BY TYNE.

The day was beautiful as I
Sail'd slowly o'er the stream,
Mirror'd within it was the sky,
And round me waved steam
Of cooling leaves—how bright, and fair
They flickered in the balmy air.

At easy pace I pass'd along
The sandy banks, alone,
And through the golden sheaves among—
How rich the harvest shone—
And then my eye went wandering free
The glory of the vale to see.

The castle on the grassy hill
I viewed with rapture'd breast,
And then I walk'd, and walk'd, until
Sol brighter'd all the west:
Full joyfully in that west hour,
I linger'd at the Saxon tower.

The fine old tower, what lordly place
Can move my spirit so?
It has a worn and batt'r'd face,
And nothing grand can show—
But ah! beholding it I feel
Solemnity within me steal.

I roam'd, and roam'd, and never tired
As calmly died the day;
For sweet it was, and I admired
The shady, flowery way;
A touching silence reign'd supreme,
And set my heart of love to dream.

Sheeny the waters shone, in them
I caught Rowena's eye,
And viewing many a rosy gem
Brought all her graces nigh.
Oh! could I just have meet her then
Within yon silent, leafy glen,

I cross'd the river now, and made
Through grassy lanes my way;
Sometimes a little while I stay'd
To scan the castle grey.
Which far above me in its power
Stood facing Gyngham's fine tower.

I sighted, too, the priestly quaint—
It almost touches Tyne—
Where dwelt a highly gifted saint,*
There she would oft recline
On rustic seats, in mood serene,
Uplifted by the soothing scene.

That's long ago, 'tis different now,
Smoke darkens oft the vale,
To what has come the saint must bow
And snake no mournful wail,
For beauty catches still the eye
And sweets are shed, a rich supply.

* Dora Greenwell. —T. W. L.

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THE SNAKE'S PASS.

By BRAM STOKER, M.A.

CHAPTER I.—The Lost Crown of Gold.

Between two great mountains of grey and green, as the rock cropped out between the tufts of emerald verdure, the valley, almost as narrow as a gorge, ran due west towards the sea. There was just room for the roadway, half cut in the rock, beside the narrow strip of dark lake of seemingly unfathomable depth that lay far below between perpendicular walls of frowning rock. As the valley opened, the land dipped steeply, and the lake became a foam-fringed torrent, widening out into pools and miniature lakes as it reached the lower ground. In the wide terrace-like steps of the shelving mountain there were occasional glimpses of civilisation emerging from the almost primal desolation which immediately surrounded the traveller. The small fields, and the irregular outlines of stone-walled fields, with black stacks of turf for winter firing piled here and there. Far beyond was the sea, the great Atlantic, with a wildly irregular coast-line studded dark blue, with the distant rocky islands. A sea of deep dark blue, with the distant horizon tinged with a faint line white light, and then and there, where its margin was visible through the breaks in the rocky coast, fringed with a line of foam as the waves broke on the rocks or swept in great rollers over the level expanse of sands.

The sky was a revelation to me, and seemed to almost obliterate memories of beautiful skies, although I had just come from the south and had felt the intoxication of the Italian night, where in the deep blue sky the nightingale's note seems to hang as though its sound and the colour were but different expressions of one common feeling.

The whole west was a gorgeous mass of violet and sulphur and gold, great masses of storm cloud piling up and up till the very heavens seemed weighted with a burden too great to bear. Clouds of violet, whose centres were almost black and whose outer edges were tinged with living gold; great streaks and piled up clouds of palest yellow deepening into saffron and flame-colour which seemed to catch the coming sunset and to direct its radiance back to the eastern sky.

The view was the most beautiful that I had ever seen, and, accustomed as I had only been to the quiet pastoral beauty of a grass country, with occasional visits to my great aunt's well-wooded estate in the south of England, it was no wonder that it arrested my attention and absorbed my imagination. Even my brief half year's travel in Europe, now just concluded, had shown me nothing of the same kind.

Earth, sea, and air all evidenced the triumph of nature, and told of her wild majesty and beauty. The air was still —ominously still. So still was all, that though the silence that seemed to lodge in it was a sense of oppression, came the beating of the distant sea, as the great Atlantic swell broke in surf on the rocks or stormed the hollow caverns of the shore.

Even Andy, the driver, was for the nonce awed into comparative silence. Hitherto, for nearly forty miles of a drive, he had been giving me his experience—propounding his views—airing his opinions; in fact, he had been making me acquainted with his store of knowledge touching the whole district and its people—including their names, histories, romances, hopes and fears—all that goes to make up the life and interest of a country-side.

No barber—taking this trademark to illustrate the popular idea of loquacity as an exception—is more consistently talkative than an Irish car-driver to whom has been granted the gift of speech. There is absolutely no limit to his capability, for every change of surrounding affords a new theme and brings on the tapis a host of matters requiring to be set forth.

I was rather glad of Andy's "brilliant flash of silence" just at present, for not only did I wish to drink in and absorb the grand and novel beauty of the scene that opened out before me, but I wanted to understand as fully as I could some deep thought which it awoke within me. It may have been merely the grandeur which filled the air that scene—or perhaps it was that I felt exalted in a strange way, and influenced at the same time with a new sense of the reality of things. It almost seemed as if through that opening valley, with the mighty Atlantic beyond and the piling-up of the storm-clouds overhead, I had passed into a new and more real life.

