there are complications, you see. But you may rely upon me to do the best I can for you, Luttrell, and I rely upon you not to worry yourself. At our time of life worry means illness, remember.’

‘And at our time of life illness is very apt to mean death, I suppose? Between ourselves, Dent, I don’t know that my death, now that my political life is at an end, would be a great misfortune for anybody. There would be a certain amount of ready money, I presume, and my wife has her own little property in France. I should leave my family landless and impoverished, but not ruined, I take it.’

But to this Mr. Dent, who had stopped to light a cigar, made no reply.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE FLOWER-GIRL AND THE POET.

RELIEF from public responsibilities did not, of course, enable the ex-Chancellor of the Duchy to quit London forthwith. There were formalities to be gone through, there were the seals of office to be delivered up, there were also sundry matters of private business to be transacted with the family lawyers which Mr. Dent, accommodating as he was, could hardly undertake on his friend’s behalf. So it was arranged that Madeline should stay with Clarissa, who was eager to retain her, until such time as her father should be free to escort her home.

‘Now I do want you,’ Clarissa said, ‘to bring an unprejudiced mind to bear upon the people whom you will meet here at luncheon and dinner. I don’t deny that their appearance is rather funny, or that they are quite unlike your mother’s friends, or that they sometimes make speeches which it would perhaps be better not to make; but, after all, one must judge one’s neighbour’s by what they do, not by what they say, and these people are really engaged upon a great work.’

Nobody would have supposed so, to look at them ; they had so little the air of being toilers in any field, and they talked so incessantly that it was difficult to believe they could have time or strength left to do anything else. The men, especially, did not convey the impression of possessing much physical strength, although they ate and drank more than would have satisfied an average navvy. As for the women, Madeline found them, upon the whole, less repulsive, if not less ridiculous. Stout Lady Kettering, who had the courage to walk about the streets with her nether limbs arrayed in voluminous garments similar to those in use amongst Eastern ladies ; pretty little Mrs. Hamley, the authoress of several startling and realistic works of fiction ; Mrs. Knibbs, the loud-voiced champion of free thought and free love, who was said to have driven the late Professor Knibbs to seek peace in self-destruction and who seemed to have reached an age at which her peculiar opinions were unlikely to involve her in any personal peril—all these were indeed, as Clarissa had said, rather funny in appearance and very unlike Lady Luttrell's friends ; yet it was impossible to listen to them long without suspecting that their bark was worse than their bite.

Mr. Alfred Loosemore, on the contrary, who barked in dulcet tones, might be capable of inflicting a nasty, poisonous wound upon the hand that caressed him. Such, at least, was the conviction of Madeline, who abhorred this portly, smooth-shaven poet, with his shock of wiry black hair, his whispered innuendoes, his sententious aphorisms, and his invincible self-satisfaction.

‘If you want to know what I think of him,’ she said to Clarissa, ‘I think he is a perfect pig—and I only wish I knew how to tell him so !’

‘He wouldn't mind,’ answered Clarissa ; ‘he is accustomed to being called names. Abuse, he always says, is much more to be desired than flattery, because it is quite as complimentary and a good deal less embarrassing.’

‘He must have queer ideas as to what is meant by a compliment, remarked Madeline ; ‘but if he really likes being called a pig, all he has to do is to apply to me. He will find me ever ready to address him as what he really is.’

‘Lucky man !’ said a voice behind her ; ‘it isn't everybody who gets such a chance of seeing himself as others see him. And who, if one may be permitted to ask, is the gentleman who would enjoy being called a pig by you, Madeline ?’

Paul Luttrell had become a frequent visitor of Clarissa's—so frequent, indeed, that he often took the liberty of entering her drawing-room unannounced. Busy and interested almost exclusively in his East End parish, he nevertheless found time to call occasionally upon West End ladies who likewise were, or professed to be, interested in the work that he was carrying on and whose alms were well worth the sacrifice of an hour or so to secure. As for Clarissa, she had even gone so far as to give him intermittent personal assistance in that work; for she had recognised from the outset that the wrongs of women are not confined to the upper class. So he proceeded to state the errand upon which he had come to Cadogan Gardens, after bestowing a fraternal embrace upon Madeline and cordially agreeing with her in her appreciation of the talented Loosemore.

'Men like that,' he said, in his decisive, parsonical way, 'are a blot upon the face of creation. In healthier times they would have been knocked on the head, as every human being deserves to be who preaches a sort of refined unhealthiness. It would be a salutary change for you, Clarissa, to be introduced to some people who are certainly healthy, if they aren't over-refined. I came to ask whether you would be disposed to come down to Southend tomorrow and spend a happy day with me and my flower-girls. I have arranged a holiday for them, and you said you wanted to see what they were like. They want very much to see what you are like, because the dress and manners of fashionable ladies interest them beyond everything, and as they are sure to be rather obstreperous, your restraining influence might be a help to me.'

The Reverend Paul, amongst whose parishioners and friends were numbered costermongers, professional beggars, and even professional thieves, had of late been much occupied with the young women who earn a livelihood by selling flowers at street corners. He had set up a club for them, had induced them to attend classes, and had contrived—not without preliminary difficulty—to win their confidence and affection. Clarissa, who had been informed that a tendency to rush into hasty and improvident matrimony was one of their most pronounced characteristics, had often expressed a wish to be brought into contact with them, and she said at once:

'Of course we will join the party; there is nothing that I should enjoy more. The only thing is that I am afraid we must

be home by eight o'clock, as I have one or two people coming to dinner. Would that be manageable, do you think ?'

'Perfectly manageable,' answered Paul. 'I don't expect to get home myself until two hours later at earliest ; but as you probably won't so very much enjoy the return in a third-class carriage, with your companions singing street-songs at the top of their voices, it will be just as well for you to retire before our shyness has quite worn off. Madeline, this will give you a glimpse of a section of the community which is altogether ignored by Mr. Alfred Loosemore and his admirers, though it is just as human as they are and far more numerous.'

'The worst of Christians,' remarked Clarissa pensively, 'is that they are so uncharitable. Mr. Loosemore's sympathies are really a great deal wider than yours, Paul, though he doesn't profess to be anything but a heathen, and I am sure he would be delighted to come to Southend with us, if you would ask him.'

'Ah—well, I don't think I'll ask him,' said Paul ; 'I shouldn't like to take the responsibility of leading my flower-girls into such doubtful company. With you I know that I am safe. You may expound your theories to them as amply as you please ; such is their indomitable common sense that they will only roar with laughter at you.'

It was rather Paul's habit to be rude to Clarissa, who was seldom affronted by his rudeness ; but after he had gone away, she told Madeline what a pity it was that he should be so narrow and so ignorant of what was taking place all around him.'

'He looks at everything from the point of view of his own religion, and his own sect,' she said ; 'he doesn't in the least realise the feeling of unrest which exists amongst the poor just as much as amongst the rich nowadays. Everywhere women are beginning to understand that laws have hitherto been made by men for men, that these laws are unfair, and that a great change is near. You have only to watch the women's faces to be convinced of that, even though they still remain mute, from force of habit.'

Possibly the young women of Whitechapel are a backward and uninstructed lot. At all events, the faces of the assemblage which Clarissa and Madeline found marshalled upon the platform at Fenchurch Street the next day expressed neither discontent nor anticipation of any change more portentous than a change of air. That, to be sure, was portentous enough ; for most of them had

never seen the sea, and the nature of their avocation was such that they seldom took advantage even of a Bank Holiday. They would not have given themselves a holiday now, had it not been 'made up to them' by the generosity of certain ladies, whom they took to be represented by Mrs. and Miss Luttrell; so that a warm and grateful reception awaited the pair. They were, to tell the truth, sadly wanting in beauty of form or feature, while the costumes that they wore would assuredly have grieved the soul of Mr. Alfred Loosemore. Those broken draggled ostrich-feathers, those prodigious hats, those cheap frayed ulsters, and, worst of all, those appalling, misshapen boots formed indeed a spectacle which could not have been otherwise than painful to a philosophic hedonist; yet happy faces, even when they are ugly ones, are, after all, pleasanter objects to contemplate than well-made clothes, and the two ladies were soon upon excellent terms with their fellow-excursionists, who were far too excited to display any of the shyness for which Paul had given them credit.

For the rest, *mauvaise honte* is a malady more common in Belgravia than in Whitechapel. Miss Sally Brown, for example, who promptly attached herself to Madeline and proved as communicative as she was inquisitive, had probably never suffered from misplaced timidity in the whole course of her professional career. Sally, being seventeen years of age, described herself as 'getting on,' and had for some time past been engaged to be married. Acting upon the advice of the Reverend Paul, of whose sagacity she entertained a high opinion, she proposed to lead her young man ere long to the altar; for, as she shrewdly observed, 'you've got to tyke 'em when they're in the humour for it, and I've kep' Sam wytin' just about as long as he'll wyte, I expect.' Sam, it appeared, was a 'fruit and vegetable salesman' by trade; he had a 'barrer and a moke' of his own, and was therefore in a position, with the aid of his wife's exertions, to support a family. Although he had but just attained his majority, Madeline gathered that he had a gay and stormy career behind him, to which the bride-elect alluded with perfect candour and even with a certain pride. The parson had persuaded him to become a total abstainer, she herself had weaned him from other temptations to which his temperament rendered him peculiarly liable, and she evidently thought that he was likely to prove a better husband from the fact that his bachelor life had not been altogether exemplary.

These confidences, which were poured out with much volubility

during the railway journey, were partially overheard by Clarissa, who was herself jammed in between two loquacious maidens, but who could not allow this opportunity of upholding her testimony against the folly of juvenile marriages to slip. She was not too didactic, she spoke kindly and sympathetically enough, and her hearers did not fulfil Paul's prediction by bursting out laughing in her face; but the doctrine which she preached was obviously not to their taste, and their answers implied that they suspected her of not knowing much. Sally, indeed, took occasion to whisper to Madeline:

'If the lydy thinks men and women is the same, she's got a lot to learn!'

'Oh, she doesn't think that,' Madeline returned; 'she only thinks they ought to be. And so do I.'

Sally shook her head and looked wise, but did not pursue the topic. One does not go out for a day's pleasuring in order to discuss the problems of human life, and that glorious August sunshine was a thing to enjoy and be thankful for, without thought for the morrow.

The heartiness with which those young women enjoyed themselves upon the beach and upon Southend pier made ample amends for any little embarrassment that might have been caused to their conductors by the noise that they made over it. They could not be restrained from walking six abreast, with linked arms, and singing aloud, nor did Paul enter any protest when they took to pelting him and one another with wet seaweed; but poor Sally got herself into trouble by taking off her boots and stockings, lifting up her skirts, and wading among the breakers. This, it seemed, was a sad breach of propriety, and her friends felt bound to rebuke it in language so unambiguous that for a moment she was in imminent danger of being reduced to tears. It was, however, a great consolation to her to learn that Madeline herself, when at home, was much given to paddling, and that ladies of the highest station and respectability were wont to exhibit themselves every evening in a far more undressed condition than she had done. Later in the day, when she, together with the rest of the company, had done justice to a substantial meal, she candidly told Madeline that, from all that she had read in the newspapers and had heard by word of mouth, she was disposed to think that the aristocracy might very well take a lesson from its social inferiors.

'Talk about the men, as that lydy did when we was comin'



down in the trine!—why, they ain't one 'arf so bad as what the women is. And the women 'd be worse, you may depend, if they wasn't afride to it.'

Here Sally, who was a simple, outspoken creature, gave reasons which sounded plausible for the comparatively high standard of morality maintained by her own sex in all classes of the community, adding, however, that in the class to which she belonged distinctions between what she called 'honest gals and bad gals' were somewhat more clearly drawn than elsewhere.

'Yes,' said Madeline; 'but don't you think that, if a man would be very foolish—as of course he would—to marry a bad girl, a girl is just as foolish when she marries a bad man?'

'Well, you see,' answered Sally, 'this is the way of it—it don't make 'em bad, not the same as it does us. A man comes to me and he says, "If I'd ha' met you before, my dear," he says, "I'd ha' kep' more stright." And I says to him, "You've met me now, Sam," I says, "and you've got to keep stright henceforth and for ever." Which, as like as not, he does it.'

'And you ask no questions about the life that he has led before he met you?'

'I shouldn't, miss—not if I was you. Men ain't neither hangels nor women. You can't arst them to beyave as if they was married *before* they're married—nor yet they wouldn't do it, if you was to arst them ever so.'

With this concise statement of Sally Brown's views, which might not perhaps have obtained the unreserved sanction of the Reverend Paul Luttrell, Madeline had to rest content; for she was now called upon to act as umpire in a foot-race between two Whitechapel Atalantas, and soon afterwards Clarissa and she had to hasten back to London.

'Poor things!' sighed Clarissa, as she settled herself in the railway carriage; 'rough as they are, there is a great deal to like and admire in them. Only they are more backward in some ways than I expected to find them. I am afraid it will be a long time before they realise that their lot in life will never be less hard until they combine in demanding what they are entitled to demand.'

Madeline made no rejoinder. She was thinking at the moment that her own lot in life would probably be a hard one if she persisted in demanding what, by all accounts, she was most unlikely to get. It was deplorable that Sam the costermonger should have

exercised so little control over himself, deplorable also that Raoul de Malglaive should have been surprised at a provincial hotel in the company of a *belle Marquise*; but were they, after all, to be treated as unpardonable sinners because they had behaved after the manner of their kind? Something in Sally Brown's philosophy appealed to the common sense of which Madeline had a rather larger share than her sister-in-law; yet she could not but remember that Raoul was without Sam's excuse, inasmuch as he had already met her before the occurrence of the escapade in question.

At dinner that evening it was Miss Luttrell's misfortune to be placed next to Mr. Alfred Loosemore, who professed to be immensely interested in hearing about the Southend excursion.

'A party of flower-girls—it sounds so pretty!' said he. 'Yet Mrs. Luttrell tells me that they were not pretty. Things are never what they ought to be, unhappily!'

'Nor people either,' returned Madeline. 'But I was quite satisfied with the girls; I didn't want them to be pretty.'

'Ah, that is so shocking of you! If you were what you ought to be, you would want everybody and everything to be pretty. And what, I wonder,' continued the poet, turning round in his chair, so as to face his neighbour, and smiling upon her benevolently, 'should I be, if I were what I ought to be?'

'I'm sure I don't know,' answered Madeline, with swift exasperation, 'but I should think you would be dead.'

She was rather ashamed of herself after this little outburst; but she did not appear to have affronted the sublime Alfred, who only chuckled and remarked: 'I suppose you think I am too good for this wicked world. I have often suspected as much myself.'

Nevertheless, he may have made a mental note to the effect that he owed her some return for her civility, and may even have known a little more about her than she imagined that he knew; for not long after this, he led the conversation to the subject of modern society in Paris, where it seemed that he was as much at home as in London, and amongst other names he mentioned that of young de Malglaive, 'who, by the way,' said he, 'hails from Lady Luttrell's department, I believe. Did you ever come across him at Pau?'

'Yes; I have come across him there,' answered Madeline.

'*Ce cher Raoul!*' drawled Mr. Loosemore, who spoke French fluently and who affected the peculiar mincing accent which is not displeasing in a Parisian, but is nothing short of maddening

when aped by anybody else, *'il n'y a que lui!* His iniquities are always perpetrated with such inimitable seriousness. I am sure there must be scores of ladies who do not believe that he is a monster at all.'

'I suppose I must be one of them,' said Madeline; 'for it certainly did not strike me that there was anything particularly monstrous about M. de Malglaive. He seemed to me to be very like other young men.'

'Ah, my dear Miss Luttrell, the sad truth is that we are almost all of us monsters. Ask your sister-in-law, whose mission it is to reform us and who acquits herself of her mission so exquisitely, whether we are not. At the same time, if I were to tell you all I know about that scandalous Raoul, you would admit that he passes all bounds. But wild horses should not drag such information from me.'

Further information was not solicited by Madeline, who turned her shoulder towards the speaker; but, heartily though she despised him, she could not prevent his shaft from reaching its mark. Sally Brown might forgive her mercurial Sam, and might be wise to do so; but it is neither easy nor perhaps wise to absolve a sinner whose offences are committed with 'inimitable seriousness.'

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### LA BELLE MARQUISE.

IN days not so very long gone by the pleasant city of Tours used to be held in high favour by French cavalry officers, and thither, under the Second Empire, used to be sent such regiments as, by reason of their aristocratic *cachet*, the authorities deemed it expedient to favour highly. If the aristocrats of Touraine did not openly accept the Second Empire, they at least permitted their sons, nephews, and cousins to wear its uniform, and that these gentlemen should be quartered as far as possible in a province notorious for its Legitimism was perhaps a wise concession to persons whom it might be worth while to conciliate. The Third Republic is understood to have adopted other tactics; aristocratic regiments exist no longer; young men with prefixes to their names are said to have been subjected to many petty annoyances; favour is shown to none (although a touch of disfavour may sometimes be displayed towards a few), and it was doubtless a mere coinci-

dence that the corps to which Raoul de Malglaive belonged, and which still retained the reputation of being a crack corps, formed part of the garrison of Tours during the fine hot summer which witnessed the defeat of the Conservative party on the other side of the Channel.

To Raoul this was scarcely such a subject for congratulation as it was to his brother officers; for the many relations and connections whom he had in the neighbourhood possessed no special attraction for him, while it was a very great nuisance to be at the beck and call of the Marquise de Castelmoron, whose charmingly situated château overlooked the broad Loire. It was true that he had once had a more or less profound admiration for the Marquise de Castelmoron; it was true that he had been a frequent visitor at her Parisian abode and that their intimacy had gone so far that she usually (when they were alone) addressed him by his Christian name; but the world can hardly contain persons whom one is more anxious to avoid than those whom one has profoundly admired once upon a time, and has altogether ceased to admire. Besides, there had been that stupid affair, which had found its way into the newspapers, had given rise to numerous distasteful jocularities, and had not yet been forgotten or disbelieved in, notwithstanding the quasi-public *démentis* of M. de Castelmoron and the circumstance that M. de Malglaive still continued to be the friend of the house.

The affair in question had been indeed stupid enough, though scarcely, Raoul thought, one which could have been avoided. What could he do when the woman wrote, begging him to meet her at a certain time and place? It was idiotic of her to adopt such a method of convincing him that de Castelmoron was not a pattern husband—especially as he did not care in the least whether de Castelmoron was a pattern husband or not—but to decline the *rendezvous* would have been practically impossible. Then the absurd scene which had ensued, the mutual recriminations, his own impatient offer to fight the irate little man who had been so easily pacified, the somewhat ignoble understanding which had eventually been patched up between the husband and wife—all this did not shape itself into a very agreeable memory or render Raoul particularly eager to be stationed in the department of the Indre-et-Loire. He was not, however, aware that an account of the adventure had found its way into the public press of his own department; still less did he imagine for one moment that any

echo of it could have reached the distant ears of the girl to whom all his heart and most of his thoughts belonged.

Very often—being so completely without means of ascertaining where she was or what she was about—he had pictured Madeline to himself mixing in that brilliant society which would naturally be open to the daughter of a Cabinet Minister, surrounded by admirers, oblivious of a certain fine spring afternoon at Lourdes and of all that she had said then and afterwards respecting her disinclination to marry an Englishman ; so that he had not been sorry to hear of the general election which, he presumed, would have the effect of sending her and her people away from the metropolis to the comparative solitude of the provinces. But he was quite sorry to learn from the columns of the 'Figaro' and other journals which boasted of a foreign correspondent that Sir Robert Luttrell's party had met with a hostile reception at the polls. He even thought that the occasion might justify the despatch of a few words of condolence from a foreign friend of Sir Robert's family, just as victory might have been made the pretext for a letter of congratulation.

And so, after a day or two of hesitation and deliberation, he sat down and penned a missive to Lady Luttrell which did credit alike to his head and to his heart. It was a composition which no young Englishman would ever have dreamt of committing to paper ; but, fortunately for him, he was writing to a Frenchwoman, who, notwithstanding her long residence abroad, would not be in the least likely to laugh at him, but would, on the contrary, be sure to appreciate the correctness of his attitude. The political sentiments with which he contrived to fill three closely written pages were both unexceptionable in themselves and of a nature to gratify those who, during a period of transition, are striving to arrest the too rapid advance of democracy ; incidental expressions of personal respect for Sir Robert were well and gracefully put, while nothing could be more natural or more proper than that Lady Luttrell's correspondent should wind up with a modest request that he might be recalled to the memory of her daughter. But what was so very astute of him was that he managed, before reaching his elaborate concluding phrase, to ask a question which could hardly in courtesy be left unanswered. His mother, he said (and this was perfectly true), had written to him lately about her health in terms which caused him some uneasiness. Would Lady Luttrell, who was so old a friend of his

mother, do him the great kindness to tell him whether, in her opinion, he ought to absent himself from France under such circumstances? He asked because he believed that, either in Africa or in Tonquin, there might be a chance of his seeing some active service, and because he had sometimes thought of applying to be transferred to those remote regions. But of course his first duty was to his mother, and if Lady Luttrell had noticed any sign of those failing powers to which Madame de Malglaive alluded, a word would suffice to make him renounce such ideas.

Raoul posted his letter with confident hopes of shortly receiving replies to queries which were not stated therein, as well as to the one which was. His mother was a wiry old lady who was likely to live for another twenty years or more, although she sometimes complained of aches and pains. Certainly, however, she would not wish him to fight savages in pestilential climates, nor did he seriously contemplate such a step, save in occasional moments of depression. But would Lady Luttrell care whether he lived or died?—whether he spent next winter in Sénégal or in the Basses-Pyrénées? That was what he wanted to know, and that was what he expected to be told; for he did not doubt her capacity for reading between the lines, and he felt sure that, should she deem him beneath notice as a suitor for her daughter's hand, she would find means of intimating as much quite civilly. Moreover, if he had been forestalled, and if the London season had brought about Madeline's betrothal to another man, he would at least have the miserable satisfaction of hearing the truth and being put out of suspense.