Somehow, I had of late seemed to myself to be waking up. My foreign tour had been gradually dissipating my old sleepy ideas, or perhaps overcoming the negative forces that had hitherto dominated my life; for the whole physical nature of it was a burst of wild natural beauty—the majesty of nature at its fullest—seemed to be completing my awakening, and I fulfilled to the full. I looked for the first time with open eyes on the beauty and reality of the world.

Hitherto my life had been but an inert one, and I was younger in many ways and more deficient in knowledge of the world in all ways than other young men of my own age, the world in all ways than other young men of my own age, the world in all ways than other young men of my own age,

BEDTIME

"Tis bedtime; say your hymn, and bid "Good-night!
God bless Mamma, Papa, and dear ones all!"
Your half-shut eyes beneath your eyelids fall,
Another minute you will shut them quite.
Yes, I will carry you, put out the light,
And tuck you up, although you are so tall!
What will you give me, Sleepy one, and call
My wages, if I settle you all right?"
I laid her golden curls upon my arm,
I drew her little feet within my hand,
Her rosy palms were joined in trustful bliss,
Her heart came mine beat gently, soft and warm
She nestled to me, and, by love's command,
Said me my precious wages:—"Baby's kiss."

—LORD ROSSLYN.

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CHAPTER II.—THE TREASURE CHEST.

The company then began to discuss the legend. Said one of the women: "I wonder what forrum he tuk when he kem back?" Jerry answered:

"Sure, they do say that the shiftin' bog wor the forrum he tuk. The mountain wid the lake on top used to be the fortliest sphot in the whole counthry; but ever since the bog began to shift this was niver the same."

Here a hard-faced man named Mat McGlown, who had been silent, struck in with a question:

"But who knows when the bog did begin to shift?"

"Masha! Sorra one of me knows; but it was when the could smoke divy the wather iv the lake into the hill!"

There was a twinkle in the eyes of the story-teller, which made one doubt his own belief in his story.

"Well, for my own part," said McGlown, "A don't believe a single word of it."

"An' for why not?" said one of the women. "Isn't the mountain called 'Knockcalltecrore,' or 'The Hill of the Lost Crown iv Gold,' till this day?" said another:

"Masha! How could it bether McGlown believe anythin', and him a Protestan'?"

"All tell ye that A much prefer the face," said McGlown. "If history es till be believed, A much prefer the story told till me by you old man. Damn me! but A believe he's old enough till remember the st'eog itself."

He pointed as he spoke to old Moynahan, who, shrivelled up and white-haired, crouched in a corner of the ingle-nook, holding close to the fire his wrinkled shaky hands.

"What is the story that Mr Moynahan has, may I ask?" said I. "Pray, oblige me, won't you? I am anxious to hear all I can of the mountain, for it has taken my fancy strangely."

The old man took the glass of punch, which Mrs Kelligan handed him as the necessary condition antecedent to a story, and began:

"Oh, sorra one of me knows anythin' except what I've heerd from me father. But I oft heerd him say that he was told, that it was said, that in the Frinch invasion that didn't come off undher General Humbert, whin the attimpt was ever an' all hope was gone, the English sodgers made sure of great prize-money whin they found git bould of the threasure chist. For it was known that there was much threasure in't an' that they had bought a lot more than iver they wanted for pay and expluses in ordher to help to bribe some of the people that was houldin' off to be bought, by what side or the other—if they couldn't manage to git bought wes both. But, sure enough, they wor all sould, bad cess to both. And sure they divil a bit of money could they lay their hands on at all."

Here the old man took a pull at his jug of punch, with so transparent a wish to be further interrogated that a smile flashed round the company. One of the old crones remarked in an audible *sotto voce*:

"Masha! But Jack is the 'cute story-teller intirely. Ye have to drag it out iv him!" Go on, Pat! Go on! Tell us what became iv the money."

"Oh, what become iv the money? So ye would like to hear! Well, I'll tell ye. Just one more fill of the jug, Mrs Kelligan, as the gintleman wishes to know all about it. Well! they did say that all the officer what had charge iv the money got away with some five or six pounds whin the ship was a heavy way—an iron chist bang full up iv goold! Oh, my! but it was fine! A big chist—that high, an' as long as the table, an' full up to the led with goolden money an' paper money, an' divil a place of white money in it all! All goold, every pound note iv it."

He paused, and glanced anxiously at Mrs Kelligan, who was engaged in the new brew.

"Not toomuch wather, if ye love me, Kitty. You know me wakness! Well, they do say that it tuk hard work to lift the chist into the boat; an' thin they put in a gun carriage to carry it on, an' tuk out two horses, an' whin the shmoke was all round us the dayness of night was comin' on fast an' shore, we made away down south from on they got whin the landin' was made at Killaia. But, any how, they say that none of them was ever heerd of sa'in. But they was thraced through Ardnaree, an' Lough Con, an' through Castlebar Lake an' Lough Carra, and through Lough Mask an' Lough Corrib. But they never kem out Lough Mask an' Lough Corrib. But they never kem out through Galway, for the river was watched for thim day an' night by the sodgers; and how they got along God knows! for 'twas said they suffered quare hardships. They tuk the chist an' the gun carriage an' the horses in the boat, an' whin they couldn't go no further they thransfer the chist over the land to the next lake, an' so on. Sure one dhry year, so, when the waters in Corrib was down feet lower nor ever was in the memory iv the oldest story-teller, which made one doubt his own belief in his story.

"Then I suppose this man Murdock is a man of means—a rich man in his way?"

"Rich is it? Sure an' it's him as has plinty. He could lave this place if he chose an' settle in Galway—aye or in Dublin itself if he liked betther, and find money to big mis—landlords an' the like—instead of playin' wid poor misherables an' thrifles that's not worth a wagsful light in his eyes. Iturned to Andy for confirmation.

"Can't go! How does he mean? What does he mean?"

"Whisht! Don't ax me. Ax Dan, there. He doesn't owe him any money?"

"Which is Dan?"

"The ould man there bo the settle what has just spoke, Dan Moriarty. He's a warrum man, wid money in bank an' what owns his howldin'; an' he's not afeerd to have his say about Murdock."

"Can any of you tell me why Murdock can't leave the hill?" I spoke out.

"Begor, I can," said Dan quickly. "He can't lave it because the hill houlds him!"

"What on earth do you mean? How can the hill hold him?"

"It can hould tight enough! There may be raysons that a man gives—sometimes wan thing, an' sometimes another; but the hill houlds—an' houlds tight all the same!"

Here the door opened suddenly, and a gust of wind that entered. All stood up suddenly, with a rush of wind that entered. All stood up suddenly, for the new comer was a priest. He was a sturdy man of middle age, with a cheerful countenance. Sturdy as he was, however, it took him all his strength to shut the door, which, however, it took him all his strength to shut the door, but he succeeded before any of the men could get near enough to help him. Then he turned and saluted all the company:

"God save all here."

All present tried to do him some service. One took his wet great coat, another his dripping hat, and a third pressed him into the warmest seat in the chimney corner, where, in a few seconds, Mrs Kelligan handed him a steaming glass of punch, saying: "Drink that up, yer riv'rence. 'Twill help to kape yo from catchin' cowld."

"Thank ye kindly," he answered, as he took it. When he had half emptied the glass, he said:

"What was it I heard as I came in about the hill holding some one?" Dan answered:

"'Twas me, yer riv'rence: I said that the hill had hould of Black Murdock, and could hould him tight."

"Pooh! pooh! man: don't talk such nonsense. The fast is, sir," said he, turning to me after throwing a searching glance round the company, "the people here have all sorts of stories about that unlucky hill—why, God knows; and this man Murdock, that they call Black Murdock, is a money-lender as well as a farmer, and none of them like him, for he is a hard man and has done some cruel things among them. When they say the hill holds him, they mean that he doesn't like to leave it because he hopes to find a treasure that is said to be buried in it. I'm not sure but that the blame is to be thrown on the different names given to the hill. Then most commonly given is Knockcalltecore, which is a corruption of the Irish phrase, Knockna-calite-croin-oir, meaning, 'The Hill of the Lost Golden Crown;' but it has been sometimes called Knockcaltore—short for the Irish words Knock-na-caltte-oir, or 'The Hill of the Lost Gold.' It is said that in some old past time it was called Knocknahier, or 'The Hill of the Spade;' and, indeed, there's one place on it they call Sheenanaher, meaning the 'Snakes Pass.' I dare say now that they have been giving you the legends and stories and all the rubbish of that kind. I suppose you know, sir, that in most places the local fancy has run riot to some period, and has left a good crop of absurdities and impossibilities behind it?"

I acquiesced warmly, for I felt touched by the good priest's desire to explain matters, and to hold his own people blameless for crude ideas which he did not share. He went on:

"But it is queer thing that men must be always putting abstract ideas into concrete shape. No doubt there have been some strange matters regarding this mountain that they've talking about—the shifting bog, for instance, and as the people could not account for it in any way that they understood, they hooked up a legend about it. Indeed, to be just to them, the legend is a very old one, and is mentioned in a manuscript of the twelfth century. But somehow it was lost sight of till about a hundred years ago, when the loss of the treasure-chest from the French invasion at Killala set all the imaginations of the people at work, from Donegal to Cork, and they fixed the Hill of the Lost Gold as the spot where the money was to be found. There is not a word of fact in the story from beginning to end, and"—here he gave a somewhat stern glance round the room—"I'm a little ashamed to hear so much clat and nonsense given to a strange gentleman like you, and it's as much gospel. However, you mustn't be too hard in your thoughts on the people here, sir, for they're good people—none better in all Ireland—in all the world for that—but they talk to free to do themselves justice."

All those present were silent for a while. Old Moynahan was the first to speak.

"Well, Father Pether, I don't say nothin' about St. Patrick an' the shnakes, meself, because I don't know nothing about them; but I know that me own father tould me that he seen the Frinchwin wid his own eyes crossin' the sthrame below, and fastn' up the mountain. The moon was risin' in the west, an' the hills threw a big shadin'. There was two men an' two horses, and they had a big box on a gun carriage. Me father seen them cross the sthramo. The load was so heavy that the wheels sunk in the clay, an' the min had to pull at them to git them up again. An' didn't he see the marks iv the wheels in the ground the very nixt day?

"Bedad colomew Moynahan, are you telling the truth?" interrupted the priest, speaking sternly.