He had turned his back upon the Post Office, and was pacing meditatively along the broad sun-baked street, when a shrill voice which he knew only too well called him by name. Madame de Castelmoron's carriage had been brought to a standstill beside the curbstone, and Madame de Castelmoron's beautifully gloved hand was beckoning to him imperiously. She was a plump, brown-locked little lady of thirty or thereabouts, who at the distance of a few yards looked fully ten years younger than she really was; her round cheeks, her turned-up nose, her bright eyes, and her very red lips stamped her as belonging to that class of beauties who must needs look young if they are to be beauties at all, and everything that art could accomplish towards producing that desirable result had been employed in her case with skill and judgment.

‘But in what hole have you been burying yourself?’ she cried; ‘*on ne vous voit plus!*’ And yet you might have guessed how well I am amusing myself, all alone in our deplorable château! Yes, all alone; for Philippe has been recalled to Paris on business.’ With a glance at the servants, she lowered her voice to add, ‘That means that he has returned to his edifying *vie de garçon*. After all, I prefer that to the insupportable good behaviour of which he has been guilty during the last few weeks. Now at least he is free, and so am I.’

‘I congratulate you,’ said Raoul gravely.

‘You will give me something to congratulate myself upon if you will come and help to enliven my solitude,’ returned the lady graciously. ‘Next Thursday at *déjeuner*? Oh, there is no need to raise your eyebrows. I shall have a little party to meet you, including my aunt de Richemont, who is a model of all the virtues. In the afternoon we shall perhaps go out sailing on the river—always under the strictest *surveillance*, you understand.’

Raoul accepted the invitation without enthusiasm, but not without a certain sense of relief. He did not want to breakfast with Madame de Castelmoron or to go out sailing with her; but it was something to be assured that she had no intention of placing him in any more compromising situations. He forgot all about her as soon as she was out of his sight, and reverted to the musings which she had interrupted. In a week’s time, he calculated—or, allowing for all possible delays, in ten days’ time—he would know how far he would be able to count upon the support of the Luttrell family in his suit. After that, there would be his mother’s certain opposition to be overcome and Madeline’s own consent to be gained. The third achievement was doubtless the most important, and might prove the most difficult of accomplishment; but he placed it last because he did not see how it could be undertaken at all until the other two had been disposed of. In France respect for parents has survived loss of respect for everybody and everything else.

It was, at all events, scarcely possible for Raoul, nor apparently was it expected of him, to entertain much respect for Madame de Castelmoron, at whose château he duly presented himself on the day appointed by her. The Castelmorons were well known to be half-ruined (indeed, Raoul, whose privilege it had been to accommodate M. le Marquis with more than one loan, sometimes wondered how many people it took to pay Madame la Marquise’s

dressmaker), and their provincial establishment was regulated upon principles of the strictest economy. The house was crumbling for want of repairs, the furniture had not been renewed for many years, the servants were few, and the cooking far from first-rate. On the other hand, one was always sure of being amused at the informal entertainments which Madame de Castelmoron organised from time to time. So, at least, Raoul's brother-officers, three or four of whom he found already seated in her *salon* when he made his entrance, were wont to affirm, and certainly their subsequent conduct seemed to show that they had grounds for making the assertion. Several young and frisky matrons had been asked to meet them; the conversation which took place at the round breakfast-table was more highly seasoned than the dishes; there was a great deal of loud laughter, and probably the only two guests who failed to enjoy themselves were Raoul de Malglaive and Madame de Richemont, a quiet old lady who was afraid of her niece and who also (for her own good fortune and that of others) was stone-deaf.

Madame de Richemont raised no objection when an aquatic excursion was proposed later in the afternoon, only pleading that she might not be required to take part in it. 'For,' she said plaintively, 'I have always looked forward to dying in my bed, like a good Christian.' But she would perhaps have felt it her duty to enter a mild protest, had she accompanied those ladies and gentlemen to the riverside and witnessed their embarkation. It was scarcely *convenable*, she might have urged, that her niece and M. de Malglaive should occupy a tiny sailing-boat all to themselves; but as her remarks would assuredly not have been listened to, if she had been present, her absence was of the less consequence.

Raoul, for his part, did not particularly mind this enforced *tête-à-tête*; he had foreseen what awaited him, and he bore it with philosophy. It was the old story which was poured into his ears—the story to which he had listened so many times, and in which, if the truth must be confessed, he had once believed. Philippe's cruelties and infidelities, Madame de Castelmoron's lamentations over a marriage into which she had been coerced when a mere child, the excuses which she put forward in defence of certain undeniable irregularities of her own—all this had to be heard, sympathised with and responded to after the only appropriate fashion that Raoul knew of. It took a long time, and



Madame de Castelmoron, who held the tiller, would have capsized the boat a dozen times in the course of the interview, if there had been any wind; but the weather, though close, dull, and threatening thunder, was still, and the sail flapped loosely as Raoul and his fair companion drifted down the broad glassy stream. One of them was far away in the spirit, while the other, who was accustomed to his taciturn absent ways, flattered herself that he was dreaming about her.

He was dreaming about a very different person—about one whose ideas respecting the subject upon which Madame de Castelmoron was descanting with so much fervour had always seemed to him to be painfully just, albeit opposed to those of the rest of the world. He would not have liked Madeline Luttrell to know what his life had been, he would not have liked her to see him where he was now—and yet he could have sworn to her with a clear conscience that she was the only woman in the world whom he had ever loved. Would she believe him, he wondered, if the time should ever come for him to take that oath? In the face of facts with which she might easily be made acquainted, it really did not seem certain that she would.

He was startled out of his rather despondent reverie by a warning shout from one of the rowing-boats astern which contained Madame de Castelmoron's friends. He glanced over his shoulder, saw what was coming, and made an instinctive clutch at the tiller, which he failed to secure. But, in any case, he would probably have been too late. The sudden gust which came sweeping across the water caught the diminutive craft before he knew where he was, and in another moment he was performing an involuntary act of descent towards the bottom of the Loire. At the best of times he was no great swimmer, nor is a tight cavalry uniform quite the most suitable costume that could be designed for feats of natation; still, he did not lose his presence of mind, and his first thought, on rising to the surface, was naturally for the lady whose heedlessness had brought about this catastrophe. Not a little to his relief, he heard her calling him by name in accents which proved that she was in no danger of being drowned.

'Scramble up on the boat, Raoul! As for me I shall stay where I am until somebody can give me a hand.'

The boat was floating on her beam-ends; Madame de Castelmoron, who, by better luck than she deserved, had been thrown into the sail, was seated there, with one arm flung round the

mast ; prompt assistance was forthcoming, and a few moments later the shipwrecked pair were on land, drenched, but safe.

‘ *Coup de théâtre manqué,*’ remarked Madame de Castelmoron, looking down ruefully at her dripping garments. ‘ If at least you had saved my life, after an exciting struggle, that would have been some compensation for the ruin of a new gown : as it is you will have to buy me another one, and we will say no more about it. Come, let us walk home as fast as we can before the thunder-storm begins. It is true that we need not be afraid of rain now ; but I am afraid of lightning, and these ladies, I am sure, would be very much afraid of admitting us into their boat in our present condition.’

It is certainly wiser for people who are wet to the skin to trust to their own legs than to any other means of locomotion ; but Madame de Castelmoron, who never exerted herself if she could help it, yielded to the solicitations of her friends, submitted to be enveloped in shawls, and sat down in the stern of the rowing-boat, whither Raoul reluctantly followed her. He was not allowed to return straight to his own quarters, as he wished to do ; he was assured that somebody should be despatched at once from the château to fetch a change of clothing for him, and he did not like to mention that an attack of fever and ague which had placed his life in jeopardy some two years before had compelled him to be rather careful about contracting chills.

The unfortunate consequence of this was that, whereas Madame de Castelmoron was not a penny the worse for her ducking, M. de Malglaise perforce remained her guest that night. He made a valiant effort to leave the house with the rest of the party, who lingered, chatting and sipping sweet Malaga wine, until the expected thunderstorm had spent itself, but found that he was physically incapable of doing so. His teeth were chattering, his head was swimming ; he was in no state to disobey the commands of Madame de Richemont, who insisted upon his being put to bed at once and upon sending for the doctor.

Before many hours were past he was in a high fever ; and on the following day two of the most competent medical men of Tours were shaking their heads over him. It was impossible, they declared, to say as yet what his malady might turn to ; but what admitted of no doubt at all was that he would have to remain where he was for an indefinite length of time. That being so, it clearly behoved Madame de Richemont, who dwelt

hard by, to take up her temporary residence under her niece's roof; and this she did willingly, being a kind-hearted old lady, as well as an excellent nurse. Madame de Castelmoron, too, rose to the level of the occasion, and, during the days and nights of anxiety which followed, proved that a woman may be vain, silly, unscrupulous, yet retain some of those qualities which in all ages have been the property and the glory of her sex.

As for the patient himself, he was happily unconscious of a condition of things which, had he had his wits about him, would probably have worried him to death. To be so indebted to Madame de Castelmoron, of all women in the world!—to be nursed by her through a dangerous illness!—what more cruel trick could Fortune have played upon him? However, he was raving and tossing in delirium the whole time; so that his chances of recovery were not impeded by any suspicion of where he was.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A LITTLE DOSE OF POISON.

IT can hardly have been in consequence of skilful and assiduous nursing that Raoul de Malglaise escaped the rheumatic fever with which he was threatened by the doctors; but his illness, no doubt, might have proved a much more serious affair than it did, had he been less carefully tended, and it was only natural and right that, when he was restored to consciousness and convalescence, he should feel exceedingly grateful to the kind ladies who waited upon him. One does not, in such times of weakness and pleasant drowsiness, vex one's brain greatly with connected thought. Raoul was but dimly aware of the circumstances which had landed him in that cool spacious room; for several days he was content to lie there passively, to listen to the sounds of life which floated to him through the open windows, to watch Madame de Castelmoron moving softly hither and thither in her becoming airy draperies, and to murmur a few words of thanks to good old Madame de Richemont when she arranged his pillows for him or made him swallow his medicine.

This enjoyable semi-trance was brought to a somewhat abrupt termination one morning by Madame de Castelmoron, who, after bringing him his breakfast, asked, with a smile, 'And pray, who is Madeline?'

‘Madeline?’ repeated the invalid, glancing uneasily at his questioner, and falling forthwith out of dreamland into the domain of actualities.

‘Yes; the Madeline whom you invoked without ceasing in your delirium. It is a droll name. Madeleine—Madelon—*à la bonne heure!* But who ever heard of a Madeline before? For the rest, in the world to which she probably belongs an original label is a *trouvaille*, I suppose.’

The world to which Madeline Luttrell probably belonged!—he was upon the point of giving utterance to the horror with which such an insinuation filled him, but checked himself. Was it not, after all, better to leave ill alone?

‘Is one responsible,’ he asked reproachfully, ‘for what one may say or do in delirium?’

Madame de Castelmoron laughed. ‘It is for what you did when you were in full possession of your senses that you ought to be held responsible,’ she replied. ‘But do not be alarmed; you are in the house of a discreet friend, who may have one or two little sins upon her own conscience, and who is not so easily shocked by the sound of feminine names as I am sure your mother would be. *À propos*, are you not very much obliged to me for having omitted to telegraph or write to your mother?’

He could not but own that he was; although he now reflected, with a pang of remorse, that a good many of Madame de Malglaive’s constant missives must have remained unanswered.

‘Are there any letters for me?’ he asked.

‘A mass,’ answered Madame de Castelmoron. ‘We thought it best not to trouble you with your correspondence before; but if you feel that you are in a state to grapple with it, it shall be handed over to you.’

It was handed over to him shortly afterwards, and, naturally enough, he selected from the pile for first perusal a letter which bore an English stamp and an English post-mark. Not without some acceleration of the heart’s action and some trembling of the fingers (for he was still far from having recovered his ordinary strength) did he tear open Lady Luttrell’s envelope and read the very friendly and gracious reply with which it had pleased her to acknowledge his condolences. Lady Luttrell, as we know, had never been inclined to look with an unfavourable eye upon Raoul de Malglaive as a possible son-in-law. She knew that he would be, if he was not already, very comfortably off; she suspected that

her daughter was not ill-disposed towards him, and she had had melancholy and provoking proofs of her daughter's reluctance to espouse a suitable person merely because that person happened to be suitable. Clearly, therefore, it would be a sad mistake to let Raoul ship himself off for Tonquin, and she wrote that, since he had done her the honour of consulting her upon the subject, she must earnestly dissuade him from giving his mother so much pain.

'One understands,' said she, 'your weariness of garrison life and your desire for something a little more exciting; but I think that, if you were to banish yourself from France, you might afterwards deeply regret having done so, and I am persuaded that, upon consideration, you will abandon this idea. Frankly, I shall be very much disappointed if we do not see you at Pau next winter. My husband and my daughter, who thank you for your amiable remembrance of them, beg me to say that they share entirely the opinion which I have permitted myself to express.'

This last statement was purely apocryphal, neither Sir Robert nor Madeline having been so much as informed that a letter had been received from young de Malglaise; but Lady Luttrell considered herself at liberty to round off her phrase in that way, just as most people consider themselves entitled to send 'love' or 'kind remembrances' to their correspondents from members of the family who do not chance to be in the room at that moment. Lady Luttrell, in fact, did not mean a great deal by her letter: she merely thought that it would be a tempting of Providence to snatch away the bait from a nibbling fish, and was not altogether averse to landing him, in the event of other lines failing to secure a heavier one.

But Raoul, with his imperfect comprehension of English ways, took her to mean far more, and attributed a significance which it did not deserve to her mention of her daughter. To say in so many words that a young lady will be disappointed if she does not see you at a certain time and place—is not that to say everything? He would have been capable of despatching a formal offer of marriage to the young lady's parents then and there, if he had not reflected that it would be scarcely respectful to his mother to take so portentous a step without consulting her, and if he had not felt only too sure that his mother would be against him in the matter.

Consequently, he refrained from committing that foolish action;

but he proceeded forthwith to commit another at least equally foolish; for, in his joy and exultation, what must he needs do but admit Madame de Castelmoron into his confidence! It is quite impossible to explain or account for the amazing things that men of ordinary, or even extraordinary, common sense will do when they are in love. The wondering student of human nature can but take note of such phenomena and humbly pray that he himself may be preserved from ever requesting a woman at whose feet he has once knelt to sympathise with him in the transfer of his allegiance to one younger, more beautiful, more innocent, in every way more desirable than she. Raoul may have thought—most likely he did think—that the fair recipient of his confidences was fonder of admiration than of admirers; his modesty may have forbidden him to suppose that the loss of one admirer out of so many could be a source of any vexation to her; he may also have considered that there is a certain incongruity between nursing the sick and flirtation. But perhaps the truth was only that, being so happy, he could not for the life of him help telling somebody how happy he was.

Madame de Castelmoron's face while he was narrating his love-tale might have furnished him with an instructive study if he had had eyes to see it; but all he saw was that she was smiling pleasantly upon him and that she appeared to take a deep and sympathetic interest in what she was being told.

'Sincere felicitations!' said she, when he had finished. 'For myself, I abhor Englishwomen; I find them stupid, ungainly in their movements, and spoilt for all social purposes by their unfortunate habit of having such enormous families. But your Madeline, we will hope, is an exception to the general rule. At any rate, I presume you think so; and that is the essential point, is it not?'

He certainly thought so. To speak of Madeline Luttrell as 'stupid' or 'ungainly in her movements' was to display so absurd an ignorance of the person alluded to that it seemed quite necessary to describe her in detail; after which it was difficult to help indulging in rhapsodies which were listened to without interruption.

'And yet,' observed Madame de Castelmoron gently at length, 'it is not such a very long time, Raoul, since you were ready to swear that your whole heart belonged to some one who is rather nearer to you now than Mademoiselle Luttrell.'

He had the sublime fatuity to reply, 'You must forgive me.

One imagines oneself in love a hundred times ; but I believe that no human being is ever really in love more than once. Besides, you only amused yourself with me for a time ; you will forget my existence, I am sure, long before I forget your kindness—and Madame de Richemont's.'

'I do not, I confess, propose to hang myself in consequence of your infidelity,' she returned dryly ; 'since you are a man, you could scarcely, without a frank paradox, be faithful to any one woman. But those hundred imaginary loves of which you speak !—it is rather a large number. Do you not think that the enchanting Madeline may have a question or two to ask you about them ?'

Ah ! that was just the trouble. Raoul quoted sundry strange and disquieting speeches which had fallen from the lips of his beloved and which made him apprehensive that she might demand from him more than he had it in his power to bestow upon her. He was very anxious to have Madame de Castelmoron's opinion upon this singular aspect of his case. Assuredly he had not lived the life of a saint, and no one could regret more than he did the follies of which he had been guilty ; but he did not think that he had been much worse than his fellows, nor could he see that the past had a great deal to say to the future.

'*À tout péché miséricorde,*' he concluded, with an appealing glance at the little lady beside him, who had much ado to keep her countenance.

She shrugged her shoulders. 'This comes of losing your heart to an Englishwoman,' she remarked ; 'they are unheard of, with their ideas and their theories ! Nevertheless—I do not say it to discourage you ; but it seems to me that, without being an Englishwoman, this young lady might find some little things to object to in what you have done and are doing. Your presence here at this moment, for example—what would she think of that, I wonder ?'

Raoul was rather afraid that she would not like it, and hoped that she would not hear of it—although, to be sure, it admitted of an explanation which must be acknowledged by everybody to be entirely satisfactory. For the rest, there was no great danger that she would hear of it. The dangers and difficulties which he foresaw were of another kind, and would, he thought, demand a good deal of circumspection on his part. He told his amiable adviser all about it ; he did not disguise from her that there would

be trouble with his mother ; he pointed out—and she quite agreed with him—that he had as yet received no more than an implied permission to pay his addresses to Miss Luttrell ; he was inclined, upon the whole, to think that he had better possess his soul in patience until he should meet her once more at Pau during the coming winter.

Madame de Castelmoron replied that, by her way of thinking, that would be a good plan. She added that she was infinitely obliged to him for having done her the honour to seek counsel of her, that she had never in her life heard anything more charming or touching than the romance with which she had been regaled, and that, as it was quite time for him to take his *bouillon*, she would go and inquire why it had not been sent upstairs.

Outside the door she paused, clenched her teeth and her hands, and hissed out a few words which would have taken Raoul completely by surprise, had he overheard them. He had been perfectly correct in his conjecture that she cared very little about him as an individual ; but she cared a great deal about her vanity, which he had contrived, during their long colloquy, to lacerate and trample under foot in a style that would have been resented by the meekest of women. Since she lived in the nineteenth century, and since she had no ambition to be guillotined, or even sent to prison, Madame de Castelmoron abstained from putting poison into his broth ; but that he should be made to smart for his atrocious conduct seemed to her to be as indispensable as that she herself should preserve a placid and friendly exterior.

Consequently Raoul was entertained with the greatest care and kindness for another ten days at the château on the banks of the Loire, which he quitted at last with many heartfelt expressions of gratitude to its mistress. Consequently, also, an anonymous missive, written in a disguised hand and disfigured by numerous intentional blunders in grammar and spelling, was despatched to Miss Luttrell, whose address it had been no hard matter to obtain. A careless invalid who leaves his correspondence lying about, can scarcely expect to have secrets from his nurse.

At Haccombe Luttrell that year the early autumn was, as it not unfrequently is in the far west, a season of calms and hot weather. The equinoctials were coming ; but the winds seemed to be taking a rest in preparation for that annual outburst of fury ; the skies were clear and serene, the harvest had been gathered in



without a drop of rain, and Guy, who had come down to shoot his father's partridges, groaned over the labour of toiling up hill and down dale under so scorching a sun. Sir Robert, who was not feeling very well, declined to share his fatigues; economy being so imperatively necessary, no other sportsmen had been invited to stay in the house; so that Guy was fain to fall back upon the companionship of his sister, who often walked beside him, and with whom, on those occasions, he had several serious talks. Of his own disastrous matrimonial affairs, which she was anxious to discuss, he had little to say, giving her to understand that he had spoken his last word upon that subject; but he warned her with much earnestness against allowing herself to be led away by Clarissa's morbid notions.

'I don't suppose you want to be an old maid,' said he; 'I never met a woman who did. And if you begin by thinking that no man is good enough for you, you'll be apt to end by thinking any man good enough. One has seen that happen before now. Besides, the whole thing is such utter nonsense. Take my advice, and when you meet a man whom you care for, be satisfied if he's a gentleman and a good chap. Don't you get making inquiries about whether he has been what you call "dissipated" or not. If you mean to go in for that sort of thing, you'll have to confine your attention to curates—and Heaven knows whether even curates are as good as they look. I shouldn't think they were. The average man, you may depend upon it, will be all right, so long as his wife doesn't play the fool, and the average man is bound to have had experiences which he doesn't care to talk about to his wife.'

Such speeches as this were not wholly unwelcome to Madeline; although, as a matter of principle, she believed Clarissa to be in the right and her brother to be in the wrong. The truth was that she was secretly eager to pardon one whom she had pronounced to be unpardonable; and if—as seemed to be the case—the male standard of morality was so different from, and so very inferior to, the female, perhaps he ought not to be blamed for having been what others are. Possibly, too, that odious newspaper story had been exaggerated, or even false. Her heart was further softened when her mother made casual mention, one day, of Raoul de Malglaiive's letter, saying that it had really been very pretty of the young fellow to write and that she hoped they would meet him at Pau when they returned thither.

‘He threatens to betake himself to Tonquin or Sénégal,’ added Lady Luttrell, laughing; ‘but I don’t think he was very serious about that, and I have told him that he owes it to his poor old mother to abandon such fantastic ideas.’

Now it was impossible to suppose that M. de Malglaiive would ever have entertained such ideas unless he had been in low spirits, and it did not seem altogether probable that he had written to Lady Luttrell for the sole purpose of telling her how sorry he was that Sir Robert’s political party had been left in a minority. Madeline, therefore, sometimes permitted herself to wonder whether, after all, she was going to be as lonely and miserable for the rest of her days as she had made up her mind to be; and the arrival, one morning, of a foreign letter, bearing the Tours post-mark, caused her to catch her breath and pause irresolutely for some seconds before tearing it open.

Alas! the contents were not what she had expected, nor was the signature, at which she at once glanced, that of Raoul de Malglaiive. His name, indeed, occurred frequently in the four clumsily written pages which Madeline hastened to read through, but the writer, who signed herself ‘*Une Malheureuse,*’ had nothing good to say of him. Not without reluctance, she averred, had she decided to place herself in communication with Mademoiselle Luttrell; but, as she had reason to believe that a heartless libertine had designs upon the happiness of that young lady, her conscience would not permit her to remain silent. Statements—some of which were true, but most of them false—followed; Madame de Castelmoron, ‘of whose house he has now been an inmate for three weeks, under the pretext of having been taken ill there,’ was not spared; in conclusion, Madeline’s anonymous correspondent remarked, ‘He will tell you, no doubt, that he loves you, and I do not say that he will be insincere; he has so many loves! But, humble as I am, it does not suit me to go shares in such favours, and I think, mademoiselle, that you will feel as I do.’

We are all agreed, as a matter of theory, that people who are afraid to sign their names are unworthy of a moment’s attention; but theory, unfortunately, is one thing and practice is another. Had Madame de Castelmoron been present in the flesh (as she was in the spirit) when her little dose of poison reached its destination, she would doubtless have felt herself fully and satisfactorily avenged.

(To be continued.)

*MEN AND MANNERS IN FLORENCE.*

ABOUT three visitors of every six who come to fair Florence go straight to a pension. The city may be said to be made up of pensions and antiquities, with flower-girls and royal personages thrown in. Such an error of conduct is therefore excusable. For an error it certainly is, if you propose to feast instructively on mediæval relics, paintings, and memories, and study the modern Florentines into the bargain. I know nothing more distracting mentally than the drama of an Italian pension, in which a couple of dozen individuals of three or four continents, of incongruous ideals and different ages and stations (from dukes and duchesses —Italian—to retired butchers), herd together at one dinner-table, and in the drawing-rooms devote themselves to gossip and love-making. The pension is, in fact, just the stage of a theatre; and the life in it makes up a variety of plays, in which tragedy and farce predominate. This is especially true of Florence when the almond-trees are in blossom and the streets are perfumed by the flower-girls.

And so, as a start, I went to a humble inn in Shoemaker Street, deferring my pension experiences for a week or two. I did not regret it. The common Italian is a much-misunderstood person in England, where we form wrong ideas of the nation from the organ-grinders and ice-cream men it sends us. He is honest, amiable in the extreme, and as natural as Dame Nature herself. At this plebeian inn they gave me no fewer fleas than I ought to have expected at a 'lira' the night. But their civility was unbounded, even as their linen was clean. My window looked across unblushingly at the window of a room occupied by a couple of genial young women, who slept, worked at bonnet-making, ate, and sang as if they really rather enjoyed than disliked my involuntary supervision of them. My landlord was proud of me—he said so, never before having had an English 'Excellency' under his modest roof. He himself sat up to receive me when I stayed out late at nights, and smiled, even through his yawns, as he carried my candle for me. And the dark-eyed chambermaid who brought me my coffee of a morning could not have been more

engagingly gentle and devoted if she had had to thank me for her life and ten times as many accompanying blessings as she possessed. Her 'buon giorno, Sinny,' or her 'buona sera,' as we clashed on the narrow stairs, was always emphasised by a winning smile of the kind one does not get out of King Humbert's happy realm.

Thus loosely tethered, I could do as I pleased in all essential matters. In fifteen days I had dined at fifteen restaurants and supped at fifteen others. I also made acquaintance with about a score of cafés. That is seeing life in Florence with a vengeance. At any rate, it taught me to lift my hat with ease in entering and leaving these public places of entertainment. The home-staying Englishman may mock at this simple courtesy, but to my mind it is somewhat educative, and the more so that it is violently against the grain of the British temperament. The flower-girls also were one of the salutary trials of the life. Perceiving that I did not wear a Florentine countenance, they invariably made me their victim. In the middle of my macaroni, for instance, one of them would assault me with a bunch of violets and a pin. Covering her attack with a smile all over her brown countenance, and showing a score of eager white teeth, she would fasten the nosegay in my coat ere I could say five serious words in opposition. The other guests beheld the encounter with pleased impartiality. Life in Florence is all pictorial. I thus contributed a commonplace yet bright little vignette on my own account. And so it happened that regularly as I dined was I adorned with flowers.

It was the same with the mandoline players. How excellently these sweet strummers aid digestion in this city of the Medici! They and their stringed toys appear everywhere. Indeed, the more obscure the eating-house the more systematic their visitations. The music dignifies the viands. Not always was the wine good, nor the cutlet à la milanaise of the tenderest; but one forgets these defects in the plaintive spectacle of a white-bearded sightless mandolinist led into the room by an angel-faced (though not very clean) little girl, to add the sauce of harmony to the meal. I have seen a warm-hearted neighbour shed tears over his 'carciofi' during the melody, and another let his meat go cold while he beat time to the musician's strumming. The Florentines are all sensibility—or nearly. Touch their hearts and you may be sure you have touched their pockets also, though there may be naught inside these. For my part, I reckoned the copper to the

mandolinist as an integral part of my dinner bill. The flower-girl and the waiter were the only inevitable extras.

Afterwards it was gay to go into the lively streets with the post-prandial cigar; to roam recklessly for a while among palaces, churches, and slums; or to watch the stars and lamplights in the Arno from Taddeo Gaddi's quaint old bridge, with its shops and crowds of passengers. The evening air here in spring is often keen, thanks to the snow on the distant mountains; but it always reaches the lungs with a 'cachet' of purity upon it that the dead dogs visible in the Arno by daylight may appear upon the whole to belie. The pensions and hotels of Lung' Arno after the dinner-hour exhale an air of fascinating frivolity. One beholds illuminated drawing-rooms and gleaming shoulders, and there is a clang of merry voices. Music, too, floats hence towards the gliding water, and whispers descend from amorous couples nestled in the balconies, with hearts steeped in the romance of their surroundings. And music ascends also to these love-makers; for the omnipresent mandolinist of the street finds them out, and serenades them one by one as fervently as a thrush its mate. The musician's words are often as torrid as his notes. It is convenient. The discreet wooer has only to murmur in the ears of his loved one that his sentiments are precisely those tongued by the melodious rascal below.

Your typical Florentine is epicurean to the toe tips. His enthusiasms and yearnings are quite other than those of the northerner. Give him two francs a day for life and he will toil no more. He may be a marquis, and seventh or eighth in direct descent, but he will be content to forego the assertion of his rank so he may thenceforward enjoy the priceless boon of leisure and independence. His leisure he will dissipate at the café, with perhaps two three-halfpenny sweet fluids per diem; and you may study the effect of his independence in his courtly manners, even though his hat be worn at the brim and his coat-back be deplorably shiny. He is a pellucid brook—shallow as you please, yet engaging for his pellucidity. As he sits on the red velvet cushions and looks forth at the carriages and gowns of fashion in the Via Tornabuoni, he shows no trace of envy on his open countenance. What, in effect, have these rich ones more than he, save the *ennui* of modishness and the indigestion of high feeding? The monuments and blue skies of Florence (not to mention the glorious or stirring memories of its history) are rather more his than theirs.

And it is such ineffable bliss to be able to twiddle one's thumbs and defy all and everything (except death) to upset one's sweet tranquillity of soul. Call it vacuity instead of tranquillity, and no harm will be done.

Through sitting twice or thrice as his neighbour, I came to know one of these remarkable men. His salutations at meeting and parting were of the benignest, but he had nothing to say between times. He sat with his hands folded in his lap, looking as happy as a pretty maid at her first ball. Now and then he would comb his hair and moustache with an ivory pocket-comb, and now and then he would use a tooth-quill. Occasionally he hummed a popular air. His daily beverage was lemon and water. When he lifted his arm I could see the bare skin through the parting of his shirt. In the forenoon, towards evening, and well on in the night, I caught him in the thrall of the same giddy diversion. Yet he was always radiant with innate felicity. And there were others, many, like him.

This devotion to the pleasant shadows of propriety is quite a characteristic of certain of the Florentines. They skim the cream of existence, and care little or nothing for what lies underneath. Why should they distress themselves with doubts or unattainable ambitions? they seem to inquire with their ingenuous, unwrinkled countenances. The thing to do is to live easily. That achieved, all worth achieving is achieved. This explains much in modern Florence that has raised the furious ire of more or less illustrious stranger-sojourners in her laughing midst. Our great Ruskin writes of the 'Devil-begotten brood' of the Florentines of our day. They 'think themselves so civilised, forsooth,' he proceeds, 'for building a Nuovo Lung' Arno and three manufactory chimneys opposite it, and yet sell butcher's meat, dripping red, peaches, and anchovies side by side: a sight to be seen.' The authoress of 'Moths' also has not yet wearied of fusillading the tough hide of the city's rulers for their apparent disregard of the first principles of æstheticism. But Florence will put up with worse and far more comprehensible abuse than this, so it may still sip its wine and twiddle its thumbs beneath the soft mantle of its all-enveloping self-esteem. The very raging of its celebrated aliens on such subjects is a tribute to its own beauty, which nothing can mar irretrievably. Besides, is there not a necessary difference between the children of Arno's banks and these their revilers from other lands? The latter are the slaves, the blind

champions, of Art. Your born Florentine knows better than to worry himself about the crumbling of one fresco among many, or the incongruity of whitewashing what is called 'an immortal piece of stone-work.' Due observation of these racial dissymmetries is convincing on one point. In all physical struggles between the north and south the latter must go to the wall. There is a stern, almost ferocious pertinacity and strength in the Teuton that the mild or hectic self-gratulatory enthusiasms of the modern Latins cannot stand against.

One day I went with a fellow-countryman to the Church of S. Spirito. It was the saint's festival. Outside, the morning was hot and still, and you could hear the larks over the red earth and blossoms of the distant fields and gardens. Across the church's threshold, however, all was yellow with candle-light. The atmosphere was sickly sweet and hot, thanks to incense, flowers, warm humanity, and the multitude of untimely tapers. A woman knelt by my side and prayed audibly for certain desirable blessings, with her bright eyes upon the richly garbed officiating clergy by the altar. Two or three amazed tourists stood and contemplated the candles, the worshippers, and the clergy through opera-glasses, passing remarks between their views. I heard a British youth whisper 'What rot!' none too quietly. Anon the function at the altar reached its zenith. The crowd of worshippers seemed to hold their breath. What was coming next? Why, this: the reverend bishop showed symptoms of fatigue or suffocation. Instantly two of the lesser clergy relieved him of his mitre; the one then respectfully wiped his episcopal brow, while the other, with the palm of his hand, smoothed his sleek hair at the back. Afterwards the function proceeded. In the evening this same church was decorated externally also with countless lights to its weather-vane. There was no wind to spoil the garish spectacle. But there was a vast assemblage of the faithful and the dilettanti in the space about the church, and an infinity of tokens of joy. The word 'Bella!' was bandied from tongue to tongue, and from their eyes you would have thought the people had received a national and personal boon of the highest kind.

They were the lineal ancestors of those impulsive men and women who, six hundred and more years ago, when Cimabue's Madonna was ready for its shrine, escorted it, with incredible rejoicing and the music of trumpets, from his studio to the church

of S. Maria Novella. They recognised in this sad-faced Virgin the source of new emotions; and as such it was exceedingly welcome, quite apart from its religious character.

So nowadays, when a monarch or two or three come to the city, their majesties are received in the piazza of the railway station with outcries of joy that may well deceive the visitors into fancying that they have some especially amiable quality which endears them to the Florentine heart. Nothing of the kind, in fact. They beget a new emotion, that is all. To the southern nature this is as if handfuls of gold and silver were to be scattered from a carriage. Nay, it is even more; for in the scrambling for the coins some may receive injuries provocative of emotion of quite another kind—and language in keeping. One evening, when I returned to my inn in Shoemaker Street, I found Cecca, the maid, voluble and pretty with excitement. ‘I have seen your dear Queen, sir,’ she said; and then she described the sight, with tears of rapture in her eyes. The innkeeper also referred to my country’s sovereign as ‘la cara regina.’

The same sensibility on such an occasion pervades the city in all its parts, from the itinerant shirt-seller (who shows you his goods in a café) to the municipal rulers. These at once seize on the pretext for public revels. They issue leaflets in which the citizens are implored to be conscious of the honour done them by the presence in their midst of these ‘august personages.’ There is to be, for example, a Battle of Flowers on a certain Sunday, with illuminations to follow. The citizens and others who will hang out carpets and flags from their windows, and adorn their vehicles (or even the chaises they may hire for that purpose) with flowers in as tasteful a manner as possible, will oblige the municipality and at the same time do their own hearts good in the recollection that they are pleasing royalty. The result is admirable. One spends an intoxicating afternoon in streets strewn with violets, apple-blossom, and lilies, and sees a thousand pretty girl-faces in the cars as happy as the blue May sky overhead.

A race meeting in the park by the green Cascine shows us something more of the Florentine nature. Save among the wealthy sprigs of nobility and others who have the doubtful advantage of foreign travel, there is no betting. The horses run as best they can through the lush grass of the course, and the people clap their hands. It is a spectacle pure and simple; and



it is also the glad occasion of other spectacles, such as Punch and Judy, the feats of acrobats, and the fine clothes of fashion. The rich young men of Florence make themselves rather ridiculous in their high collars, primrose-yellow gloves, and legs clad in leather from the knees. They also excite the derision of the couple or so of enterprising British bookmakers who cry the odds in their midst in English. For they are chary of their five-lire piéces, and do not lose with grace, even as they express themselves somewhat queerly in their business transactions in a tongue not their own. But they are not specimens of the true-born Florentine. Their inherited nature has got more than a little adulterated. The very dogs at their high heels have been beaten into a mood that compels them to ape the *sang froid* that is believed to be a feature of the British dog as of the Englishman. They are totally unlike the ordinary dog of Florence, which capers and barks and wags its tail in the grass and flowers of the park with all the vivacious 'abandon' of its master or mistress.

Between the unspoiled high-born Florentine and the ordinary native there is comparatively little difference on all material points. The one has more money than the other—that is about all. He has a heart of just the same size, and is just as willing to let his heart be the monitor of his actions. From vulgar pride he is gloriously free. John Evelyn, who was here in 1644, makes a note of the conduct of the Grand Duke, who sold wine in the basement of the Pitti Palace and was not ashamed to do so: 'wicker bottles dangling over even the chiefe entrance into the Palace, serving for a vintner's bush.' It does one good to think of such condescension, assuming, as one well may, that the wine was of fair quality. But Florence has never been disrespectful towards the tradesman since the days of the Medici, with their pawnbroker's sign for a coat of arms. She remembers, too, that more of her geniuses were lowly born than of lofty parentage, and she loves geniuses for the rare emotions with which they provide her. These must, however, be of the first order of great men. Commonplace cleverness is scarcely more than respectable here; and the mere clever person (man or woman) who makes a tiresome claim for recognition as a genius in Florence is likely to become only a butt for the glib jests that fall as easily from Florentine tongues as courtly phrases.

I was privileged to bear a letter of introduction to a certain Countess well to the front in society here. She received me with

the grace one expects in Florentine ladies. But almost her first words were astonishing.

'I hope you are not intellectual, Mr. ——,' she said, with rather an anxious smile. Her daughter and the young Count, her son, also smiled.

Having assured her that I was nothing of the kind, she sighed with relief. And yet she herself was distinctly intellectual, which made the matter seem a trifle odd. The truth was she had but just said 'A rivederci!' to one of the lights of English literature, who had, she confessed (and so did her daughter), bored her in a quite pitiable manner. The daughter was cruel enough to compare the poor gentleman to a cloud. 'One does not want clouds in May,' she added. The young Count (an unobtrusive adolescent) agreed. And then, I am afraid, some rather unkind censures were passed upon certain others of my country people as we drank our tea and looked at the sunlight on the orange trees in the little garden upon which the room opened. I had to congratulate myself that I had gained my footing on the sober grounds of mediocrity.

To recommend oneself in Florence it is necessary to be volatile and unpretentious. It isn't at all necessary to be a judge of pictures and statues. This, upon the whole, is a mercy, for Professor Ruskin has made it hard for the average Philistine to express an opinion about Florentine works of art without avowing his own ignorance. Praise Florence in a general manner, and you will win the hearts of the Florentines. This is a simple and easy programme.

As for the leisured young men of the city, these devote themselves strenuously to but a couple of aims: the garnishing of their own dear persons and the pursuit of fair ladies. In the former particular they are not more eccentric than their peers elsewhere. But in their amorous adventures they are wonderful. One with whom I was acquainted was possessed by three infatuations at once. The ladies in question were entire strangers to him, but he knew their names, their circumstances, the hotels at which they were staying (with mammas, papas, or big brothers), and the shops they patronised. He was deterred by no false modesty from raising his hat to them whenever he met them in the Via Tornabuoni (his favourite lounge) and smiling his sweetest. He had tried a *billet-doux* on two of them, but had received no answer. He admitted that so far he had not had encouragement from any one of the three; yet he was far from despondent. The

most beautiful of them was soon to have a birthday (he had learnt that fact from the subsidised *portiere* at the hotel—Heaven knows how), and he proposed to spend ten lire on her in a magnificent bouquet, in the midst of which there was to be a note containing an eloquent declaration of his heart's passion. He said he was sure he should succeed sooner or later with one of the three, because he had so often before succeeded under similar circumstances. When I mentioned the perils he so audaciously faced at the hands of wrathful parents and brothers, he shrugged his shoulders in contempt of such petty obstacles.

'Amico mio,' he remarked, with the air of a Solon, 'between two hearts that love there is always a way.'

The Briton is disposed to laugh to scorn such barefaced impertinence in the Florentine youths. But not infrequently impudence gains the day. A lamentable instance of this occurs to my mind. The victim was a convent-bred American girl, visiting Florence with her mother. She was beautiful, with strange light-brown eyes, a coquettish demeanour mysteriously out of keeping with the manners one is disposed to believe are inculcated in convents, and a sufficiency of dollars. The rascal who wrecked her was precisely one of these young ruffians of the Via Tornabuoni. He was a count, of course. They are all that, at least. He bored his way into her young heart with the assiduity of a bookworm and the singleness of purpose of a ferret. When she and her mother ate tarts in the swell confectioner's shop near the club, he also was there, with sad, wistful eyes. He won the driver of their hired car to slip something into her hands from 'il Signor Conte.' He bribed the porter at the pension where they were staying, and so established a channel for his love-letters—on superb thick paper embellished by an insidious gilt coronet. And after a fortnight's wooing of this kind, he got so far that the girl was not unwilling to sit at the open window of her ground-floor room and accept his smiles and greetings from the roadway, and even his letters. The affair ended in a wedding, and a year later in a divorce. This precious count, like so many others of his kidney, was a mere adventurer. The tale of his iniquities would astonish a world used even to the reports of our home divorce proceedings. While I write, I have before me one of his letters to this unfortunate girl. He takes credit in it for the ardour of his Italian heart and the eternity of its passion. But it is a pity some one did not pinch the life out of him as a babe ere he began his

career of blind brutish subservience to the dictates of this same heart.

Since the time of the 'Decameron,' love or the semblance thereof has played what one may term an inordinate part in Florentine life. Let the visitor be on his guard when he comes to this beautiful city, with its Fair Ladies' Street and its expansive smiles; and let him be so especially if he have with him a susceptible and pretty wife, sister, or daughter whom he wishes to leave Florence with her affections in much the same state as when she first walked, open-eyed and eager, among the pictures and antiquities of the place. In one of the city's enchanting cemeteries you may read the following epitaph under the marble bust of a girl—'Born for heaven. After eighteen years of life and forty days of love, fled to her home.' These words are an epitome of more than one young life upon which Florence has brought the first rough shock of disillusionment. Taine says of the Florentines that they are 'actifs sans être affairés.' It is a significant phrase. The late lamented Dr. Watts could have given us a fine didactic stanza or two on such a text in such a city.

I learnt more on this subject when I left the inn in Shoemaker Street and took up my abode in one of the Lung' Arno pensions. There were no fleas here, and the furniture in my room was a charming study in green and gold. From my window, instead of a couple of absorbed little milliners, I looked upon a barrack exercising ground. The bugling was rather a nuisance at times, but the strong colours of the troops, the tight breeches of the lieutenants and captains in command, and their resonant voices were not altogether a change for the worse. And, though the pension was of the best class, it did not need a lynx eye to see that a good deal of an interesting kind was going on in it.

There were about fifty of us. Of course we included six or seven unattached English spinster ladies with white hair who knew all that was worth knowing about the rest of us. Also there were two German families; the one from Hamburg, the other headed by a baron and baroness from some small Schloss. Americans, two English parsons and their wives, a newly married and very modest pair from London, a marchese from Naples, two Roman counts, a Dutchman, and a round dozen others made up the housefull. Every room in the pension was occupied, and the dinner-table was a sight to warm the heart of the signora who ran the pension.