"Throth an' I am, Father Pether; divil a word iv a lie in all I've said."

"Then how is it you've never told a word of this before?"

"But I have told it, Father Pether. There's more nor wan here now what has heard me tell it; but they were tould an a saycret!"

"Three for ye!" came the chorus of almost every person in the room. The unanimity was somewhat comic, and caused amongst them a momentary silence, which was followed by several sounds. The pause was not wasted, for by this time Mrs Kelligan had brewed another jug of punch, and glasses were replenished. This interested the little crowd, and they entered afresh into the subject. As for myself, however, I felt strangely uncomfortable. I could not quite account for it in any reasonable way.

Perhaps there must be an instinct in men as well as in the lower orders of animal creation—I felt as though there was a strange presence near me.

I quietly looked round. Close to where I sat, on the sheltered side of the house, was a little window built in the deep recess of the wall, and, further, almost obliterated by the shadow of the priest, as he sat between me and it. Pressed against the empty lattice, where the glass had once been, I saw the face of a man—a dark, forbidding face it seemed in the slight glimpse I saw of it. The profile was towards me, for he was evidently listening intently, and he did not see me. Old Moynahan went on with his story:—

"Me father hid behind a white bush, an' lay as close as a hare in his form. The min seemed suspicious of bein' seen and they looked carefully all around for the sign of wan. Thin they all started up the side of the hill; an' a cloud came over the moon so that for a bit me father could see nothin'. But prisintly he seen the two min up on the side of the hill at the south, near Joyce's meadin'. Thin they disappeared again, an' prisintly he seen the horses an' the gun carriage an' all up in the same place, an' the moonlight sthruck thim as they went out iv the shadda; and min an' horses an' gun carriage an' chist an' all wint round to the back iv the hill at the west an' disappeared. Me father waited a minute or two to make sure, an' thin he crep' across the road as he could an hid behind the projectin' ron round as hard as he could an' hid behind the projectin' ron round as hard as he could an' hid behind the projectin' ron round as hard as he could an'

LIFE'S PICTURES.

AUTUMN.

Sigh winds of autumn through the burnished trees,
And kiss the amber and the gold away.
Sing ye late lingering birds, sing yet one song,
The tremulous echo of some summer's day.
Soft fall the crimson leaves, and sunbeams gleam
Athwart the green bank, and the babbling stream,
Crowned are the uplands with fair beauty's crown,
In regal splendour she is reigning still,
She is immortal, death is not for her,
She doth, but dream—while fates her vision's fill;
And she walking from her winter's sleep
Calleth her hosts of flowers from valleys deep.
Oh! fitful years—russet, and green, and brown
The leaves that clothe you in your gorgeous robes,
Have they the lovely verdure of our earth
Far off in the high stars—those shining globes?
Or are you but for us? to bid us know
There is a world where autumn doth not glow.
PATTY HONEYWOOD.

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THE SNAKE'S PASS.

By BRAM STOKER, M.A.

CHAPTER III.—The Gombeen Man.

There was a sort of paralysed silence in the room, through which came the whisper of one of the old women:

"Musha! talk iv the divil!"

Joyce's face grew very white; one hand instinctively grasped his riding switch, the other hung uselessly by his side. Murdock spoke:

"I kem here expectin' to meet Phelim Joyce. I thought I'd save him the throuble of comin' wid the money."

Joyce said, in a husky voice:

"What do ye mane? I have the money right enough here. I'm sorry I'm a bit late, but I had a bad accidentbruk me arrum, an' was nigh throwndeed in the Curragh Lake. But I was goin' up to ye at once, bad as I am, to pay ye yer money, Murdock." The gombeen man interrupted him:

"But it isn't to me ye'd have to come, me good man. Sure, it's the sheriff himself, that was waitin' for ye', an' whin ye didn't come"—here Joyce winced; the speaker smiled—"he done his work."

"What wurrk, scuulla?" asked one of the women. Murdock answered slowly:

"He sold the lease iv the farrum known as the Shlieenanaher in open sale, in accordance wid the terrms of his notice, duly posted, and wid warnin' given to the houldee iv the lease."

There was a long pause. Joyce was the first to speak:

"Ye're lyin', Murdock. For God's sake, say ye're lyin'! Ye could me yerself that I might have time to git the money. An' ye towld me that the puttin' me farrum up for sale was only a metther iv forrum to let me pay ye back in me own way. Nay! more, ye asked me not to tell any iv the neighbours, for fear some iv them might want to have iv me land. An' it's thrue, as that whin ye got me off to Galway to rise the money, ye went on wid the sale, behind me back—wid not a soul by to spake for me or mine—an' sould up all I have! No! Murtagh Murdock, ye've a hard man I know, but ye wouldn't do that! Ye wouldn't do that!"

Murdock made no direct reply to him, but said seemingly to the company generally:

"I expected to see Phelim Joyce at the sale to-day, but as I had some business in which he was consarned, I kem here where I knew there'd be neighbours—an' sure so there is."

He took out his pocket-book and went on:—"Father Pether Flynn, Michael Joe, Moriarty, Bartholomew Moynahan, Andhrew McGlowd, Mrs Katty Kelligan—that's enough! I want ye all to see what I done. There's nothin' underhand about me! Phelim Joyce, I give ye formil notice that yer land was sould an' bought be me, for ye broke yer word to repay me the money like ye before the time fixed. Here's the sheriff's assignmint, an' I tell ye before all these witnesses that'll proceed with ejectment on title at wanst."