I never breathed such an atmosphere of ill-suppressed antagonisms as in this establishment. To me, as unattached as the spinsters themselves, it was highly diverting when I was in the humour to amuse myself at the expense of poor human nature. At table I sat between a parson's wife and the eldest daughter of the Hamburg merchant. The latter was a fine statuesque young woman and very candid in certain matters. She could not bear the daughter of the German baron, whose manners were so much more polished than her own, and she liked better to whisper about the girl's deficiencies and pride (so she regarded it) than to discuss the churches and pictures she had visited *en famille* in the course of the day, Baedeker scrupulously in hand. She was also much put about by the extraordinary number of frocks in which one of the American girls indulged. That, too, she considered bad form, and she asked her stout father if he did not think a mere half-dozen gowns per lady made up enough travelling luggage. Papa said, 'Ach, yes,' very decidedly. Nor did the fair Hamburger like the powder on certain faces. 'It is only when they require it that they use it,' she told me—a statement not so self-evident as it may seem. She said much more when we were in the drawing-room of evenings; and sometimes she said it in the privacy of one of the pension balconies, towards which she loved to steal when the stars were very bright and there was mandoline music underneath more moving than the piano flourishes indoors. For, though critical in company, she was not devoid of enthusiasm when the right time offered. Being the daughter of a practical man and a German, she contrived not to waste any of the impressions made upon her by the sunny south. It is bold in a man to pass judgment upon a girl, but I believe this Hamburg maiden was a downright good lass in spite of her prejudices and limitations—perhaps, indeed, because of them. There were times subsequently when I thought of profiting by her father's and mother's warm invitation to visit them at their villa on the Elbe. But I have not yet used the opportunity.

The parson's wife also was not above being divertingly critical of our company. Several times, however, her husband pulled her up in her remarks with a gentle 'Hush, my dear!' of horror, though it was as plain as could be that in his heart he thought her none too severe.

I made friends with one of the spinster ladies, a dear old soul with snow-white hair brushed high from her forehead. She re-

called Carmen Sylva's royal words in one of her novels: 'White hairs are the flakes of foam which cover the sea after a storm.' For I know not how many successive years she had been accustomed to spend the spring months in Florence. Thus she had all the city's gossip at her tongue's end, and delighted to tell it in driblets to my sympathetic ears. It was she who first discerned that the young Dutchman was in love with the prettiest of the American girls; and it was from her that I learned of the progress of this little love affair between two people, each ignorant of the other's language, and none too well acquainted with Italian. There was a scare one day in the pension vestibule. The Dutchman had proposed and been treated rather badly by the young lady's mamma. The scene was between the two ladies. The next morning the Dutchman was absent. He had, said my venerable informant, gone to Venice 'to recover his senses.'

The one duke in our company was an interesting personage. He was stout and about fifty. Far from communicative as a rule, he seemed, like my spinster friend, to find his pleasure mainly in calm contemplation of his neighbours. However, one evening he and I smoked cigarettes together on a lounge, and he confided to me that 'these English are a bizarre nation!' He took me for a Frenchman. I did not undeceive him, and coaxed him to continue. And then, after a while, he amazed me by hinting that he thought a certain one of my countrywomen in the pension a sufficiently handsome lady. Fat and fifty though he was, and possessed of a large dark duchess with a moustache, he had proved susceptible to the charms of the wife of one of the clergymen. But he was philosophic withal, and nourished himself on no delusions. 'She appeals to me,' he said, 'like a portrait I saw in one of the galleries this morning. Nothing more, parole d'honneur,' and then he laughed a short dry laugh and puffed blue smoke into the air.

There was also an Oxford gentleman who was wont, for his accent's sake, to talk with the countrypeople beyond the Santa Croce district of the city. He declared that the purest Tuscan was to be heard there, and that they used pretty much the same phraseology as Boccaccio wrote. He kept himself serenely above the transient bickerings and drama of the pension, and what time he did not give to the galleries and churches he gave to a very big book. It was edifying to see him thus engrossed of an evening, when music, love-making, and gossip held the ascendant on

all sides of him. The duke said he did not know what to make of that kind of man. But for my part I fancied he might be right to hedge himself about with his intellectuality. There was a certain grand duke here who, when he travelled, always carried about with him Raphael's 'Madonna del Cardinello,' now in the Uffizi Gallery. That, too, was perhaps an ennobling, or at least a protective, proceeding.

The pension served its turn with me, as well as with the kindly signora who owned it. At any rate it was never tedious, and it was always a notable contrast to such places of pilgrimage as the monastery of S. Marco and Michael Angelo's tombs of the Medici. The past is so very dead in Florence that one is apt the more therefore to enjoy even the vibrating sense of actuality in its present. On the rare occasions when I yearned for an evening soporific in contrast with the pension's drama, I had but to go to the theatre or to my favourite humble café, the Antica Rosa, where Giovanni the waiter passed his spare minutes in playing cards with the gentle lady who sat at the counter and smiled on her clients as they came and went.

*JUST A FREAK.*

## I.

THE other night I played the impulsive fool once more, and it landed me in a bit of a bother.

We had tickets for the stalls in the theatre, to see one of Ibsen's plays—'The Mutton Sausage,' I think the thing was called; and fine silly bosh it was. Not that the others went to see it. They couldn't or wouldn't go, after all. But it seemed such a sell to waste four tickets in that way, and so I went all by myself.

The fact is, I expected to see Ernie Grey there. Ernie and I were great chums at Eton, and it's awfully jolly to be going to the same college at Cambridge.

I positively yawned through that 'Mutton Sausage.' If it hadn't been for the smokes between the acts, I'd never have had the patience to sit it out, especially as Ernie wasn't to be seen anywhere. You never can rely on Ernie; that's the worst of him.

However, it came to an end at last, and I slipped into my cloak. There was rather a heavy crowd going out. I raised several sets of strong language from the dowagers because I trod on their trains. Serve them right, say I, for wearing such things.

When I was on the pavement, I hesitated. Was it, I asked myself, worth while trying to hunt up Randolph at his club? He'd stand me a soda and something if I could find him there; but, on the other hand, if I missed him the walk would be a horrid grind for nothing.

I was thinking it over like that, and standing close up to the door of a carriage, when I heard a fellow say almost in my ear, 'Here he is, m' lady!'

It was a footman, with what seemed to me a most lovely girl on his arm. I liked the curve of her cheeks immensely, and the action of her outstretched hand was also very taking.

What do you think happened next?

The lady tossed her cloak loose, pitched it over my shoulders, and said:

'You naughty boy, Raymond. Why didn't you stay to help me out?'

'I—I really——' I began.



'Oh, don't make excuses. Jump in quickly and atone for it.'

'Yes, sir,' added the lackey behind me, 'they're waiting for us to move.'

The fellow not only gave me a leg up, so to speak, but he pushed me inside the carriage in a way I'd like to have boxed his long ears for.

Anyhow, there we were; her ladyship (whoever she was) and I, side by side, and the horses getting up steam at every yard.

'Upon my word,' I exclaimed, 'there's some mistake——'

'No mistake at all, you selfish cousin,' was the patronising reply. 'You did it on purpose. I haven't the least doubt you devoted yourself to following some pretty girl. But it was *not* chivalrous of you, Raymond, indeed it was not. So early in our acquaintanceship, too! Are all the boys at Eton like that?'

Well, this settled me again. Wasn't it a coincidence that her Raymond should also be an Eton fellow? I wondered whose house he was in. But I didn't know any fellow of the name of Raymond. Rather a nice name, Raymond!

'No,' I said, 'of course they aren't. We don't get any practice there.'

Her ladyship laughed a silvery little laugh. I wished there was more light inside the carriage. As it was, she didn't turn her face towards me at all, but seemed to be looking straight before her. It was a trifle queer, though not anything like as queer as my situation.

'I didn't know you had so distinctly the making of a Lothario in you,' she said.

'Nor I,' I replied. 'But might I inquire where we are going?'

'Going! Why home, of course. And when you have had a little supper you shall go on to your father's. You'd like some supper, Raymond?'

'Certainly I should, but——'

'Oh no, you needn't be alarmed. We won't give you any mutton sausage. Was that what you were going to say?'

'No, it was not,' I answered indignantly.

'Tell me,' said her ladyship, 'did the characters look as foolish as their dialogue?'

'Well now, what did *you* think?'

I retorted, naturally unwilling to give myself away.

'What should *I* know about their looks?' she asked quite mournfully.

‘Why shouldn’t you?’

‘Raymond!’

She turned her face towards me at last, and the reproach in her expression made me feel that I was a brute.

‘Do you forget things so soon?’ she asked. ‘Do you forget that I am all but blind?’

Now that staggered me. I don’t know whether I most hated myself or pitied her.

‘I’m horribly sorry,’ I said. ‘But please let me explain matters to you, and afterwards you shall do just as you think best with me.’

However, she would do no such thing. She put one of her pretty hands awkwardly towards my cheek and stroked it, and suddenly rattled into a criticism of ‘The Mutton Sausage’ that lasted until the carriage stopped. Mr. Ibsen would not have liked to hear what she said about his play.

In the meantime, I pondered how to get out of the scrape I had got myself into.

Should I slip away by the off side of the carriage when it stopped, or should I first see this blind young lady into her house?

The matter was really decided for me, which was in a sense comforting, for I do hate to make up my mind to a thing.

We stopped. I fumbled at my door and couldn’t get the handle to work.

Then the other door opened, and a ‘Jeames’ stood to attention by the step.

‘Look after the cloak, Raymond,’ she said to me. ‘It is much too warm a night to have worn it.’

‘All right,’ I said, and that is how I came to follow her across the threshold of that house in Gloucester Place.

‘It’s a case of supper here after all,’ I confided to myself, not altogether ill-pleased, and upon the whole somewhat pleurably excited by the adventure.

A fellow doesn’t come of an army stock, I suppose, without rather liking to put himself into a hole, just to see how he’s going to get out of it.

## II.

But I oughtn’t to have been such a fool. The bungle had gone quite far enough, and it was like me not to have seen that it was so.

The house looked all right inside—as comfortable as could be; and I was just pulling myself together for a little more cheek when the man at the door set to and stared at me. He stared still more when her ladyship spoke.

‘We can hardly expect the Earl in yet, I’m afraid, Raymond,’ she said.

‘No?’ said I.

That was when the lackey stared most. The worst of it was that our eyes clashed at the same moment.

He made a step forward—I knew what was coming, of course.

‘If you please, m’ lady, Mr. Raymond is not with you,’ said the fellow.

I was starting to tell her all about it, with ten thousand apologies and so on, when a young woman put in *her* oar—her ladyship’s maid, as it happened.

‘I beg your pardon, my lady,’ said the damsel, ‘but have you the diamond cloak clasp?’

As she looked as if she wanted it, I had thrown my companion’s garment into her arms as soon as I saw her.

This wasn’t all, either.

From the end of the corridor, on one side of the hall, a tall old gentleman with white hair appeared and, coming quickly towards us, asked ‘Eugenia’ if she were tired, and then looked mighty stern at me.

I bowed my serenest, though I admit I felt queerish.

‘No, Ward,’ said her ladyship to the maid, ‘I haven’t got the clasp.’

‘Then it’s lost, your ladyship,’ exclaimed the girl.

‘Perhaps *you* have it, Raymond?’ was her ladyship’s retort, as she turned her dim eyes towards me.

‘If your lordship will be kind enough to listen to me,’ I said, with a cold shiver down the back (for the Earl’s expression was nasty), ‘I will try to explain how I come to be trespassing inside your lordship’s house.’

The Earl exchanged glances with the man, and the latter shut the door.

‘Be so good as to follow me,’ he said.

‘What is the matter?’ inquired Lady Eugenia, looking about her pathetically.

‘I fear your ladyship has been made a victim,’ said that fool

of a maid. 'He has been personating Mr. Raymond. He is a perfect stranger.'

Eugenia screamed: a musical scream.

'I do assure you——' I exclaimed.

But the Earl interfered.

'I repeat, Sir, that I will thank you to follow me,' he said.

'And you too, Carter.'

'It was just a freak,' I murmured, when I was among the Earl's books, which had a frightfully depressing appearance.

'You, a stranger, have accompanied my daughter from the theatre; have *dared* to do so?' he inquired stormily.

'She made the mistake first,' I said.

'What has that to do with it, Sir?'

'I admit that I did wrong.'

'Then there's the di'mond clasp, m' lord,' observed the man, in a deferential whisper. What would I not have given for the liberty to punch his impertinent head! Anyhow, I turned on him sharply.

'Do you imply, you rascal,' I demanded, 'that I am a thief?'

The Earl shrugged his shoulders, and his lips looked malicious.

'At any rate, I must trouble you,' he said, 'to turn out your pockets. Afterwards I shall be more able to understand events.'

I bit my lip, and said that my pockets were entirely at the service of the menial who pleased to examine them. For my part, I would not condescend to be even an accessory to my own exoneration.

'Do so, Carter,' said the Earl.

We Talbots can look fierce on occasion, I've always understood. This was about the most encouraging opportunity for a little family spirit to show itself that I've ever enjoyed; and I feel sure I glared at the Earl while his man approached me, with fingers to the front.

The Earl met me straight. There was not much charity in his soul, I saw.

And now imagine my situation when, at the first plunge, so to speak, Carter pulled forth from my waistcoat pocket a small brooch affair sparkling with diamonds.

'Here it is, m' lord!' he said, triumphantly.

The Earl touched a hand-bell.

'How the mischief it came there is more than I can say!' I stammered.

'You *need* say nothing more,' said the Earl. 'Your explanation is due to the magistrate. I do not want to hear it. Fetch a policeman.'

These last words were to the man who answered the bell.

'Take him away, Carter,' this obliging Earl continued, 'and give him into custody.'

'Yes, m' lord,' said Carter.

The fellow made as if he would touch me. This roused me again.

'If you or any of your class lay a hand on me I'll knock you down without more words,' I said. 'You may as well know it.'

The Earl rang again.

That meant another man.

'But,' I added, 'I'll go quietly, my lord, to any police court you please. For it's absurd to suppose that Reginald Talbot, one of the Shropshire Talbots, let me inform you, is just a commonplace peddling thief. I've got myself into this mess by being civil to a lady when invited. As for the brooch, I don't know anything about it. And that's all I do know about it.'

'You just come along without all this talk,' said Carter.

The two fellows closed up to me. I set my shoulders back, held up my nose, and, with a parting glance at the white-haired Earl, marched. As I marched, I suddenly bubbled into mirth. It was really too good, you know.

### III.

There was a little snugger for the porter by the door. They took me there; 'Jeames' himself turning out into the hall, with his hands in his breeches pockets, to make way for us. He contemplated me jauntily, did 'Jeames.'

'You be advised, young man,' said Carter to me, 'and stop that larfin.'

I took a chair by the fire and laughed on, not altogether happily though. It occurred to me that Randolph and two or three other fellows might have got home. In that case I should miss a good hand at 'nap.'

'Look here,' I said, 'I've left my card case behind, but I'll write down my address and give the man a sovereign who'll take a line there.'

My two keepers looked from me to 'Jeames' and then at each other.

'Anything else, young man?' asked Carter derisively.

'You're Walker, London, aren't you?' inquired the other, not without a certain admiration in his face that appealed to me.

'And you're all a parcel of idiots,' said I.

This caused a triple laugh. I was out of it.

'Nice specimen, aint he?' said 'Jeames.'

I fumbled into my pockets to feel if anything mysterious as well as a diamond clasp had found its way there. Only my cigarette case met my fingers. Instantly I yearned towards it.

'Do you mind if I smoke?' I asked. 'Your policeman's a long time coming.'

Carter said he was dashed. He looked it too, but quickly cooled down, and added—

'I like your smartness; I really can't help liking it. I'll answer any civil, natural sort of question you ask, but you can't smoke.'

'Thank you, I'm sure,' said I. 'Then what's your master's name, first of all?'

'Lord Loughborough.'

'Lord Loughborough, is it? Then Lord Loughborough's a——' Carter exclaimed 'Hush!' 'And you're another,' I hastened to add.

The bell rang and the knocker knocked.

It was the policeman, a red-faced individual, looking as they always do when they think they've a nice easy thing on.

'That's him,' said the man with him, pointing at me. I had moved with my guards to see what was coming.

The fellow had handcuffs ready. This fairly stirred my bile.

'I'll not have them on,' I yelled. 'I defy you or ten of you to put 'em on.'

A couple of maidservants and another man showed in the hall. The scene interested them, I reckon. It would have interested me if I hadn't been principal character in it.

'Ketch him behind,' whispered the dunderhead of a constable. But I had my back to the wall in next to no time.

'You "ketch" me behind if you can!' I remarked.

The man who had been sent for the police made a rush at me. I shinned him badly. I also shinned the constable. He was of the puffy sort, and bound not to stand much bustling. I resolved,

now that my blood was warm, to let fly at them anyhow. I could have fancied I was in a bully at the old school.

And I did let fly at them, too. They came all together, with their arms out like waxwork figures. I just ducked and laid about me anywhere, but chiefly above the belt.

The policeman got it in the wind, and even Carter didn't come off scot free.

Never, I should think, did the Earl of Loughborough's town house behold such a shindy.

The fellows stood off after this first round, the policeman nursing his stomach and gasping (swearing, too, I'm afraid), and Carter and one of the 'Jeameses' rubbing their legs.

One of the maids behind was laughing. I noticed that, and it cheered me.

And now out came the Earl again. What a face he had on, to be sure! Beerbohm Tree would have given a ten-pound note to see him.

'Good God!' he cried.

'The villain defies us all, m' lord!' stuttered Carter, holding his right leg stiffly.

'Yes, and he'll continue to!' said I. 'I'm not going to be carried to a police cell like a lamb, I can tell you, Lord Loughborough.'

You should have seen the Earl fume at this. I didn't care though. I was past caring for anything.

He strode towards us. 'Stroke' is the very word for it.

'Open the door at once!' he bellowed.

'It'll make no difference,' I retorted.

The door was opened, and the brutes came at me again. I wasn't fully prepared, and this time they pinned me sure enough. A fellow of my age (getting on for nineteen) can't do much with a grown-up man gripping each of his legs and arms.

'Now out with him!' ordered the Earl.

But it wasn't to be, after all.

Almost as soon as the door was opened a young spark came up and got one foot on the steps.

'Hullo!' said he, when he saw what was going on, 'what's all this about?'

It was Giffard of Mason's, by all that was merciful!

'Say, Giffard!' I cried, 'don't let these fellows make such a fool of me.'

I'll not forget in a hurry how well he did it too. He rammed in and parted me from two of them. I shook off the other two by myself.

'Thanks, old man,' I said, as I fell against one of the pillars of the Earl's porch.

In that moment it flashed to me: Giffard was the Lady Eugenia's Raymond.

'Do you know the Earl of Loughborough?' I asked him quickly.

'Rather,' said he, 'I'm his nephew. Come along in and let's hear all about it.'

The servants gave way in fine style now, and the constable looked an ass. We had only the Earl to tackle.

Nor did his lordship waste time.

'Who is this young man, Raymond?' he inquired, frowning so that you would think his skin must cut through.

'He's at Eton, uncle,' said Giffard, 'and the best "long behind" in the place.'

I hate being flattered. That was why I immediately mentioned Cameron, Grant, and Bentinck, whom some fellows think safer kicks than me.

'Rot!' said Giffard.

'It isn't for me to express a decided opinion,' I continued. 'I last, though, better than either of them.'

The Earl ejaculated something that sounded extraordinarily like a rhyme to 'ham.' I vow he did. Both Giffard and I glanced at him reproachfully; more in sorrow than in anger, I imagine.

The servants all slunk out of sight. Only the red-faced constable was left. He looked uneasy. I suppose he had heard of the Earl of Loughborough's temper, which, his nephew tells me, is notorious.

'May I,' inquired Giffard blandly, 'ask Talbot inside, uncle?'

The policeman touched his knobby forehead to the Earl and rudely interfered with a question of his own.

'I suppose I'm not wanted any more, your lordship?' he said.

'Go, you fool!' replied the Earl.

Giffard was beginning a second time, but I cut him short.

'My dear fellow,' I remarked, 'the Earl of Loughborough might say "Yes;" but I have a voice in the matter also. It's getting late. I don't feel like going inside again, many thanks.'



Giffard lurched one shoulder.

'Then that settles it. I'll stroll down the street with you, if you don't mind.'

'Do,' said I.

I asked the Earl's pardon as I crossed his threshold for a moment to pick up my hat, which had got mauled above a little; and then, with a bow and nothing more, I turned my back on that inhospitable mansion.

It was really too funny for anything to see how the Earl of Loughborough stood rigid and silent while we strolled off.

Then I told Giffard everything, and didn't he roar!

It was not altogether a laughable affair; nevertheless, I tried to snigger a little on my own account.

We stood backs against a lamp-post to see if there was anything to choose between us in height. There was nothing. My voice too is much in the same key (I believe they call it that) as Giffard's.

'Oh, yes, there's every excuse for my poor cousin Eugenia,' Giffard was agreeable enough to say.

'Any for me, too?'

'None, old man; none at all. And it's a heaven's blessing for you I chanced to have spent the day in Gloucester Place. Take warning and look sharp that the next lady not of your acquaintance, whose cloak you carry, doesn't have a valuable trinket to it ready to drop into your waistcoat pocket.'

After that well-turned sentence, I said 'Good night' to Giffard, having sworn him to secrecy about the adventure.

But he went back on his oath the next day. That is why I'm at such pains to tell the story in an unvarnished form.

As I expected, when I got home, I was too late for anything. They had all gone to bed except Randolph, and he was so grumpy that I couldn't stand five minutes of him. Wanted to know why I hadn't turned up an hour or two sooner. Wish I had, that's all.

*A CITY OF SUFFERING.*

It is a city lying within the Conqueror's city, fine old Caen, whose squalid streets are touched into worthiness by their churches with colour-flushed windows and stones carved long ago. The plenitude in these streets, not only of churches but of family rubbish-heaps, leads to the inference that the prayers of the Caennais absorb more time than do the punctilios of sanitation. The schoolgirl who stated that atmospheric air was composed of germs and small insects may perhaps have been a dweller in this Norman community, and in that case she came near being justified of her thesis. No stranger who suffers his nose to travel forth into the public highway undefended by smelling-salts, can harbour the smallest doubt of the need of hospitals in this place.

We all know well the story of the Conqueror's marriage with Matilda of Flanders, and how the twain snapped their fingers at remonstrant abbots and condemnatory councils, and lived awhile triumphantly in what the Church considered very naughty wedlock. But with the flight of a brace of years compunctions pricked, and the royal sinners devised each a solid expiation of their naughtiness. Thus at opposite poles of the good town of Caen arose the twopenance-built churches, William's and Matilda's, the *Abbaye aux Hommes* and the *Abbaye aux Dames*, stony warnings to those who would plunge into matrimony without first considering tables of relationship; and round these two churches congregate nowadays the sick in body and mind. For the noble ladies of *La Trinité*, Matilda's Abbey, tend the wards in the hospital, whose park kisses their walls; and almost under the shadow of William's austere *St. Etienne* lies that wonderful composite house of mercy, the convent of *Le Bon Sauveur*, where many human miseries bring themselves to be healed and comforted. Thanks to its distinguished connections, the former foundation in earlier days seems to have been able to conduct itself with not a little flourish. Thus we read that in 1729 the citizens of Caen fired seven volleys of cannon to honour the arrival of a great lady as Abbess at *La Trinité*, and the thrifty-minded chronicler adds regretfully that they would not have fired more than three, but that they thought her sister, the Princess de Carignan, was with her. 'Noble dame Marie-Anne de Verus' made, however, but shabby return to the town of Caen for its lavishness in welcome and gunpowder. Little more than a year

later it was discovered that she was employing agents to smuggle large quantities of wine into the Abbaye. Wherefore there was some little unpleasantness with the authorities, and great heart-burnings resulted, and a still greater lawsuit. It was not surprising that the Caennais, accustomed to the amplitude and aristocratic methods of this royal sisterhood, should dub the struggling congregation of *Le Bon Sauveur*, in its baby days, 'le petit couvent.' That it should ever have been thus named seems incredible to the visitor in a hurry, who begins at the wrong end, and, marvelling at the stinginess of convents in the matter of exits and entrances, has to circumambulate something like a mile of walls before reaching the gates. For 'le petit couvent' is not only big but huge, and covers seventeen acres of the old town of Caen. This is little cause for wonder, since within its mighty walls of native stone two thousand motley humans suffer and work and pray. Here Napoleon's schoolfellow, the never too lucky Bourrienne, came to die. Here that gay dog, Beau Brummell, lived out the tattered remnant of his low-pitched life. Though, as the great doors opened before him, the old creditor-ridden Beau cried out in despair at entering what his mazed senses took to be a prison, yet it was here that he found the kindness which the world denied when the clothes supply failed, and debts took the place of money. Captain Jesse, in his 'Life of Brummell,' tells how, at his entrance into the convent-asylum, the poor old Beau was helped to his rooms by Auguste, his friend's servant, and by one of the Sisters, whom, despite her holy robings, he insisted upon taking for Auguste's wife. Auguste was a lucky fellow, he remarked to the Sister in a burst of gallantry, as they went along, 'car vous êtes bien une jolie femme!'

It was in 1731 that 'le petit couvent' began its career, very quietly, with no flourish and no volleys of cannon, for it was a lowly born woman's venture. Anne Leroy was the daughter of an insignificant tradesman, who drove his little business in one of Caen's mean streets. She was brought up to earn her living as a dressmaker, but, being devoutly minded, she before long forsook her trade, and entered the convent at St. Lô, near Bayeux, hoping by this step to serve better both God and her fellows. For to the average woman in the France of olden days the path to devoted philanthropy led commonly through convent gates. The lavish vices and prejudices of the time barred to the ordinary woman of the world the wide field for work which lay open to secular sisterhoods. Thus when the altruistic passion touched the ex-needle-

woman, she in her St. Lô convent had to 'faire sa profession,' to take the three great vows which shear life of its fulness, before her career of fellow-service could begin. The motive which made her presently leave the convent, and go back to her native town, is left for our guessing. Certainly she, of all others, brought up from babyhood in its narrow filthy streets, must have known to the full the nameless horrors that lurked in them, the sicknesses that pained and the poverty that gnawed, and known too with a compassion born of fellowship. We are told that in 1733 the 'coqueluche,' that old-time cousin to influenza, ran riot in dirty Caen during Lent, and resulted in such an enfeebled plight of the inhabitants that it was found necessary to officially sanction the reopening of the butchers' shops.

Possibly it was some such plague and the rumours of misery radiating from it, that drew the devout Caennaise from her convent to help her fellow-townsmen. Whatever the cause may have been, Anne Leroy left St. Lô in 1731, and, going back to Caen, devoted herself to tending the sick and sad and suffering, and drew around her other women eager for the same pitiful task. 'Her sole idea,' as they say in the mighty convent that arose from her efforts, 'was to do as her Saviour had done on earth.' They lived in Vaucelles, these Sisters, in the heart of the city's poverty; they taught young girls, they visited the sick, they took into their own quarters poor lunatic women, and there ministered to them. And truly no more urgent work than this last could they have chosen, for in history there are few blacker blots of cruelty and ignorance than the old-time treatment of the insane. There were no Masters in Lunacy in Anne Leroy's days, no decent asylums, little compassion for madness, and less knowledge of its causes. A lunatic was a person of uncertain, inexplicable, and often dangerous habits. Society feared him, tucked him away somewhere out of sight with the aid of keys and chains, and passed by on the other side. In all probability this Gallo-like attitude meant for the lunatics a far greater sum of suffering than that involved in the impetuous treatment of a younger civilisation, with its duckings, and whippings, and like active but transitory measures. But whether or no the poor creatures found swift agony preferable to imprisonment, their history unfortunately leaves no doubt of the existence of both in great bounty, of horrors and barbarity unimaginable, of the deprivation of all that their dulled sense could grasp of life and its joys. In Caen the pillared Palais de Justice stands where once stood the old gaol,

part of which was known as 'La Tour des Foux.' Here were stowed away those wretched beings who were not as their fellows; here their days dragged out to years with a ghastly accompaniment of heavy chains, insufficient food, and lack of all things desirable. Kindness, consideration, pity—of these they probably knew less than wild beasts in captivity. Vincent de Paul had indeed preached, but Dr. Pinel had not yet practised. Wherefore Anne Leroy in her quiet way tried to build a seemly harbour for this human wreckage. She began, naturally, with the women, and with some success, apparently, for when the volcano of the Revolution burst, this little community, which it scattered with the rest, consisted of twelve Sisters and sixteen lunatic women. Owing to the disturbances of the Revolution, it was not till 1804 that the prosperous period of the Bon Sauveur Sisterhood began. Then their director, the Abbé Jamet, came to their assistance with no half-hearted aid, and obtained for them the larger premises of the Capucines, as numbers bade fair to increase. Doing as Christ had done on earth proved a widely comprehensive scheme, upon which secular authorities were in time brought to look favourably. A loan was granted, and the work grew.

The old building of the Capucines thus forms the nucleus of the present acreage of Le Bon Sauveur. It is a joy to artists' eyes, that low-built old quadrangle, with its age-tinted roofs and narrow cloisters, and grateful minglement of sun and shadow. In summer the begonia beds blaze amid the prim little walks, and heliotrope scents the air round the quaintly sheltered well whose pagoda-cover ever forbids entrance of the sunny glare. One side of the quadrangle is the nuns' common room—a grand space, rich in many windows, many chairs, and many portraits of sweet womanly faces, all uniformed in the ugly scapular that so surely kills the prettiness of the merely pretty. From all sides they look down on us, these honoured women, some old, some not so old, the 'mothers' of the convent who have gone to their rest. On one side of the fireplace hangs the portrait of Mère Leroy, a strong-featured, somewhat stern face, with more of command than of sweetness in it. There, too, is pictured the Abbé Jamet, benefactor and faithful co-worker, who shares the honours of the convent with its foundress. A tablet in the chapel of the male lunatics tells how for two years the good Abbé was paralysed, and was only cured by the healing touch of the Bishop of Bayeux, wherefore he built the chapel as a thank-offering, and died very soon after. So he lies ever among them, there in the little

garden chapel, a peaceful statued figure, with praying hands, bathed in a perpetual glory of golden light.

The Consul-General's loan, with its resultant larger premises, enabled the Sisters to give the lunatics better housing and treatment than had been possible in the old buildings. At the demolition of the Tour des Foux the mad folk were taken to the gaol at Beaulieu, and brought thence after a while to the kindly shelter of Le Bon Sauveur, where compassionate women followed the lead of the Paris doctor in forbidding chains, and neglect and cruelty were of the past. The lunatics were human beings once more. But the Sisters did not limit themselves to this one branch of good works. There are three schools within their walls: one for *demoiselles de famille*, one for middle-class girls, one for the youngsters of the poor folk of Caen. In the infirmaries the four resident doctors treat not only inmates, but whatsoever of broken limbs and casualties the surrounding Caennais bring to them. The Sisters go forth and nurse the poor, they distribute food and medicine to the needy, and carry their sympathy and kindly faces into the smelliest streets. As the great doors shut out the grimy Rue Caponnière, there comes a vision of a sunlit court of low buildings, catching a hint of tropic grandeur from the huge palms and yuccas which grow in wooden buckets, glorying in the glare. From among the palms a gate opens upon the quarters of the deaf-mutes, a cheery place enough, though rife with strange unhuman sounds. There are some sixty of them in all sizes, these bungled creatures to whom Mother Nature has been so strangely stingy. The Sisters labour patiently to bridge the gulf, and some with this their life-task have marred their faces and widened their silently speaking mouths at which the children stare with such intentness. The little ones' laboured answers come curiously, with unexpected catches of breath, and with tones and turns which show the undefrauded heirs of vocal ages that the small ears cannot listen to the small lips' strivings. To children of a larger growth are taught divers trades: they learn to be joiners, weavers, tailors, and what not. Both big and little take kindly to physical exercises, and a delight and joy to most, though possibly not to their more completely sensed neighbours, is the beating of a drum, which looks as though they instinctively sought to cheat the fate which condemned them to make less noise in the world than their fellows.

The little wicket swings behind us on the voiceless dwellers, and we are out among the palms again, and cross courts and

quadrangles bright with flowers, and cool cloistered walks and shady avenues. There, under the lee of the men's infirmary, goes a knot of blue-bloused inmates, interested and busy with their truck-load, their warder dressed even as they. Here in the shade saunter brightly dressed ladies, with a keen-eyed Sister in attendance. They might be taken for whole-minded were it not that their gait bewrayeth them, as is also the case with the little regiment of poorer women whom the Sisters are bringing to help in the great laundry. Specklessly clean are they, shady hats tied well under their chins, smiles on their meaningless faces; but their path zigzags, they are prone to halts and vacuous stajings. Then the Sisters touch the lax arms gently and remind them of business, and they go forward again with large dragging steps. So we follow up through the mighty wooden washhouse, four wide stories of cleanliness, with their tenantry of steam and water and myriad pendant sheets and stockings. Peeping through a trapdoor we see under a cool arch below, framed as in a picture, the strong-armed women of the town who help their less competent fellows within the convent walls. Blue-bodied, bent-necked, they kneel on the brink of the little Odon's shadowed ripples, and emptying basketfuls whiten in their hands, while behind them sits the quiet Sister, supervising, arranging, handing this or that, a black-robed figure whose face we see not. And turning back through the farmyard, with its orderly perspective of chewing cows, we reach at last the huge kitchens, where the faces of the army of Sisters redden amid stoves and boilers, where in cohorts and battalions the milk-puddings flaunt their little span, where the domestic coffee-pot stands six feet high, and the sight of the soup supply evolves disbelief in a parallel hunger. And on over the way into the bread-cutting room, where an amiable lunatic, bubbling with the importance of his mission, turns the machine which changes ponderous loaves into thin shreds for potage. Thence to the home of the said loaves, a russet wheaten glory from floor to ceiling, ponderous verily, but fleeting, for each hungry day swallows seven hundred of the stoutest. But the Titanic bakery replenishes gamely, for the monster proportions of its mixing-troughs seem to laugh at the little men who work them. Further on, the cider-press has a house to itself, and sunk steps lead to the cider's penultimate goal—two barrels of gigantic girth, whose inwards, we are told, are cleaned by no mere mop, but by several mortal men with mops, who spring-clean within these cider mansions at the dry season.

For since there are two thousand throats in the convent, even to the giantest cider-cask cometh every two months a dry season.

In time we reach the quarters of the women lunatics—airy rooms and corridors smelling of much soap and more summer air. For the milder paupers are little dormitories, plainly furnished with some half-dozen white-winged beds, and the warder Sister's stronghold tucked into the alcove next the peepholed door. The paying patients have their one or two private rooms, prettily furnished: here easy-chairs and costly hangings, there a lace-draped bed for the lady, and for the wild beast who occasionally gets the upper hand, lo! a strongly barred berth, where the beast may tear and worry and hurt nought till it becomes a lady again. 'Do you admit Protestants?' curiosity asks of one of the Sisters. 'Why, surely—if they are mad!' she answers sweetly. More corridors, more white beds, more warder religieuses, and at last out through locked entrances on to the roof, whence we look down on all Anne Leroy's city and a good deal of William the Norman's too. The 'little convent' lies below, buildings and flowers and trees and walls, variously dight lunatics and darkly draped religieuses, chapel roofs and the crosses of two graveyards, tiny chateaux for rich noblemen and noblewomen, flower-gardens for them, aviaries, fountains, carefully guarded fishponds, all of miniature delight that can be devised. Just at our feet is the pleasure-ground of the women lunatics, rendered fourfold by high walls. In one division the rich ladies lounge in low chairs amidst gorgeous flower-beds; in another women of a lower class take their ease a trifle less luxuriously, or pace up and down in the shade. The other twain are for the paupers. In the first of these movements cease not, feet wag on the gravel, fingers drum, heads nod unmeaningly; there is no quiet there. They are the ever-restless, separated from the more placid variety lest all should become restless. But in the last garden there is peace. Figures sit under the trees like logs, desire seems to have failed, a voice seldom breaks the quiet of the peopled lime-walk. There is sunshine round them, greenery over their heads; but they sit on dumbly, their eyes vacantly gazing, doomed to be mere existences in a world that lives. And we lift our eyes from the sadnesses of Anne Leroy's noble charity and the great enfolding walls, and outside spreads the racecourse, flecked with flags and hurdles, and beyond all the shivering heat of distance and the serrated squadrons of poplars, looking like giant ghosts of the old Northmen marching to battle.



*THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE DRIFFELL.*<sup>1</sup>

BY JAMES PAYN.

PART III.

It was fortunate for me that I had now some occupation which monopolised my mind and prevented it from dwelling on that dread interview, which, however unlikely, might take place any day. I paid many visits to the office of the 'Crescent,' partly on literary business, partly with the intention of cultivating Mr. Gledson's acquaintance. The more I saw of him the more I liked him, and in a less degree I venture to think that that was also his experience of myself; for in the first place I was really a capable contributor whom he could trust for that punctuality and carefulness which it seemed he had found to be a rarity; and secondly, I was what he called 'a reasonable being' in the taking advice with respect to alterations, of which he had hardly any other example. As to this he would say:

'The women are the worst. Their MS. is as the Ark of the Covenant, and to touch it is to invoke the thunder; if I restore the grammar that is wanting to a paragraph, they say: "Now you have spoilt everything, and destroyed what is most worth reading in my whole article!"'

'But that surely is not the case with all your lady contributors,' I said, 'the one, for instance, who wrote "The Home Spirit" in the last number of your magazine.'

'Oh, you appreciated that, did you?' he answered. 'It is very seldom that our verse is remarked upon—or indeed is worthy of remark.'

Then, to my astonishment, in a soft and gentle voice he repeated the poem:

THE HOME SPIRIT.

Like a sunbeam gliding over common places,  
 About this simple home of ours she moves;  
 Whate'er her hands are set unto she graces,  
 Her duties not beneath the things she loves.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1896, in the United States of America.

Serene, unconscious of her perfect sweetness  
 As one of those moss-roses she hath tied  
 In clustered beauty, with some art fast neatness,  
 As born high-heartedness excelleth pride.  
 In all things studious of another's pleasure,  
 In all things careful for another's pain ;  
 Inactive never, never without leisure  
 When age or childhood her sweet aid would gain.  
 If e'er, thick folded, fall the veil of sorrow,  
 She beareth up the burden to its tomb ;  
 The love balm dropping aye, until some morrow  
 Putteth the tender heart again in bloom ;  
 And now the hush of sickness stealeth through us,  
 A healing spirit 'midst its sad array,  
 So strong in hope, she almost seemeth to us  
 To chase that shadow, dark and vague, away.  
 Ah ! bliss to him to whom she shall be given !  
 Fond heart, clear head, pure soul, and form so fair,  
 Her spirit well might cleave to it in heaven,  
 And meet him changeless and unangel'd there.

'Yes,' continued Mr. Gledson critically, 'I should not have remembered those lines had they not been above the average.'

'Are you quite sure,' I remarked slyly, 'that there was no other reason—such as a personal knowledge of the young lady, for instance ?'

'Young lady? How do you know she was young?' he answered sharply. 'Well, there *was* a reason. You remember your friend Miniver's poem we published the month before, "My Wish" ?'

'Oh yes, quite well.'

'Then oblige me by repeating it.'

No less astonished than before, for it was not Mr. Gledson's way to dwell on the merits of his contributors, I did so.

#### MY WISH.

Cherry-cheek'd, merry-eyed,  
 Lip apart, head aside,  
 Crown'd with thy golden hair ;  
 Maiden, this youth of thine,  
 Far more than war or wine,  
 Breedeth joy, slayeth care.

Sinketh the soul awhile  
 Under thy perfect smile,  
 Brimm'd with all love and grace ;  
 Lady, for such must be  
 All that are like to thee,  
 Ne'er may tear soil that face !

Ab, that my wish were charm  
 'Gainst every mortal harm,  
 Happy for aye wert thou ;  
 Nor should the hand of care  
 Ever so much as dare  
 Shadow that happy brow.

But if woe doth come on  
 Even thee, pretty one,  
 Brave is that gentle heart ;  
 Youth may fade, beauty fly,  
 Truth and love never die,  
 Nor may pure faith depart.

Safe art thou, with those three,  
 Vulture-faced misery  
 Maketh no common nest ;  
 Stoopeth, and then upsprings,  
 While joy's expanded wings  
 Fold at their sight and rest.

'The fact is,' said Mr. Gledson when I had finished, 'that Miniver's poem produced the young lady's.'

'Excited her ambition, I suppose?'

'Not at all, her antagonism. She disapproved of Miniver's verses because they only dwelt upon the physical charms of their subject, and wrote her own to show what really should make women worthy of a man's love. At least that is what I gathered from the very brief conversation I had with her on the matter.'

'And does Miniver know of this?' I inquired.

'Nay,' he answered, smiling, 'that you must find out for yourself. I fear I have been already somewhat indiscreet.'

There the matter dropped, but my curiosity was aroused. I could get no corroboration of the little romance from Miniver, who, however, was much too clever to reveal anything he wished to conceal ; but one day, when calling at the office, whom should I see emerging from the audience chamber, where the smart people were received, but Lucy Gilderoy, immediately followed by Mr. Gledson. That she was acquainted with him I knew, for she had been with her sister at Grasmere when he and Braidwood had gone to the Lakes together, but nothing could account for her visiting him at the office of the 'Crescent' but the fact of her being a contributor. It struck me at once that it was she who had written 'The Home Spirit,' and, what was more, that Grace had been the subject of the poem. Her portrait, so far as character went, had indeed been most accurately drawn. I now remembered that there had of late been illness in the family—one of Mr. Parker's little

children having been laid up with low fever—which no doubt had suggested certain lines in the poem. When I taxed her with the authorship, not without many congratulations, she admitted it at once, and yet, as it seemed to me, with some show of discomfort. I expressed a hope that I had not annoyed her by compelling the revelation, but it was evidently not that which caused her embarrassment; nor, I was sure, was it on account of my former *tendresse* for her sister, which she well understood I had long got over. Indeed, I spoke of Grace's marriage, which was to take place the following week, and asked for her opinion upon a certain wedding present that was to be despatched that very evening. She said she thought it very suitable and that there was no duplicate, but in a voice so confused, and indeed almost tearful, that when she left me I felt quite miserable about it. Was it possible that something had occurred which had made Braidwood appear a less desirable bridegroom than he had been? This last and worst explanation of her conduct, however, was proved at once to be groundless, since the next morning I received the kindest letter from Grace herself, overflowing as it should be with happy confidence in her future. There was, however, this single note of sorrow.

'I greatly regret to say, dear Mr. Gresham, that, in consequence of the serious indisposition of my father, the invitations to our wedding will be confined, almost exclusively, to members of our respective families. There will be no one, I am sure, whose absence from it Richard and I will regret more than yours, and it gives me sincere sorrow to feel that our meeting must be postponed till we have the pleasure of welcoming you to our own house.'