All in the room were as still as statues. Joyce was fearfully white, but when Murdock spoke he flushed red with excitement." he seemed to wake in a moment to frenzied life. The blood flushed up in his face, and he seemed about to do something rash; but with a great effort he controlled himself and said—

"Mr Murdock ye won't be too hard. I got the money today—it's here—but I had an accident that delayed me. I was thrown into the Curragh Lake and nigh drownded an' me arrum is bruk. Don't be so close as an hour or two—ye'll never be sorry for it. I'll pay ye all, and more, and thank ye kindly for yer bargain all me life. Sure it's the paper, won't ye, for me children's sake—for Norah's sake?"

He faltered; the other answered with an evil smile—

"Phelim Joyce, I've waited years for this moment—don't ye know me bether nor to think I would go back on meself whin I have thrusted you a second time? Ye got me money, not five pound note was spread into an acre and cut up in tin-pound notes. I want yer land—I have waited for it, an' I mane to have it! Now, don't be me any more, for I won't go back—an' tho' its many a grudge I owe ye, I square them all before the neighbours by refusin' yer prayer. The land is mine, bought an' paid for, an' all the judges an' courts in Ireland can't take it from me! An' what do ye say to that now, Phelim Joyce?"

The tortured man had been clutching the ash sapling which he had used as a riding whip, and from the nervous twitching of his fingers I knew that something was coming. And it came, for, without a word, he struck the evil face before him—struck as quick as a flash of lightning—such a blow that the blood seemed to leap out round the stick, and a vivid welt rose in an instant. With a wild, savage cry the gombeen man jumped at him; but there were others in the room as quick, and before another blow could be struck on either side both men were grasped by strong hands and held back.

Murdock's rage was tragic. He yelled like a wild beast to be let get at his opponent. He cursed and blasphemed so outrageously that all were silent, and only the stern voice of the priest was heard.

"Be silent, Murtagh Murdock! Aren't you afraid that the God overhead will strike you dead? With such a storm as is raging as a sign of His power, you are a foolish man to tempt Him."

The man stopped suddenly, and a stern dogged sullenness took the place of his passion. The priest went on:—

"As for you, Phelim Joyce, you ought to be ashamed of yourself; ye're not one of my people, but I speak as your own clergyman would if he were here. Only this day as the Lord seen fit to spare you from a terrible death, and yet you dare to go back of his mercy with your angry passion. You had cause for anger—or temptation to it, I don't say but you must learn to kiss the hand that smites you. It is not for us to question what the Lord is doing for you as for others, and it may be that you will look back on this day in gratitude for His doing, and in shame for your own anger. Men, hold off your hands—let those two men go; they'll quarrel no more—before me, at any rate, I hope."

The men drew back. Joyce held his head down, and a more dejected figure or a sadder one I never saw. He turned slowly away, and leaning against the wall, put his face between his hands and sobbed. Murdock scowled, and the scowl gave place to an evil smile, as looking all around he said:

"Well, now that me work is done, I must be gettin' home."

"An' get some wan to iron that mark out iv yer face," said Dan. Murdock turned again and glared around him savagely as he hissed out:—

"There'll be item for some one before I'm done. Mark me well! I've never one back or wakened yit whin I promised to have me own turn. There's thim here what'll rue this day yit! If I am the Shnake on the Hill—well, it's the shnake. An' for him what invints me, hell be in bether sorrm for it wid him—him an' his!" He turned his back and went to the door.

"Stop!" said the priest. "Murtagh Murdock, I have a word to say to you—a solemn word of warning. Ye have to-day acted the part of Ahab towards Naboth the Jezreelite; beware of his fate! You have sought your neighbour's land and used your power without mercy; how's goodness you used your power to enforce the law an engine of oppression. Mark me! you have made the law an engine of oppression. Mark me! It was said of old that what measuro men meted should be meted out to them again. God is very just. He not deceived; God is not mocked; for what things a man soweth, those also shall he reap.' Ye have sowed the wind this sow, those also shall be reap.' Ye have sowed the wind this day—beware lest you reap the whirlwind! Even as God visited his sin upon Ahab the Samarian, and as He has visited similar sins on others in His own way—so shall he visit yours on you. You are worse than the land-grabber or the cattle-driver—worse than the moonlighter—worse than the man only who covets. You are worse than all of these in that you have combined them all in yerself. Remember the story of virtue compared with your evil—the steadfast one of Naboth's vineyard, and the dreadful end of it. Don't answer me! Go and repent if you can, and leave sorrow and misery to be comforted by others—unless you wish to undo your wrong yourself. If you don't, then remember the curse that may come upon you for it!"

Without a word Murdock opened the door and went out. Without a word we heard the clattering of his horse's feet on the rocky road to Shleenanaher.

When it was apparent to all that he was really gone a torrent of commiseration, sympathy, and pity broke over Joyce. The Irish nature is essentially emotional, and a strong and stronger feeling I never saw. Not a few more genuine tears in their eyes, and one and all were manifestly deeply touched. The least moved was, to all appearance, poor Joyce himself. He seemed to have pulled himself together, and his sterling manhood and courage and pride stood by him. His second, however, to pity broke over wishes of his friends, and when we suggested that his hurt should be looked to, he acquiesced:

"Yes, if you will. Bether not go home to poor Norah and distress her with it. Poor child! she'll have enough to bear without that."