I was not altogether sorry that I was thus preserved from an introduction to Mr. Gilderoy, whom I could not forgive for his cruel conduct to poor Laurence, while at the same time this accounted for Lucy's behaviour on the previous day, who, though conscious that I was not to be a guest at her sister's wedding, had probably no authority for stating the fact.

A few days afterwards, however, being at the office of the 'Crescent,' these comforting ideas of mine were a good deal dispelled by a conversation with Mr. Gledson.

'Well,' he said, when he had nodded to me good-naturedly, which was his usual sign of welcome, 'why did we not see you at the wedding the other day?'

It astonished me very much that Mr. Gledson had been there

himself. He was not very intimate with the Braidwoods—who rather ignored the existence of the magazine—and, save through the two girls, knew nothing of the Gilderoy's whatever; and since the illness of Mr. Gilderoy had, in Grace's words, 'confined the invitations almost exclusively to members of the two families,' how was it that Mr. Gledson had been included in them? However, I could of course show no surprise on this account, but only reply for my part that I had not been asked.

'Not asked?' he repeated; 'why, Richard told me that he hoped you would be his best man.'

'And who was his best man?' I inquired with some curiosity.

'Why, Miniver, whom I should rather have taken, from the way in which I have heard him spoken of, as his second best. I always understood you were the more intimate of the two.'

I certainly had been, and I confess that I felt not a little hurt at what had happened; I did my best, however, to affect indifference.

'Had there been many people,' I inquired, 'at the wedding, and what was the Gilderoy's house like?'

'The house,' Mr. Gledson said, 'was a huge one, with an excellent garden, on Lavender Hill. There had been a large gathering, but there was room for everybody. The bride had looked uncommonly well,' &c.

'And the old gentleman?' I said. 'What was *he* like, or was he too ill to be seen?'

'Ill! Not a bit of it. He was well enough—that is, in a physical sense—but, between you and me, I think getting a little dotty. He gave me the impression of one who had once had a very strong will, but whose strength had gone out of him.'

'It seems, however,' said I dryly, and thinking of how he had treated Laurence, 'that he can be obstinate enough on occasion, and even without occasion.'

'That is possible, but I am told that his son-in-law, Mr. Parker, has considerable influence over him, and that he always exercises it for good. Uncle Charles, as they call him, is the favourite of the family; he struck me as being a very pleasant clever fellow—the life and soul of the business they say, and I can well believe it. He is also a well-read man; Mrs. Parker is a very handsome woman—handsomer even than her sisters—and her children very beautiful. The one that has been ill looks like a little angel, and to see her and the bride together was very touching. She is

devoted to Aunt Grace, who I have no doubt is deserving of all her sister wrote of her in "The Home Spirit." It is a character portrait to the life.'

'I hope Braidwood will make her a good husband,' said I, with an involuntary sigh.

'I think he will. He is rather too old and grave for his years, but that makes him none the worse match for her; I should not have said the same had he fixed his affections on Miss Lucy.'

I agreed with that, and, putting Laurence in the place of Braidwood, I could not help thinking that the observation would have been equally applicable to his case. The more I saw of Lucy, the more I doubted her fitness for being his wife, and now I began to see a good deal of her, mainly at the office, but also at Mrs. Argent's, who had been abroad for some time and only just returned to her London house. She had quite sympathised with me as to Mr. Gilderoy's ill-conduct to Laurence; indeed it had made her rather a stranger to the house before her departure to the Continent, and I don't think she was sorry for the excuse to be absent from Grace's wedding on that account.

'Now your friend Braidwood and she are married,' she said, 'I hope to see a great deal of Grace; but I no longer visit at Lavender Hill with any comfort to myself. I have no patience with that old gentleman, and that's a fact.'

It almost seemed to me that she had some new reason for dissatisfaction with him.

'Lucy, of course, I shall still see at her sister's, but it will be a real sorrow to me to have so much less of Mary's company—that is, Mrs. Parker—she is such a sweet creature, but so devoted to her husband that one can scarcely ever secure her apart from him.'

'But Mr. Parker is very nice also,' said I, 'is he not?'

'Yes, a most agreeable person; a little old for her one would have thought, but they get on together admirably. Only he hates society. It is only with the greatest difficulty that he can be got to dine anywhere. Mr. Gilderoy was something of a recluse, and in this respect, and this only, his son-in-law has done him more harm than good—that is to say, in the discouragement of his friends. Now his daughter is married he will probably see but little of her, and of the elder Braidwoods nothing at all.'

From what I had seen of this couple I did not think that the loss of their acquaintance would be a very deplorable matter. Thanks to their son I had received one or two invitations to dine

with them, but had derived no pleasure from the experience. They were essentially commonplace people; the old lady good-natured enough, but very heavy in hand; the husband pompous and purse-proud. One wondered how their son came to be such a vast improvement on the old stock; but such a transformation in a generation is not uncommon, and perhaps his university course—which has usually a good effect in the way of culture in such cases—had something to do with it.

Mrs. Argent, a rich widow, lived in a large house in South Kensington, and the recently married couple took a smaller one in the same neighbourhood. Notwithstanding that I still felt a little sore at having been excluded from their list of marriage guests, I paid them an early visit on their return from their honeymoon. They gave me a most friendly welcome, and even, as I thought, a particularly kind one, as though they were conscious of shortcoming. Nothing was said about it at first, but Braidwood took the opportunity of his wife leaving us for a few minutes to explain the matter.

‘There is one thing, my dear Gresham, which I wish to relieve my mind about; it has been the one shadow upon our honeymoon, namely, your not having received an invitation to our wedding.’

I smiled and said, like Mr. Toots and quite as foolishly, that it was of no consequence; but he shook his head.

‘It cannot be but that you must have thought it very unfriendly, and indeed downright discourteous,’ he continued. ‘You were, of course, to be my best man; but when we spoke of it at Lavender Hill my father-in-law fell into almost the same way about it as he did in Driffell’s case, and indeed on his account. He said that you had seen of late a great deal of Lucy, which he thought injudicious, since it kept up a certain indirect connection between her and Driffell; that your coming to the house would naturally increase intimacy; and, in a word, that he would not encourage it. You may imagine what I felt at this, and I am sure you would have been satisfied with what I said. It is probably many years, if ever, since the old gentleman heard so many home truths as I supplied him with. I was sure of Grace and wanted none of his money, so that I could afford to give him my views upon his behaviour. It was a very unpleasant interview, and but for Parker—who I must say behaved like a trump—might have had very unpleasant consequences. Though I had to give in, I felt I could not write to you on the subject; I was too

ashamed to do it, and besides it was so difficult to explain the matter on paper. So Grace and I agreed to trust to your good-natured forbearance, and to wait to explain what must have seemed our outrageous conduct till we got home.'

Of course I begged Braidwood not to say another word about it, and as I was doing so the door opened, and his wife re-entered the room accompanied by a lady whose beauty threw even that of Grace into the shade. She was older by some few years, but still combined the charms of youth with that sympathetic gentleness of expression, born of solicitude for her little ones, which is only to be found in matrons.

'My sister, Mrs. Parker,' said Grace, though the introduction was unnecessary, for her likeness to both her and Lucy was unmistakable; they were by far the three prettiest women—though 'pretty' was a word that did scant justice to them—I ever saw in one family.

'I *ought* to know Mr. Gresham,' said Mrs. Parker, with gentle significance, 'and it is not my fault, nor, I may add, my husband's, that I have not done so long ago.'

The sweetness of her voice, the graciousness of her manner, are as impossible to convey in words as some ravishing note in music. I was literally enchanted, and stammered out something exquisitely silly about it being better late than never. She very properly took no notice of it.

'Richard and Grace have talked of you so often,' she continued, 'that you seem to be quite an old acquaintance, while Lucy is for ever praising the articles of her co-contributor in the "Crescent." Richard thinks nothing of his father's magazine, but *we* think immensely of it.'

I would rather she had spoken of my articles from personal knowledge than at second hand, but it was clear she meant nothing but kindness.

'Miss Lucy herself,' I replied, 'is a very brilliant contributor to the "Crescent"; Mr. Gledson calls her "our poet."'

'But is not that rather hard upon Mr. Miniver,' remarked Grace, smiling, 'who writes verses in the "Crescent" also?'

'My belief is,' observed Braidwood, 'that they use the thing instead of the penny post to communicate their tender thoughts to each other.'

'You are very scandalous, Richard,' said Mrs. Parker reprovingly.



‘And very disrespectful to the “Crescent,”’ added her sister.

‘Miniver’s attitude to it is not exactly reverent,’ remarked Braidwood. ‘You should hear him give imitations of old Gled.’

‘And not only of old Gled., I dare say,’ said I, with a smile that I felt to be rather faint.

‘Well, he has given us one or two of the other contributors,’ admitted Braidwood; ‘but very good-natured sketches, you know.’

Both the ladies were laughing; it was clear to me that, though Mrs. Parker had not seen me before, she had seen somebody *like* me. I knew that Miniver possessed great powers of mimicry, with which he had often amused me, but it never before struck me that its exercise was so reprehensible.

‘He does Linton capitally,’ continued Braidwood. ‘You know Linton, who writes about the aristocracy—county people and that sort of thing? Linton the Liar, as old Gled. calls him. His boastfulness about his genealogy and his family title-deeds, though he lives in second-floor lodgings, and how he “writes for the ‘Times,’” as he calls it, but is never printed—all that Miniver paints to the life.’

I knew that very well; but I should not have called it a good-natured sketch. My face, I suppose, betrayed my feelings, for Grace here observed very gravely—

‘I am sure that Mr. Gresham will understand that Mr. Miniver is much too good a friend of his to describe him ill-naturedly, and that even if it were otherwise he would not choose us for his audience.’

‘That’s quite true, my dear fellow,’ said Braidwood; ‘my wife would be at him like a wild cat if he represented you unworthily.’

These excellent people certainly took a great deal of trouble to flatter my *amour propre*, which, as is the case with most persons of my age, was easily wounded. As for not having been asked to Braidwood’s wedding, I still thought it a personal slight, but it was plain they had not been to blame for it, and if for the moment I had felt irritated with Miniver for not having resisted the temptation of making fun of me, as he made of every one else, Mrs. Braidwood’s gracious words had won my forgiveness. Indeed when Miniver called on me, as it happened, that very evening, I was unfeignedly glad to see him; I had not met him since he had been at the wedding, and was curious to learn his impressions of the Gilderoy family. To my inquiries about the old gentleman he favoured me with what was doubtless an admirable portrait,

but from not having seen the original I was, of course, unable to appreciate the likeness. From the hacking cough, the slipshod gait, the depressed tone, diversified by fits of impatience, I could gather, however, what manner of man Mr. Gilderoy was far better than from any mere verbal description.

‘We met on an auspicious occasion,’ said Miniver; ‘we probably saw him at his best, but still we could pretty well imagine what his worst was. Even from his daughters, you know, one could gather it was pretty bad, or, at all events, had been so. Uncle Charles, as they call him—that is, Mr. Parker—gave me to understand that things had much improved of late years. In fact, with him the old fellow is not only very reasonable, but, as it seems to me, is twisted about his little finger. I was told that the only thing in which he has opposed himself to Parker was that affair of poor Driffell; about that he was adamant.’

‘And I conclude will always be so,’ I remarked. ‘I mean that no lapse of time will cause him to regard Driffell with favour.’

I noticed that Miniver looked rather uncomfortable as he replied: ‘No, I fear, that is I think not; it appears to me that matter is closed for good.’

It was not the first time I had had my suspicions of Miniver as regarded Lucy. They had met more than once at the ‘Crescent’ office; a good deal oftener, it was probable, at Mrs. Argent’s; and might not his selection as Braidwood’s best man have had something to do with his future admission to the family? There was not a word to be said against him; he was a very suitable match for Lucy every way; he was not taking her away from Driffell, for that matter, as he had truly said, was ‘closed,’ nor did I think that Lucy would have reopened it even if she had had the chance. Yet I felt sick at heart for poor Laurence, and the disappointment of his fondest hope. That Miniver spoke with rapture of Mrs. Parker did not at all surprise me; it did not need that he thought himself likely to become her brother-in-law that he expressed himself with such enthusiasm.

‘Parker, as I have said, I like, but he is not to be spoken of in the same breath as his wife; indeed, he seems to me too old and serious for her. But I am bound to say I never saw a more loving couple. She seems to sympathise with him in everything, and only regrets that dear Charles is really too domestic, and thereby prevents the world—by not mixing with it—from appreciating his perfections.’

Then we began to talk 'shop.' We were both making our way, in a modest fashion, in the literary world, and both pretty constant contributors to the 'Crescent.' Miniver was rather too full of fun to suit its highly respectable pages; Mr. Gledson thought him rather flippant and frivolous as a writer, though personally he could not help liking him. I had an idea that Braidwood had helped him to his connection with the magazine, as indeed he had helped me.

'Old Gled. has asked me to give him some society sketches,' observed Miniver; 'they are to begin next month.'

'You will do them very well, no doubt,' I said; 'so far as the men go, at least, no one better. But I should have thought, since you are a bit of a Bohemian, that you would not so accurately describe the ladies. But perhaps you have had some recent experiences of which I know nothing.'

Miniver flushed in what I thought a very tell-tale manner. 'Well, the fact is,' he said, 'I am to have some assistance. The speeches are to be done in collaboration.'

'What, with some lady-killer?'

'No, with a lady; in fact, with Miss Lucy Gilderoy.'

I dare say it was wrong, I am sure it was vulgar, but I exclaimed: 'The deuce they are!'

Of course it is possible for folks to collaborate and yet not be in love with each other. Monsieur Chatrian, for example, if one can trust to the law reports, was certainly not in love with Monsieur Erckmann; but the case of Mr. Frederic Miniver and Miss Lucy Gilderoy was different. The piece of information that had just been communicated to me convinced me, in fact, of what I had previously only suspected. Miniver was to win the prize which Laurence had lost. I did not tax him with it (and indeed he was not to blame), and at that time he did not acknowledge that there was anything between them beyond liking, but had he confessed they were already engaged it could not have brought conviction nearer home. After all, why should it not be so? I reflected. They were kindred spirits; the one gay and bright as a bird, the other less superficial and more imaginative, but fond of innocent pleasures and not inclined to take disappointments to heart. He was a more fitting match for her than Laurence, I felt assured, and also that that would be her view of the matter; there had been a little kink in the strands of her life, but now it had been smoothed away, and there would be no further need to think

about it. But poor Laurence was not made that way, and my whole heart ached for him, while it felt an unreasonable indignation against Miniver, to whom happiness had come so easily. Perhaps a little jealousy on my own account mingled with this feeling; for now it was plain why Miniver had been selected as Braidwood's best man instead of myself; his welcome at Lavender Hill was also obviously to be set down to the same cause, though I could still hardly understand how Mr. Gilderoy had been induced to show no objection to one who, though not so intimately as myself, had been on terms of friendship with Laurence Driffell. If Miniver and Lucy should marry, there would of course be no further fear of the associations of which the old gentleman had been so apprehensive, and it was possible that even I myself should be no longer in a state of 'taboo.' It may be thought that I was wanting in self-respect in thus looking forward to being received with favour by one who had behaved so ill both to myself and my friend; but I very much prized the acquaintance of such of the Gilderoy's as I knew, and the antagonism of the head of the family obviously interfered with it; and, moreover, though I scarcely confessed it even to myself, I was inexplicably curious to see this old gentleman who seemed to play the part of a small providence (though not a good one) to so many people.

In a few days after this conversation with Miniver this opportunity seemed to be offered me. I was calling at Mrs. Argent's, and to my great pleasure found Mrs. Parker with her. She had brought one of her children with her, a beautiful but rather delicate-looking little girl; they were presently, she said, going to be called for by her husband.

'It will, I am sure,' she observed, 'be a great pleasure to him to make your acquaintance, Mr. Gresham. He has no sympathy with papa's prejudices against you, and has done his best, though, unfortunately, without success, to remove them.'

'I am greatly obliged both to him and to you,' I answered, smiling, 'but I should be sorry to be the cause of your husband getting into any trouble or unpleasantness on my account. Perhaps it will be better for me to remove the object of so much apprehension,' and I rose to depart.

'Indeed, Mr. Gresham,' she replied gravely, 'I do hope you will not go away for any such reason. Though my husband is willing to do much for peace and quietness, he is the last person to place himself in a false position for the sake of conciliating

anybody. He would not sacrifice his independence of character for the sake of any man, however nearly he may be related to him, and indeed I know that he is desirous of an opportunity to assure you of his personal disapproval of the way in which you have been treated. The chance may not occur again, since I can so seldom get him to leave business and give me the pleasure of his company even for an afternoon. If it were only to oblige me, Mr. Gresham, I entreat you to stay.'

'My dear Mrs. Parker,' said I, 'of course I will stay.' Then the conversation turned upon Lucy and her literary work. 'So I hear your sister is going to shoot folly as it flies, to describe the world of society in the "Crescent,"' I observed.

'I believe she has something of that kind in view,' replied Mrs. Parker. Her voice had its usual gentleness, but I thought there was a false note in it, a certain affected ignorance or indifference, which I rather resented. I was debarred from intercourse with the Gilderoy family, but Miniver was my friend, and she need not have taken it for granted that he had not informed me of the matter.

'And the sketches,' I remarked, 'are to be made in collaboration, I understand.'

'You will say I am not very literary, but as to "collaboration,"' observed Mrs. Argent, 'I don't quite know what that means.'

'Well, when a young gentleman and a young lady collaborate,' said I——

There was a ring at the front door, and the child jumped up, crying: 'That is papa.'

The delicate subject, if it was so, was forgotten. A flush of pleasure overspread Mrs. Parker's gentle face. She looked like one who has some present to show one which we are sure to admire.

'Edith, run down and bring your papa up, and tell him Mr. Gresham is here. He will be so pleased.'

The child obeyed with a shriek of delight, and after the manner of her age omitted to close the door behind her. From the echoing hall we heard the sound of the visitor's footsteps on the tiled floor; the welcoming voice of the girl as she hurried downstairs into her father's arms; then a few words, which, of course, we could not catch; and then the opening and shutting of the hall door.

'I hope nobody has called just at this moment,' observed Mrs. Parker anxiously; 'it will be so awkward.'

Then the child returned, with a very different step from that with which she had left us. The tears were gathering in her eyes, her voice was laden with them as she said: 'Oh, mamma, I have had such a disappointment.'

'But where's your papa?' exclaimed her mother.

'He is not coming; he has gone. Is it not sad?'

'Sad! it is unaccountable. What can it mean? What did he say?'

'Well, he bade me tell you he was very sorry, but some urgent work had just come in at the office and demanded his immediate attention; he ought not to have come at all, he said, only he could not bear the idea of sending any one else to put you off. And you were to take me to the Zoological Gardens just the same,' added the child, not so rapidly as the rest of her story, but with even more impressiveness.

'It is the first time this month,' said poor Mrs. Parker, in a most distressful tone, 'that Charles has been at liberty to give me an afternoon.'

'Then let us hope it is very important business indeed,' said Mrs. Argent, dryly, 'that has prevented it.'

'There is no doubt of that,' replied Mrs. Parker, the injured wife lost at once in the tender apologist; 'it will have distressed him almost as much as me. I have not much heart for sightseeing now, but since he wishes me not to disappoint you, my darling, let us go.'

Mr. Parker, so far as we knew, had expressed no such apprehension, but this paternal sentiment was, I am sure, attributed to him in the most perfect good faith. I never saw a wife more fond or more oblivious to a husband's failing. Mrs. Argent made no objection to her departure, but signed to me to remain behind.

'I am afraid my dear Mary has got a coward for her husband,' were her first words when we were left alone.

'Why so?' I inquired, for I was quite unaware of her meaning.

'Well, that story of his about business at the office was all rubbish. I heard his hansom stop and then go away without him; he had dismissed it and had no intention of giving up his plan of taking his wife and children to the Zoo, till Edith told him you were here. Then, out of fear of his father-in-law's displeasure, he did not dare to come up, but went away again. It was a cowardly thing to do, to disappoint that devoted wife of his for such a reason.'

‘But I thought,’ said I, ‘you had all such a high opinion of Mr. Parker.’

‘I used to think well of him myself, but of late I have had my doubts about him. You and I, Mr. Gresham, have always been good friends. You made me your confidant about Grace, you know, and a woman likes that; and I have always taken your part as regards your exclusion from the Gilderoy circle. I thought it very unjust that Mr. Miniver was admitted to it so easily while you were left out in the cold, and I said so. This has caused a little friction between me and Mr. Parker, who defended his father-in-law’s conduct, and that is why I was not informed of what I have no doubt is an engagement between Mr. Miniver and Lucy; it is not pretty to treat an old friend of the family like me in that way.’

I was sorry to see Mrs. Argent take the matter so much to heart, especially as it was partly for my sake.

‘I have no certain knowledge,’ I said, ‘of any engagement, but the collaboration looks a little suspicious.’

‘Well, of course,’ returned the widow, ‘and, moreover, I read the fact in Mary’s face; it was not her fault, of course, but her husband’s, that I have been kept in the dark about it, and she looked thoroughly ashamed of having had orders to hold her tongue.’

‘Then Mr. Parker, you think,’ I remarked, ‘can be authoritative like his father-in-law?’

‘I am really almost afraid to say what I think,’ said the widow, who, it was clear to me, thought she had said rather too much. ‘It is only certain that both you and I have cause of complaint against somebody.’