His coat was taken off, and between us we managed to bandage the wound. The priest, who had some surgical knowledge, came to the conclusion that there was only a simple fracture. He splinted and bandaged the arm, and we all agreed that it would be better for Joyce to wait until the storm was over before going home. Andy said that he could get on the car, as he knew the road well, and that, as it was partly on the road to Carnaclif, we should only have to make a short detour and would pass the house of the doctor, by whom the arm could be properly attended to.

So we sat around the fire again, whilst without the storm howled, and the fierce gusts which swept the valley seemed at times as if they would break in the door, lift off the roof, or in some way annihilate the time-worn cabin which gave us shelter.

There could, of course, be only one object of conversation now, and old Dan simply interpreted the public wish when he said:

"Tell us, Phelim—are we're all friends here—how Black Murdock got ye in his clutches? Sure any one of us would see ye out of him, if he could."

There was a general acquiescence. Joyce yielded himself, and said:

"Let me thank ye, neighbours all, for yer kindness to me and mine this sorrarful night. Well, I'll say no more about that; but I'll tell ye how it was that Murdock got me into his power. Ye know that boy of mine, Eugene?"

"Oh, and he's the fine lad, God bless him! an' the good lad, too!" This from the women.

"Well, ye know too that he got on so well whin I sint him to school that Dr Walsh recommended me to make an engineer of him. He said he had such promise that it was a pity not to see him get the right start in life, and he gave me, himself, a letther to Sir George Henshaw, the great engineer. I wint and seen him, and he said he would take the boy. He towld me that there was a big fee to be paid, but I was not to throuble about that—at any rate, that he himself didn't want any fee, and he would ask his partner if he would give up his share too. But the latther was hard up for money. He said he couldn't give up all fee, but that he would take half the fee provided it was paid down in a lump sum. Well, I'm a rashed man, but I had twelve hundhred pounds, and as Sir George had giv up half an' only half th' other half was to be paid, that was possible. I hadn't got more'n a few pounds by me—for what wid dhrainin' and plantin' and fencin', and the payin' the boy's schoolin' and the girls at the Nunz' in Galway, it had put me to the pin iv me collar to find the money up to now. But I didn't like to let the boy lose his chances in life for want of an effort, an' I put me pride in me pocket an' kem an' asked Murdock for the money. He was very smooth and nice wid me—I know why now—an' promised he would give it at wanst if I would give him security on the land. Sure he jokid me and laughed wid me, an' was that cheerful that I didn't misthrust him. He told me it was only forrouns that I was signin' that'd never be used"

—— Here Dan Moriarty interrupted him:

"What did ye sign, Phelim?"

"There wor two papers. What was a writin' iv some kind, that in consequence iv the money lent an' his own land—which I was to take over if the money wasn't paid at the time appointed—he was to get me lease from me; and the other was a power of attorney to enther judgment for the amount if the money wasn't paid at the right time. I thought I was all safe, as I could rely on him in the time named, for if the worst came to the worst I might borry the money from some wan else—for the lease is worth the sum tin times over—an' repay him. Well I what's the use of looking back, anyhow! I signed the papers—that was a year ago, an' one week. An' a week ago the time was up?"

He drew a sob, and went on more calmly:

"Well! ye all know the year gone has been a terrible bad wan, an' as for me it was all I could do to hould on—to make up the money was impossible. Turne the lad cost me next to nothin', for he armed his keep be extra work, and the girls, Norah, bless them! had their keep be the work iv the girl, so we saved every penny we could. But it was all no use; we couldn't get the money together anyhow. Thin we had the misfortin' wid the cattle that ye all know of; an' three horses, that I sould in Dublin, up an' died before the time I guaranteed them free from sickness." Here Andy struck in:

"Thrue for ye! Sure, there was dhreadful disorther in Dublin among the horse cattle, intirely; and even Misther Doother Perfesshinal Ferguson himself couldn't git undher it," Joyce went on:

"An' as the time grew nigh I began to fear, but Murdock came down to see me whin I was alone, an' towld me not to throuble about the money an' not to mind about the sheriff, for he had to give him notice. An'," says he, 'I wouldn't, if I was you, tell Norah anything about it, for it might frighten the girl—for wasmin is apt to take to heart things like that that's only small things to one like her. An' so, for God's sake, don't say a word about it—even whin I got the notice from the sheriff. An' whin the notice tellin' of the sale was posted up on me land, I tuk it down myself so that the poor child wouldn't be frightened—God help me!" He broke down for a bit, but then went on:

"Be some manes I wasn't asy in me mind, an' when the time iv the sale dhrew nigh I couldn't keep it to meself any longer, an' I towld Norah. That was only yisterday, and look at me to-day! Norah agreed wid me that we shouldn't trust the gombeen, an' she sent me off to the Galway Bank to borry the money. She said it was the honestest man in the world, and that the bank might lind the money on its own land, and that she knew Murdock will thrate us iv. An' sure enough whin I wint there this mornin' be appointment, wid the coadjuthor himself to introduce me, though he didn't know why I wanted the money—that was Norah's idea, and the mother superior settled it for her—the manager, who is a nice gintleman, towld me at wanst that I might have the money on me own note iv hand. I only gave him a formel writin', an' I took away the money. Here it is in me pocket in good notes; they're wet wid the lake, God help me!" Here he broke down for a minute, but recovered himself with an effort:

"Anyhow the bank that thrusted me musn't be wronged. Back the money goes to Galway as soon as ever I can get it there. If I am ruined meself I needn't be the worse iv that! But poor Norah! God help her! It will break her poor heart."

There was a spell of silence, only broken by sympathetic moans. The first to speak was the priest.

"Phelim Joyce, I tould ye long ago, in the midst of your sorrow, that God knows what He is doin', and works in His own way. You're an honest man, Phelim, and God knows it, and, mark me, He won't let you nor youre suffer. 'I have been young,' says the Psalmist, 'and now am old; and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.' Think of that, Phelim, and be comfortable. Norah and poor Norah. God bless her! but she's the good girl. You have much to be thankful for, with a daughter like her to comfort you at home and take the place of her poor mother, who was the best of women; and with such a boy as Eugene, winnin' name and credit, and perhaps fame to come, even in England itself. Thank God for His many mercies, Phelim, and trust him."

There was a dead silence in the room. The stern man rose, and coming over, took the priest's hand.

"God bless ye, father!" he said, "it's the thrue comfortee ye are."

The scene was a most touching one; I shall never forget it. The worst of the poor man's trouble seemed now past. He had faced the darkest hour; he had told his trouble, and was now prepared to make the best of everything—to look at the future—for I could not recognise to my mind the idea that that proud, stern man, would not take the blow to heart for many a long day—that it might even embitter his life.

Old Dan tried comfort in a practical way by thinking of what was to be done. Said he:—

"To course, Phelim, it's a mighty throuble to give up yer own foine land an' take Murdock's bleak shpot instead, but I dare say ye will be able to work it well enough. Tell me, have ye signed away all the land, or only the lower farm? I mane, is the Cliff Fields yours or his?"

Here was a gleam of comfort evidently to the poor man. His face lightened as he replied:

"Only the lower farm, thank God? Indeed, I couldn't part wid the Cliff Fields, for they don't belong to me—they are Norah's, that her poor mother left her—they worse settled on her, whin we married, be her father, and when he died we got them. But, indeed, I fear they're small use to themselves; shure there's no wather in them at all, savin' what runs of me ould land; an' if we have to carry wather all the way down the hill from—from me new land"—this was said with a smile, which was a sturdy effort at cheerfulness—"it will be but poor work to raise anythin' ther—nayther shnook or crops. To do but Murdock will take away the shtame iv wather that runs there now. He'll want to get the Cliff lands, too, I suppose."

I ventured to ask a question—

"How do your lands lie compared with Mr Murdock's?"

There was bitterness in his tone as he answered, in true Irish fashion—

"Do you mane me ould land, or me new.

"The lands that were—that ought still to be yours," I answered.

He was pleased at the reply, and his face softened as he replied:

"Well, the way of it is this. We two owns the west side of the hill between us. Murdock's land—I'm spakin' iv them as they are, till he gets possession iv mine—lies at the top iv the hill, mine lies below. My land is the best by rights on the mountain, while the gombeen has only with his on the mountain, while the gombeen has only a few good patches here and there. Moreover, there is another thing. There is a bog which is high up the hill, mostly on his bouldin', but my land is free from bog, except one end of the big bog, an' a stretch of dry turf, the best in the-counthry, and wid enough turf to last for a hundhred years, its thick deep."

Dan quietly joined in:

"Thrue enough! that bog of the gombeen's isn't much use anyhow. It's rank and rotten wid wather. Whin it made up it's mind to shtay, it might have done bether!"

"The bog?" Made up it's mind to shay! What on earth do you mean?" I asked. I was fairly puzzled.

"Didn't ye hear talk already," said Dan, "of the shiftin' bog on the mountain?"

"I did."

"Well, that's it! It moved an' moved longer than anywan can remimber. His grandfather wants sould me be the brave answer.

For myself, the whole idea was most interesting. I had never before even heard of a shifting bog, and I determined to visit it before I left this part of the country.

By this time the storm was beginning to abate. The rain had ceased, and Andy said we might proceed on our journey. So after a while we were on our way, the wounded man and I sitting on one side of the car, and Andy on the other. The whole company came out to wish us God-speed, and with such comfort as good-natured and goodwishes could we ventured into the inky darkness of the night.

Andy was certainly a born car-driver. Not even the darkness, the comparative strangeness of the road, or the amount of whisky-punch which he had on board could distract his sincerity; and Vincent's face burned with pleasure and pride. How could sweeter words have been poured into a lover's ears?

"Did you chance to notice her hair—did you?" said he, excitedly. "Ah, but it is braided up just now; if you could only see it as she used to wear it—flowing loose, that is—why, it's the most wonderful thing you ever saw—a kind of—of splendour when the sunlight is on it—you never saw the like. Yes, you must really see that, to do her justice, you know," the young man said, in his surprise and delight at having at last found one sympathetic confidant. "I'll tell you what I'll do; the next time she is going out for a walk I will ask her to let me go with her, and I will give you a hint beforehand, so that you may come along—"

"Vin, what are you talking about?" his friend said—and prudently he did not laugh—he only looked amused. "You couldn't ask a girl to do such a thing as that!"