I laughed, and we parted in high good humour, but the occurrences of the afternoon had depressed me strangely. When we are young and healthy, and well-to-do, small troubles have power to distress us; we do not recognise how small they are till, as the children say, we get something really to cry about. A letter I received by that afternoon’s post from Luxton swept all remembrance of trivial annoyances out of my mind. It was from my old friend the rector, and marked ‘private and confidential.’

‘Pray come to the Rectory to-morrow (Saturday); we have had some news of the person in whom we are so much interested, and your presence and assistance will be of the greatest importance. Not a word of this, of course, to any one; you are merely coming

to spend a couple of nights at your old tutor's, as indeed you ought to have done long ago.'

That was quite true; I had not had the heart—which is the euphemism of selfish youth for not fulfilling a painful duty—to go to Luxton, and witness Laurence's melancholy and his mother's still more painful resignation. I had made new friends, had my own occupations, and, though I was certainly not indifferent to the lady of Driffell Hall and her son, had become independent of them. When people lose their spirits they must be very sanguine if they still expect to retain the society of the young.

Whatever had been amiss with my previous conduct, I had not, however, a moment's hesitation in obeying Mr. Chorley's summons. I telegraphed at once to announce my arrival, and the rector met me at the station. I thought he looked older and graver than I had ever seen him. He was a good, easy-going clergyman of the old style, disinclined for all business matters unconnected with his calling, and I could easily imagine that the having to take a part, however small, in a matter such as he had now in hand was very disagreeable to him. That Fate had vouchsafed to him alone the opportunity of meeting the missing man was not a favour that he was thankful for. He had, of course, revealed that incident to Mr. Sandeman, though with greater hesitation and doubt of it having actually occurred than when he spoke of it to me. As the train took him farther and farther from London, he told me, the incident seemed more and more unreal to him. And he had every wish to disbelieve in its occurrence. For if he saw the missing man, it was certain that his old friend and neighbour was behaving—whatever might be his reason for it—in a most disgraceful and unfeeling manner. It is not too much to say that he would have preferred to have had certain news of Mr. Driffell's death. When he told his story to the lawyer, Mr. Sandeman had put aside at once all notion of his senses having been misled in the matter. He was not a man who suffered from imagination himself, and he could not understand how, provided one was not near-sighted, one's eyesight could deceive one. He too, perhaps, would have preferred to have heard of his former client's demise—if he could have got good evidence of it—but the fact of Mr. Driffell's being alive and in London was not unwelcome to him, since it offered at least a chance of opening some sort of communication with him, which by this time had grown to be of great importance, for the time had arrived for the execution of that deed between



father and son which was so essential to the latter's interests. At present the lawyer and the rector were the only persons who were in possession of the fact (for such it was concluded to be) of Mr. Driffell's existence; and it had been decided between them that an appeal should be made to him on his son's behalf. Accordingly, the following cautiously worded advertisement had been inserted in the 'Agony Column' of the 'Times':

'A has been seen and recognised; no attempt will be made to discover his secret, but he is earnestly entreated for a's sake (who is unacquainted with it) to afford S., in conjunction with one other person, the opportunity of seeing him with the view of transacting most important business, after which (if he so pleases) all connection with him will finally close.

This advertisement, on which he immensely prided himself (and to which, by the way, he presently drew my attention as a literary man and a judge of composition), owed its being to Mr. Sandeman's unaided genius. The rector would have had some appeal made to the feelings of the missing man, and a 'door for repentance,' as he expressed it, however tardily, opened to him; but the lawyer had justly pointed out that the time had gone by for such overtures; the man had been too long living his new life, whatever it might be, to be recalled to his old one, and if he had repented of the step he had taken it had always been within his power to retrace it. The rector, in his simplicity, would have headed the advertisement, 'To G.D.' which, as the lawyer pointed out, would have been recognised at once by any reader cognisant of the circumstances, whereas the great A and the little a (for his son) would awaken no suspicion, while the true initial S. (for Sandeman) would make the matter plain to the person they were addressing, if his eye (and whose more likely to give its attention to an 'Agony Column'?) should fall on it at all.

'It was all very clever and logical,' observed Mr. Chorley dryly, while narrating these facts to me after dinner; 'but what rather took the gilt off Sandeman's gingerbread was this little note I got the next day from an old acquaintance of yours:

'"Dear Sir,—I recognised, of course, your communication to Mr. D. in to-day's 'Times.' It was not very prudently worded. Still, it is not everybody who, like myself, finds a particular interest in the 'Agony Column.' I gather from it that the opinion I always expressed to you about that gentleman's disappearance is

confirmed. I am, as before, entirely at your service in case you think I may be useful in what I may call the second chapter of this strange story.

“Yours truly,

“ROBERT DERING.”

‘In spite of the blow this gave to Sandeman’s *amour propre*,’ continued the rector, ‘I think he would have employed Dering (on account of the marvellous sagacity he had exhibited in deciphering that advertisement) if he had not received the next day a communication from Mr. Driffell himself (as we conclude it to be), when, knowing your affectionate interest in Laurence’s affairs, he caused me to summon *you* hither.’

This communication, of which the rector produced a copy, was written in a clerkly hand, not the least like that of Mr. Driffell, and was certainly terse and cold enough.

‘A has seen the advertisement inserted (as he concludes) by S. in the “Times.” He is willing to execute the deed to which it alludes upon the following conditions: S. and one other person as a witness, and no more, to be present at the interview; A’s name and address to be communicated only to these persons, to C. and to a, and to no others; a deed of forfeiture of ten thousand pounds in case the condition is not kept, or any other further communication with A is attempted, to be signed by a, and deposited in A’s keeping. Advertise if these terms are accepted in the same column as before.’

‘This proviso of the deed of forfeiture,’ said the rector, ‘is, according to Sandeman’s view, a mere *brutum fulmen*, but the mention of it he thought a proof of *bona fides*; it would not have been put forward had not the offer of our unhappy friend been a genuine one.’

‘And little a,’ I said; ‘poor Laurence, does he know of all this?’

‘It was absolutely necessary that he should know it,’ said the rector, ‘since without him the deed could not be executed, and to me fell the painful task of revealing it to him. It is sad enough, my dear Gresham, to have to speak to a father (as it has occasionally been my lot as a clergyman to do) of his son’s misconduct, but how much worse to speak to a son of that of his father!’

‘It must indeed have been a dreadful business,’ I murmured. ‘How did Laurence take it?’

‘In one sense admirably—that is, there was no outburst of

indignation, no denunciation of his father's cruelty. One might have thought he had no feeling on his own account about the matter at all; but he dropped a few words upon "the selfishness and brutality" with which his mother had been treated which showed the bitterness of his soul. The fact is, I think, that with the loss of respect for his father all his former attachment to him has departed, but the knowledge that his mother still entertains her affection for the man who has proved himself so undeserving of it is wormwood to him. When I spoke to him of the absolute necessity of keeping this matter secret from her, he exclaimed with vehemence: "Secret? Of course it must be secret. To tell her would be to kill her, to shatter an already half-broken heart. My belief is that she is almost convinced that he is alive, yet holds on the skirts of hope. Her dear George, she says to herself, could never, never treat her with such cruel scorn." When I urged, weakly enough it must be confessed, that as we had no facts before us, we were not in a position, when speaking of his father's conduct, to condemn it unreservedly, he replied that in addition to his heartless desertion of his wife he did not care what Mr. Driffell had done; no subsequent crime could be greater than that first one. His calling his father "Mr. Driffell" was, I thought, terribly significant. He seemed resolved to ignore the relationship altogether. He consented, indeed, to the arrangement proposed by Mr. Sandeman, but just as he would have done if it had been connected with a stranger, with this difference—he stipulated that when completed it should not again be alluded to. *That*, he said, since provisos were being made, was his proviso.

'Then I am not to speak to Laurence about the matter?' said I anxiously.

'Not a word; indeed he does not even know that you are cognisant of it; he expressed great pleasure at hearing you were to be with me for a day or two, but you may be certain that he will make no confidant of you.'

The relief that those words gave me it is impossible for me to express. From the moment I had been informed of what had occurred, I had had a dreadful conviction that I had been summoned to Luxton to break the matter to Laurence; now I did not know why I was wanted, but, for whatever reason, I felt that it could not involve anything so painful and unwelcome as that. At the same time I was by no means easy about it, and when the rector observed: 'That is all, my dear Frank, I need say of the

matter to-night, and will leave Sandeman to tell the rest of the story,' I was not sorry for the respite.

Though I was but a stone's-throw from the Hall, I felt disinclined to visit it that evening. The news I had heard had upset me, and so pressed upon my thoughts that I feared lest Laurence should read them in my face.

Mr. Sandeman looked in the next morning after breakfast; Mr. Chorley had asked him to dine with us the previous night, but he thought that his being invited apart from his wife might arouse that astute lady's suspicions. His countenance presented a very different appearance from that of the rector's; its cheerfulness was by no means depressed by the moral delinquency of his former client; he was now acting for his son, and had brought about—or was on the verge of doing so—an arrangement of great advantage to him, which had seemed utterly beyond hope and could only have been effected by an exceptional intelligence.

'Well, you see, my young friend,' he said, shaking hands with me very cordially, 'we were obliged to send for you back to Luxton after all; we couldn't get on without you.'

At this I smiled, though it was not a comfortable smile, for I saw that his speech was not one of mere compliment.

'The rector has told you, no doubt, of the success of our negotiations—he has shown you my advertisement, and the success it has met with. We have replied to Mr.—well, we can't be too cautious, even among friends, let us say our missing friend—by the same channel, and he has appointed an address for the desired meeting. I am going up for the purpose on Monday morning, and you are going with me.'

I said I should be very glad to have the pleasure of his company, but I did not feel so very pleased. It was evident that I was not wanted as a mere travelling companion. The rector perceived my discomfort, and here put in his word. The dear old man doubtless thought that the proposed appeal would have more force with me from his lips than from those of another.

'The fact is, my dear Frank, we have to ask you a favour that we are very sure, for all our sakes, that you will not refuse. We want you to be the witness of which Mr. Driffell writes, and whose presence is necessary for the signature of the deed.'

'The witness!' cried I, aghast. 'Do you mean to say I am to see Mr. Driffell?'

'Well, of course,' exclaimed the lawyer cheerfully. 'Who

so fitting? Indeed you are the only person possible, at least on our side, since the knowledge of the affair is to be limited to four of us, and you are already one of them. Our missing friend won't bite you.'

Never was jesting, I thought, more ill timed or, as the Apostle terms it, 'inconvenient.' If I had had the courage to be coward enough, I would have refused. I did not say 'no' to a proposal which I felt to be so necessary to the interests of my friend; but the idea of meeting Mr. Driffell was hateful to me. Even that of doing so in the street by chance had haunted me ever since Mr. Chorley had had that painful experience; but to do so designedly, to see the man who had once been so kind to me, but for whom I now felt nothing but contempt, was abhorrent to me to the last degree.

'It will not be a long business,' said the lawyer comfortingly; 'the interview will be at least as disagreeable to him as to you. I doubt whether he will even open his lips. You will not be doing anything inimical to his interests, remember; on the contrary, you will be helping him to make some atonement, which he will doubtless be glad to make, for the wrong that he has done to his own flesh and blood.'

This argument was a sensible one, and had its weight with me, though, as I have said, in any case I should not have resisted the appeal.

'It will be very unpleasant,' I said—not, it must be confessed, very graciously—'but of course I am in your hands. I will do what you wish.'

'I knew you would, Frank, unless you were greatly changed,' exclaimed the rector a little triumphantly.

'Who ever doubted it?' observed the lawyer, clapping me on the back.

My impression is that *he* had doubted it, and that Mr. Chorley had been confident to the contrary; but, at all events, the matter was settled. I had to look forward as cheerfully as I could to my 'black Monday.'

It was in the 'bleak November,' the saddest and gloomiest month of the year, that I took my way that afternoon over the dead leaves and the rotting soil along the path to the Hall. How often had I trodden it with the gaiety and elasticity of youth, and with the certainty of a jovial welcome from my old playfellow, and how far away that time seemed now! Yet, as I drew near the

once hospitable door, it seemed strange that Mr. Driffell was not there, as he was wont to be at that hour, having returned home to lunch, and starting again for the mill, with his cigar stuck in the extreme corner of his mouth, and eager to be at work again. No one was now visible, and I noticed that the drive in front of the house had no impress of wheel or hoof. I had heard that no company, save a few intimate friends, were now received, and, as it seemed, there were even no callers. It was a comfort to me to see Merton's familiar face, as he opened the door to me, for (though I don't know why, except that everything had the air of change) I had almost expected a stranger's. Whether he was really pleased to see me, or the gloom of the house had put him into chronic high spirits, he greeted me with a welcoming smile.

'This is a sight, Mr. Frank, good for sore eyes,' he was so good as to say; then, as if repenting of so much cordiality, he added: 'But you ain't so bright-looking as you were, and ever so much older. Dearie me, what a change a few years do make!'

'I am afraid it has been made in other people too, Merton,' said I smiling, for indeed the butler, whom I had always known mature, like his master's wines, had got to look quite the old man.

'Well, yes, sir; neither the missis nor Master Laurence are what they used to be,' he replied, ignoring the personal allusion; 'things are very quiet here—not a bottle of champagne been drawn for a twelvemonth. However, please the pigs, there will be some "pop" to-night.'

As he evidently suggested that the wine would make its appearance in my honour, I forgave him the extreme familiarity of the remark.

'Is Mr. Laurence at home?' I asked.

'Oh no, sir; he is at the mill, as usual; never comes back in the arfternoon to take his snack, as his father did. It's grind, grind, grind, with him all day.'

However wholesome this devotion to business might be for him, as preventing his mind from dwelling on less agreeable themes, it struck me that it must make his mother's life a very lonely one.

'Mrs. Driffell is within, I conclude?' for the butler had already taken charge of my hat and umbrella.

'Yes, sir, in the old master's room; there she sits mostly all

her time now. The drawing-room is seldom used, and for that matter the dining-room might be shut up too, so far as dinners are concerned.' The contempt with which Mr. Merton hinted at the very moderate character of the meals which were now provided in the establishment was equal to a folio of condemnation.

I was ushered into the room on the left hand of the entrance hall, where Mr. Driffell had been accustomed to transact such business as could not well be seen to in the billiard-room. It was very sparsely furnished with such things as had sufficed for the master's scanty needs, including even some boxes of cigars in a cupboard with a glass door; nothing was added or had been improved upon; even the volumes in the bookcases were mostly old ledgers. An apartment unlike one's notion of a lady's boudoir indeed. Yet here, as the butler had said, his mistress sat every day, and almost all day, in preference to any other room, because, of course, it had been her husband's; it was the nearest approach to him she could get. If he was dead in the flesh, but still at home in the spirit, it was probable that he would be there, where he had engaged himself in the work that had so interested him, but which he had left so suddenly and mysteriously unfinished.

The behaviour of those who have loved and lost is in this respect singularly opposite. Some avoid every spot where they have been together; the remembrance of every object is embittered by association; they endeavour to make a home for themselves somewhere where the feet of the loved one have never trodden. Others, again, haunt the places with which he has been familiar, and every object seems sanctified on which his eye has been wont to dwell. Mrs. Driffell belonged to the latter class, but with a difference. I fancy that there was some sense of atonement in what she did; she had never been able, though she had done her best, to sympathise with her husband's pursuits, or even understand their nature. He had not expected it, perhaps not even desired it; but she had, nevertheless, lamented the fact, and was remorseful about it, though, Heaven knows, she had not been to blame. It was in some sort by way of penance, I think, that she sat in his old business room surrounded by those account books.

'Ah, Frank, how nice it is to see you here again!' she exclaimed, holding out both her thin white hands. 'But it is a selfish pleasure; you will find us very dull, I fear. The Hall is not what it used to be.' Her lip trembled, the tears rose to her eyes.

‘I wish for your sake, dear Mrs. Driffell,’ I replied, ‘that it was in my power to enliven it, but for me the Hall will always be like home. I have never received in it anything but kindness; it is associated in my memory with my happiest days.’

‘It is good of you to say so,’ she said, smiling, ‘and good of you to come back to it, knowing how it has changed. We hear of all your successes, and sympathise with them most heartily.’ She touched a copy of the ‘Crescent’ that lay on the table. ‘Dr. Garden always prophesied that you would make a name for yourself. To know that you have done so is one of our few pleasures.’

What a selfish brute I felt! How very little I had of late concerned myself about this faithful friend! Still, thank Heaven, I was now about to do what little I could for her, or rather for her son, which, indeed, was the same thing. I expressed the gratitude I felt for her kind thoughts as well as I could, which was but poorly, for I was deeply moved. Then I asked after Laurence.

‘He is well,’ she replied, ‘and takes a great interest in his affairs; that is his safety-valve, poor fellow. He has not got over his miserable disappointment.’

‘It was a sad business,’ I replied; ‘but neither he nor Lucy was to blame.’

‘That is what he tells me,’ she said, I thought a little dryly. ‘He has not a word to say against her. I hope the consequences which have been so disastrous to him have not so cruelly affected her.’

This was not put as a direct question, but I felt that it demanded a reply. It embarrassed me excessively, for my mind had been so monopolised by the rector’s news and the thought of the ordeal that lay before me on Monday, that I had for the moment forgotten what it was my duty to break to Laurence concerning a matter that had even now, perhaps, an interest greater, or at all events nearer his heart, than that on account of which I had been summoned to Luxton. My hesitation, and probably some look of trouble and distress in my face, did not escape my companion.

‘Has this girl already found another lover?’ she inquired in a tone so curt, nay contemptuous, that, coming from so gentle a creature, I could hardly believe my ears.

‘I believe that there is a likelihood of her being engaged to be married,’ I answered, ‘though I have not been positively informed of it.’



'I am not surprised,' said Mrs. Driffell coldly; then added, with an intense tenderness, 'Poor Laurence!'

'Let us hope, in course of time,' I said, 'that he will get over his trouble; some good girl will doubtless be found to make him happy yet.'

'That has been my hope until lately,' she rejoined, 'but I fear that his disappointment has sunk too deep.'

It was very inconsistent, I thought, that Mrs. Driffell should have shown such indignation against Lucy for forming another attachment, when it was the very thing she was hoping that Laurence would do; but to argue about such a matter, though I should have liked to put in a word for Lucy, would have been fruitless. With Laurence I knew it would be different; the news might be bitter to him, but he would attribute no blame to his old love.

'Do you think it best that I should tell your son?' I inquired gently. I most devoutly hoped she would have said 'No,' feeling very little confidence in my own diplomacy.

She hesitated a moment, then answered: 'If you will be so good; it is a painful task to impose upon you, but if I broke it to him I might say things which would distress him and yet would do no good. Being a man you will have sympathy for the girl, whereas I, you see, am his mother.'

I understood her, of course, at once; she could not trust herself to speak of 'the girl' to the son who, she was well aware, was her lover still.

Presently Laurence came home, and welcomed me with all his old friendship. His manner, which had never been gay, was graver than it used to be; we say of some men that they look 'well and hearty;' he looked well enough, but *not* hearty—the heart, as it seemed to me, had gone out of him. In tone, as in form—for the becoming leanness of youth had left him and he had 'put on flesh'—he was ten years older. I dined alone with him and his mother, the rector having an engagement (or, as I suspect, having invented one) for that evening; and afterwards Laurence and I adjourned, as usual, to the billiard-room. However, we did not play, but sat over the fire with our cigars. We had talked of the past, though it had not been easy to do so, so far as the old life at the Hall was concerned, since the central figure of it had to be left out; and also of our life at college, with no reference, however, to that fateful May term and our lady

visitors. And we had talked still more about Laurence's business affairs; it was the topic that he took most interest in, and the more eloquent he was upon it the better I was pleased, for it was a safe subject: in all others I felt there was danger. Still, this reticence about matters which, I was well convinced, were uppermost in his mind was very uncomfortable; it was not, it must be confessed, a pleasant evening, and I was congratulating myself that it was drawing to a conclusion without the occurrence of any unhappy allusion, when suddenly Laurence put this amazing question to me:

'When is Lucy going to be married, Gresham?'

'To be married! Who told you she was going to be married?'

'You did,' he answered with a sad smile, 'or at least your silence did so; your avoiding all mention of her could only be explained one way. You knew, of course, I should be glad to have any news of her but that.'

'And why not that?' I answered, not without some resentment. It seemed to me that Laurence was acting the dog in the manger; since he could not marry the poor girl, why should he be angry that some one else was about to take his place? I had not been angry with Braidwood because he had married Grace; to be sure, there was some difference in the circumstances, but I was never of a jealous temper. The fact was that I scarcely understood Laurence's character, how changed and even warped it had been by that great disappointment of his life. Even now it seems to me that when a young fellow has failed to secure his first love, his best and most natural course is to look out for a second; at all events not to fret and fume at Fate, and to become isolated and morose because things have not turned out at first exactly as he would have had them. There are as good fish in the sea—but these are the views of a philosopher who has long been content to see others wooing and winning, or losing, without the least inclination to join in so exciting a game. I have avoided speculative investment of all kinds on principle, and am really no judge of the conduct of one so utterly different in character from myself as Laurence Driffell.

'You are right,' he said gently, after a little pause, 'I have no cause to be angry. It will be my happiness, and I shall have no other'—he said this with a pathos of which I had not thought him capable, and which filled me with remorse and pity—'to know that all is well with her.'

I took his hand, and pressed it. 'That is right,' I said, 'and like yourself.'

'No,' he said gravely, 'I shall never be like myself again.'

Laurence was incapable of a joke at the best of times, and the present occasion could hardly come under that category, but his reply certainly sounded very strange. A ghost of a smile perhaps hovered on my lips, for he went on :

'You may well think, Frank, that the less I am like my old self the better. There was great room for improvement, no doubt, but some also for deterioration ; and that is the way I have gone.'

I murmured something of incredulity and remonstrance, and laid my hand upon his shoulder. We were, for the moment, boys again, when there were no rivals—whether male or female—in our regard for one another. There had been silence between us for some time, when suddenly Laurence exclaimed, with an effort I thought, but quite cheerfully :

'And who is to be the happy man, Frank?'

When I said 'Miniver,' he drove his heel into the burning logs in front of which we sat, and uttered the only execration I ever heard pass his lips.

'And why not Miniver,' I said gently, 'as well as another?'

'Quite true, I was wrong,' he replied, like a child who owns his fault ; 'just for the moment it was hard to bear, Frank, but, as you say, "Why not Miniver?" He is a good fellow ; he will make her a good husband ; but he will never love her as I loved her—never, never, *never*.'

It was very touching to see this passion of tenderness in one naturally so unemotional. It seemed to wring his very heart-strings. However, there was no more of it, and before we said good night, which was also good-bye, he had completely regained his composure.

In reply to Mr. Sandeman's second advertisement he had received a notification, in the same handwriting as before, that Monday would be a convenient day for the proposed meeting. The hour was four in the afternoon, and the place certain Chambers in the Temple, where he was to ask for a Mr. Robson, the name (as we supposed) under which Mr. Driffell now passed.

The lawyer and I took the morning express to London, and, after an early dinner at the Club, drove together to the Temple. It was certainly the most unpleasant business I had ever been engaged in. The relations which had formerly existed between Mr.

Driffell and myself made it very hard for me. I felt that, considering my youth, he might deem my interference in his affairs an impertinence. But it was not my fault; I had had this responsibility thrust upon me, and there was no alternative (except a refusal too discreditable to be thought of) but to go through with it. Mr. Sandeman did not like his mission much better than I did, though I have no doubt he was to be well paid for it. We stepped out of the cab at the Temple gates as though it had been a mourning coach, and we had come to bury a Bencher. I had never seen the perky little lawyer look so lugubrious. The address we had been directed to was in Essex Court; a long list of names was painted on the doorpost, and over one of them was pasted 'Mr. Robson,' written on a piece of paper, in a handwriting which Mr. Sandeman at once recognised as the same with that of the communications he had received. If we could have read the name beneath it, it might have helped us to track our missing man, but this was not to be thought of; he had consented to see us only upon the understanding that no attempt of any kind should be made to discover his secret. Mr. Robson's chambers were on the first floor. In answer to our summons at a miniature knocker, a clerk, or a person who looked like one, ushered us into a large room, with a table covered with briefs, all of which, I noticed, were laid upon their backs, so that the names to which they were addressed could not be read.

'In one minute, gentlemen, Mr. Robson will see you,' he said, nor did he ask us even to sit down. At this I was far from being displeased, since it seemed to augur that our interview was to be made as short as possible. Indeed, in less than the time he had mentioned, he had entered an adjoining room and returned, bidding us follow him. Snow lay thick on the ground, the court was silent, and through the muffled roar of Fleet Street I could hear my heart beat.

In a small well-furnished room, with his back to the window but full in view, sat Mr. Driffell. He looked older than his years of absence could account for, and there was a streak or two of grey in his brown hair; but his face, though grave, was far from sad, and it was with a smile of welcome that he pointed to a couple of chairs, placed opposite the fire, and within easy reach of him.

'You have brought the papers, Mr. Sandeman,' he observed, 'and Mr. Gresham, I conclude, is to be our witness?'

The two 'Misters,' which he had never used before in addressing

either of us, seemed to signify that what lay before us was a matter of business only, and to preclude any possible reference to our previous relations.

‘I have them here,’ said the lawyer, producing them. ‘Your son has already signed them, I need not say with what——’

‘You need say nothing,’ interrupted Mr. Driffell austere-ly. There was something in the dryness and resolution of the tone that roused within me the remembrance of his interview with his workmen concerning the strike; ‘the point is that they are signed.’

I confess I was not sorry for the rebuke that was thus implied. I thought it foolish and useless that Mr. Sandeman should have made the least attempt, as was clear had been the case, to impart any sentiment into such a matter. All curiosity about his client had for the time departed from me; if the rest of the interview could have been conducted in dumb show, I should have been better pleased. It was almost so conducted; the rustle of parchments, the occasional scratch of a pen, for there were several deeds to be signed, were all that broke the uncomfortable silence, and seemed to intensify it. A line of Shelley that Mr. Driffell had once quoted to me about the busy woodpecker making ‘still by its sound the inviolable quietness’ occurred to me. The idea of *this* man quoting Shelley, and taking an interest in a boy’s budding literary taste, seemed preposterous. So cold and unmoved he looked that he might have been a graven image. When it came to my turn to sign, my fingers trembled so that they could hardly do their office. Mr. Driffell perceived my emotion, and, when I had finished my task, to my amazement and distress, held out his hand. I took it of course, and returned its pressure, but I felt that to speak, without tears, would have been impossible; there was, however, no need to speak. Mr. Driffell did not take my companion’s hand, but nodded to him, and said in quiet and almost indifferent tones, ‘Good-bye.’ I took up my hat at once, and already had my hand on the door, when I heard Mr. Driffell speaking in answer to something from Mr. Sandeman I did not catch.

‘Mr. Chorley is in error; you may tell him from me that I was never so happy as I am now.’

It struck me then, and I think so still, that his voice was that of a man who feels what he says; there was neither boast nor hesitation about it, but the confident assertion of a fact. Mr.

Sandeman was returning at once to Luxton, and I accompanied him so far in his cab.

‘What do you think of it all?’ I said.

‘I don’t know what to think,’ he answered; ‘the whole affair seems like a nightmare. You heard what he said about his being never so happy.’

‘I did indeed; if Mrs. Driffell had heard it, it would have broken her heart.’

‘I do not believe—to do him justice—that he thinks so. They were not altogether suited to each other, and he gives her credit for exercising the same philosophy in the matter as himself.’

I thought this the most sensible remark I had ever heard the lawyer make. It seemed impossible that Mr. Driffell, being the man he had been in my eyes, could have behaved with such callousness and cruelty had he been aware what misery he was inflicting. As to Laurence, his father had not, perhaps, estimated his filial affection very highly, and foresaw that such bond as there was between them, unequal to any strain of suspicion, would soon be snapped—which, indeed, had actually happened.

Still, the mystery of Mr. Driffell’s disappearance was as inexplicable as ever. On my way home on foot, after taking leave of Mr. Sandeman, an incident occurred which, coming after the events of that afternoon, struck me as remarkable. During all the time I had been in London I had never chanced to come across Mr. Dering, and this day, of all days, I had met him face to face in Piccadilly.

‘Well,’ he said, after a friendly greeting, ‘have your friends at Luxton run their fox to earth yet?’

I felt so self-conscious in the presence of my astute companion that, forgetting he knew nothing about my visit to Mr. Chorley, I half feared he would read my late experience in my tell-tale face. ‘I do not think so,’ I replied, it must be confessed rather feebly, since it was hardly a matter about which I could be in doubt.

He smiled his usual benignant smile with a touch of contempt in it. ‘Mr. Sandeman’s pack will never succeed without the help of the fox terrier,’ he went on. ‘Even with that help there is only one thing that can ever draw the fox out of his hole.’

‘And what is that?’

‘The long arm of the law.’

‘But that presupposes that the person you speak of has done something criminal,’ I answered; ‘which, from what we know of him, is out of the question.’

‘Luxton is an Eden,’ said Mr. Dering; ‘the people there are as innocent as our first parents before they upset the apple cart; but to find one who has been in London so long as you have been so guileless is refreshing indeed.’

‘Is it possible, Mr. Dering, that you can think a man like Mr. Driffell has brought himself within reach of the criminal law?’

‘I think nothing of the kind, Mr. Gresham, I am perfectly sure of it,’ was the uncompromising reply.

Strange to say, now that I had seen Mr. Driffell in the flesh, though his whereabouts and position were as mysterious as ever, I was less troubled by his presence in London than I had been when I had only had Mr. Chorley’s evidence of the fact; just as Robinson Crusoe was more alarmed by the footprint in the sand than by the appearance of the savages for which it had prepared him. I had now also a good deal of literary occupation, which prevented my dwelling so much on other matters. There were several periodicals besides the ‘Crescent’ very ready to accept my contributions, though I still maintained a constant connection with it. This kept me in touch with Miniver and also with Lucy; indeed, association with one included the other. There was now not only no doubt of their engagement; an early date had been fixed upon for their marriage. To neither of them did I say one word of my late visit to Luxton; any allusion to Laurence would, I felt, be a source of embarrassment to both of them. Miniver had succeeded where he had failed; Lucy, forbidden to wed him, had found a lover more to her mind; but neither of them had wronged him in any way. Why, then, should I embitter their happiness by the introduction of so painful a subject? Yet now and then their high spirits and manifest delight in each other’s society could not but jar somewhat on my mind when I remembered Laurence’s joyless face and the sadness that hung, like a cloud, over Driffell Hall.

The only shadow upon Miniver’s future, who had a greater regard for me than I deserved, was the reflection that I could not be present at his marriage; he was not so sparing of his denunciations of his father-in-law, that was to be, as Braidwood had been, but gave rather a different account of him.

‘In my opinion,’ he said, ‘I think the old gentleman is getting imbecile. I did not hesitate to tackle him concerning his refusal to see you and all that rubbish about raking up painful associations. I said if there was anything painful—though I didn’t see it—it was Lucy who would be affected by it, and that she was most anxious that you should be invited. He looked at me with lacklustre eyes, and shook his head, not, as it seemed to me, so much in negation as in nervous embarrassment, and muttered something about it being ‘impossible, quite impossible.’ I spoke to Parker about it, but he only shrugged his shoulders. I must say that Parker does that too often to my mind; he has greater influence with Mr. Gilderoy than any of the family, and might, I think, use it a little more for good if he chose.’

Of course I could only shrug *my* shoulders, and beg Miniver not to quarrel with any of his new relatives on my account. Lucy expressed an equal sorrow about the matter, though with less of indignation; it was her nature to submit to authority. I saw a good deal of her at the office of the ‘Crescent,’ where Miniver’s frequent visits were no doubt the attraction; his contributions were not only written in collaboration with her, but were often accompanied by illustrations from her pen. Braidwood thought her proceedings rather *infra dig.*, but of course Miniver was the only person to be consulted as to her conduct. We formed a very pleasant little literary triumvirate, in which I played the inconspicuous part of Lepidus. With such companionship as they vouchsafed to bestow on me, however, I was well content, and when they married and went on their honeymoon I missed them immensely. Mr. Gledson gave me a graphic account of the wedding. He corroborated Miniver’s view as to the mental condition of Mr. Gilderoy. It seemed strange to him that one whose faculties were so manifestly failing could have the vigour to exhibit such antagonism as he had persistently shown towards myself; but, on the other hand, he thought that Mr. Parker had done his best to mend matters. He described him as a man not only successful in business, but as having considerable literary attainments and not a little romance in his character. He had fallen in love with his wife at first sight at an age when such impetuosity is very unusual; but he appeared to make her an excellent husband, and was a great favourite with all the family—‘except, as you know,’ said Mr. Gledson, smiling, ‘his new brother-in-law. Miniver thinks that if he had put more pressure



on the old gentleman you would not have been excluded from the fold at Lavender Hill.'

I was sorry to hear that there had been any further friction on my account, but soon dismissed the subject from my mind. I should like to have seen more of Mrs. Parker—certainly a most fascinating and gentle creature—but her sisters I should still constantly meet either at their own houses or at Mrs. Argent's. It was a simple forecast of innocent enjoyment—more domestic, perhaps, than most young fellows of my age would have indulged in—but in my experience at Driffell Hall I had had dramatic incident enough to last my lifetime. And yet it was fated that I should again be brought face to face with it, and that in the most unexpected manner.

The Minivers had returned home from their marriage tour some weeks, and I was their most frequent visitor. Our tastes and pursuits were more or less similar, we were unfeignedly attached to one another, and our conversation was of a confidential character. As to my interview with Mr. Driffell my lips of course were sealed, but I had no other secrets from them, while Miniver discussed his wife's relations in her presence with good nature indeed, but with considerable unreserve. They were agreed on most points, and indeed the Gilderoy family—with the exception of its head, about whom little was said, partly from filial respect and partly because the poor gentleman had become, according to Miniver's account, hardly responsible for his actions—were a very nice family, and would stand a good deal of criticism. But Uncle Charles, as they called Mr. Parker, was a subject on which they had different opinions. Lucy admitted that he might have made a better fight for 'dear Mr. Gresham'—he who had once been 'dearest Laurence' was not alluded to—but he had a hard part to play with dear papa, and he really was the kindest soul. Everybody liked Uncle Charles who knew him.

'But nobody does know him,' argued Miniver, laughing; 'he is never seen except at the office or Lavender Hill. Though he is certainly not a young husband.'

'It is lucky Mary does not hear you,' put in Lucy.

'Well, he's fifteen years her senior, if not twenty. There, you *know* it's twenty,' added Miniver, triumphantly, 'or else you'd have said so sharp enough.'

'I am sure he doesn't look so,' said Lucy evasively.

'No, I am bound to say he is very well preserved. But, as I

was about to say, not being a Methuselah, why should he eschew all public entertainments and the haunts of his fellow-creatures? I grant that he can make himself agreeable, and perhaps that is the reason why he shuts himself up like a monk; he is afraid of becoming too cheap, I suppose.'

'You may suppose anything you like, my dear,' said Lucy, 'but you will never persuade me that Uncle Charles is not a very remarkable man. He fell in love with Mary, Mr. Gresham, at first sight, just like a boy, but she has never had any reason to repent of her bargain.'

'And what is Uncle Charles like to look at?' I inquired, 'for you must remember I have never been vouchsafed the opportunity of seeing him.'

'Well, he's about the average height, and rather slim—what you call a very young figure—his hair is brown, just a little tinged with grey, his eyes—'

'My dear Mrs. Miniver,' I exclaimed, laughing, 'your excellent description is quite thrown away upon me. I have never been able to picture to myself what a person really looks like from verbal descriptions, not even those of Sir Walter Scott.'

'Well, I'm sorry,' said Lucy, with a toss of her pretty head, 'that I can't make myself intelligible to you, because there is no portrait of Uncle Charles anywhere, since nothing will induce him even to be photographed.'

'Nevertheless I took a snap-shot at him with my kodak in the garden the other day,' said Miniver, 'and I've got it somewhere.' He opened a drawer in his desk (for we were sitting in his own sanctum, which was the young couple's favourite room). 'Yes, here it is; and as like as peas. What is the matter, Gresham? Are you ill?' exclaimed Miniver.

'I do believe he has seen Uncle Charles before!' cried Lucy. (How I cursed her intelligence!)

'Mrs. Miniver has nearly hit it,' I said, 'though not quite. What made me look so astonished was the likeness of the photograph to a friend of my own, a barrister of the name of Robson.' What had been placed in my hand was a portrait of George Driffell. There was no doubt about it; it was the man, and no other. The figure still young and slim, the hair just tinged with grey, as Lucy had described him. His face was less grave than I had seen it a few weeks ago in the Temple; brighter, indeed, than I had ever seen it (the snap-shot had been taken in the garden,

while, as I was afterwards told, he was playing with the children). Perhaps, as he had asserted that day in Essex Court, he had really never been so happy—deserter, pretender as he was—as in his present position.

I turned the conversation—though doubtless clumsily enough, for this crushing blow had scattered my wits—to other topics, and escaped from the house as soon as I could.

How I reached my lodgings I hardly know, for the news I had just received monopolised every thought. The mystery of Mr. Driffell's disappearance had been revealed, but not explained. It was not till some days afterwards that, in answer to questions put as indifferently as I could, Mrs. Miniver told me how he had met with her sister. He had come up to town from the country to see Mr. Gilderoy upon business, and met her by accident at his office. Within a week he had proposed to her. He had no relations or connections of any kind, and was of independent means. His progress in Mr. Gilderoy's favour was almost as quick as with his daughter, and partnership in both cases soon followed. He showed the most extraordinary aptitude for work, and the business had greatly improved since his joining it. Personal liking joined to this success gave him great influence with the head of the firm, which increased as the health and vigour of the old man failed. So much I learnt from Mrs. Miniver, but she did not tell me, because she did not know, to what an extent the influence eventually grew. It was almost always, it is true, exerted for good; but when the occasion came, as it did come in Laurence's case, for it to be used otherwise, it was put forth to the uttermost. He not only persuaded Mr. Gilderoy to break off his daughter's engagement—upon the specious plea of the insecurity of Laurence's financial position (itself solely owing to his own misconduct)—but induced him to take the whole responsibility on his own shoulders; while pretending to work in his son's favour, and later in my own, Mr. Parker was, in fact, straining every nerve to keep the Gilderoy family from any association with us. A single meeting with me would, of course, have been fatal to him as regarded the disclosure of his identity, and it had all but occurred that afternoon at Mrs. Argent's. Despite all precautions it might still occur any day, a thought which must have been a bitter drop indeed in his cup of domestic happiness. It was certainly a stroke of bad luck for him that his sister-in-law (though an illegal one) should have been the beloved object of his own son.

To me George Driffell himself was as much a mystery as his story itself.

Though I bitterly resented his conduct (and especially when I thought of his gentle deserted wife), I could not forget how kind he had shown himself to me in my boyhood; how just, and wise, and honourable he had appeared to be; how incapable of dishonesty or dishonour. It was no explanation, of course, of his conduct, but I recalled to mind the observation made years ago by Dr. Garden: 'What rather alarms me about him is that there are such possibilities in his character.' Even I had noticed a strange mixture in it of determination and impulse, of principle and of imprudence. He had never loved his wife as a wife ought to be loved, and in Mary Gilderoy he had probably met for the first time the woman that seemed suited to him. He had underrated his wife's affection, and I honestly believe was unaware of the misery that his behaviour had brought upon her. The large sum of money he had taken with him for the purpose of buying the patent and machinery had given him the means of putting his sudden and overwhelming impulse into effect. He was doing no material harm to his wife and child by leaving them in possession of the rest of his property. In a few weeks they must needs suppose him to be dead. He would begin life under happier auspices. These, I think, were the reflections that made him enter on so wicked and dishonourable a course of life. But, cruel as it was to his wife, how infinitely more so was it in relation to the girl for whom he felt such a fatal attraction! How could such conduct be explained in connection with such a character? A remark of Mr. Dering's which I had heard him make to my old tutor occurred to me: 'We may reasonably doubt the guilt of a man charged with any other offence for the first time; his "previous record" is his witness. But with regard to his relations with the fair sex character has nothing to do with it; no, nor age, nor station, nor any other circumstance which might seem to presume his innocence. Unlike drunkards, who "break out" at intervals after previous indulgence, we may break out in this direction at any time, and without the least sign of previous weakness.' I also remembered, with such a sinking of the heart as I had never before experienced, that Mr. Dering had laughed me to scorn when I had expressed my belief that Mr. Driffell was incapable of breaking the law, whereas he was now a bigamist and subject to penal servitude.

It was this consideration, I confess, more than any reflections

upon my former friend's moral misconduct, which now filled me with apprehensions. If his crime—for crime it was, and one of the highest magnitude—should be discovered, it would mean disgrace and ruin to everyone who had been, and still was, connected with him. I trembled at the thought of being the sole possessor of so tremendous a secret. There was no comfort for me in any direction, save the one poor consolation that Laurence had not (as might have been the case) persuaded Lucy to marry him in the teeth of the prohibition (as it was supposed) of her father. That would have been a catastrophe indeed, which, in all probability, would have brought revelation and ruin along with it.

As to ever going down to Luxton and seeing dear Mrs. Driffell and her son again, I felt it was impossible. I could not school myself in their company to behave as I had been wont to do; something in my looks and manner would certainly betray my knowledge—perhaps a guilty knowledge, but with that I in no wise concerned myself—of her husband's disloyalty. I thought this the more because, in my heart of hearts, I believe she already suspected it. Nothing else could explain to me her peculiar conduct under the loss that had befallen her. She still loved him—as much as she dared; that is, she strove to love him in spite of a conviction, founded upon her own shortcomings, that her love was not reciprocated.

With respect to the Gilderoy family, I did not feel the same necessity for breaking off my friendship with them; indeed, my doing so would not have been without its element of danger, since it would have been impossible for them to have explained it in any ordinary fashion. Moreover, now that I knew what had happened, my desire not to meet with Uncle Charles would be as great as was his to avoid me. My calculations upon this matter proved correct. I enjoyed the friendship of the Braidwoods and the Minivers for many years, without being brought face to face with their misguided relative. When Mr. Gilderoy died there was a little difficulty about the matter, since neither Grace nor Lucy, nor even Mary (whom, however, I met but seldom, and always with a most painful sense of the Damocles sword that was hanging over her), could understand why Mr. Parker should any longer object to making my acquaintance; but he boldly stated that, though his father-in-law was no more, he could not, out of regard to his memory, cultivate an intimacy of which he had disapproved, and so highly was he held in respect by the family

that this excuse passed muster, save, it must be admitted, with Miniver, who did not hesitate to express his conviction that 'Uncle Charles' showed himself in this matter a greater humbug than ever. With this exception, Mr. Driffell, once of Driffell Hall, lived in the possession of the good opinion of all the family at Lavender Hill, and died deeply regretted by the woman who never (I am thankful to say) had the shadow of doubt of being other than his lawful wife. Now all have died to whom this story—told, of course, under fictitious names—will have any personal significance. I have since become pretty well known as a novelist; but no fictitious tale I have ever written, and no experience during a long and not uneventful life, has ever approached, for me at least, in its dramatic interest this incident of my early youth.

THE END.







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