"Oh, yes, I could," he said. "And I'm sure she will do it—she is so kind, so kind, and good-humoured. Don't you see, it must be excellent for the hair to have a sun-bath at times, to hang loose, and let the sun and the air get at it. I'm sure it must be good for the hair not to be continually braided up like that. And I should like you to see her, if only for a moment, with her hair hanging free—in the sunlight, if possible, and blown about by the wind—you never saw anything so beautiful. Of course, it will make her look very young—too young, perhaps—younger than she really is; but then, on the other hand, her expression is rather beyond her years—she is grave and thoughtful—so that will make up. Did you notice how light her step was?" he continued—and his breakfast received but scant attention, now that he had found some one to whom he could talk on this enchanting and all-engrossing theme. "A light and graceful step means more than mere youth and health—it means a perfect and supple figure as well. Did you think she was rather pale?" he asked—but only to answer his own question. "Yes, I dare say you might think she was rather pale. But, mind you, that is not because she is delicate—oh, dear no, not in the least; it's the natural fineness of her complexion; and when brisk walking, or a cold wind blowing, brings colour into her cheeks, then that is all the rarer and more beautiful. Of course, you couldn't see her eyes at all"—the cheerful stars of the people in the streets; she seems to find the sea more interesting when we are walking up and down; but they are the clearest, the most expressive eyes you could imagine. She hardly has to speak—she has only to look! I do think blue-grey is by far the prettiest colour of eyes; they vary so much; I've seen Mairie Bethune's eyes quite distinctly blue—that is when she is very strong and well, and out in the open air. I don't suppose it possible that any reflection from the sky or sea can affect the colour of the eyes; it must be simply that she is in the fresh air, and stimulated with exercise, and happy——" He paused for a moment. "I have nothing to say—I'm very amusing?"

"To tell you the truth, Vin," his companion admitted, "I was thinking that when you came in you announced you had something of importance to say——"

Instead of which I have been talking about Miss Bethune," Vincent said, without taking any offence. "But who began? I thought it was you who introduced the subject—and you seemed interested in her appearance——"

"Oh, yes, of course, of course," the young nobleman said, good-naturedly. "I beg your pardon. And I understand how the subject may be of importance to you—"

"Well, yes, it is," Vincent calmly. "For I propose to marry Miss Bethune, and at once, if she will consent.

Musselburgh looked up quickly, and his face was grave enough now.

"You don't mean that, Vin?"

"That is precisely what I do mean," the young man said.

"I thought—I had fancied—that certain things had been found out," his friend stammered, and then stopped; for it was a hazardous topic.

"Oh, you have been told that?" Vincent said, with a careless disdain. "Well, when I heard those charges brought against Miss Bathune's grandfather, I did not choose to answer them; but speaking about him to you is another thing; and I may say to you, once for all, that more preposterous trash was never invented. I won't decry," he continued, with a perfectly simple frankness, "the origin of the money about Mr Bethune that I cannot quite explain—that I rather shut my eyes to; and perhaps there are one or two things that one might wish altered—for who is perfect? But the idea that this old man, with his almost obtrusively rugged individuality, his independence, his self-will and pride, should be a party to anything underhand—it is too absurd? To my mind—and I think I know him pretty intimately—he appears to be one of the finest and grandest characters it is possible to imagine; a personality you could never forget, once you had learned to know him even a little; and that this man, of all men, should be suspected of being a fawning and wheedling writer of beggig-letters—it is too laughable! I admit that he has little or no money—it that is a crime. They live in straightened circumstances, no doubt. And of course there are many unpleasant things connected with poverty that one would rather hide from the eyes of the world; and on that account I would hidden; though I don't know that her nature, if she has a fine and noble nature, need suffer from that. For example, it isn't nice for her to see her grandfather served with a writ; but many excellent people have been served with writs; I don't follow that Mairie Bethune must be in brief because he has no money—or perhaps because he has been negligent about some debt or other. But even supposing that he was a questionable person—even supposing that he was in the habit of using doubtful means to supplement his precarious income; isn't that all the greater reason why such a girl should be taken away from such circumstances?"

Lord Musselburgh did not reply to this question. He had heard from Mrs Ellison that the granddaughter was suspected, or more than suspected, of being an accomplice; and although, of course, he could not in the least say whether there was any truth in this allegation, he deemed it wiser to hold his tongue.

"Now you may put all that aside," Vincent went on. "That's all rubbish and trash—a pack of old wives' stories. And what I want to ask you, Musselburgh, is to give me your honest opinion on a certain point. I ask for your advice. I want you tell me what you think would happen in a possible case. And the main question is this: assuming that I could persuade Miss Bethune to marry me on the quiet, assuming that her grandfather approved—when the marriage had actually taken place, what would my relatives say? Or rather, that is not the question; the question is what would they do? I know what they would say. They would say much the same as you have said—the scheming fortune and mesalliance; and there would be a deuce of a fuss. But what I want to know is, would they go further? Would they actually endeavour to—to—to marry some noble damsel whose family would have political influence. Yes, they would be wild enough, no doubt; but when they found the thing actually settled, what would they do? Would my father make a deadly quarrel of it, and cut me off with a shilling, like something out of a play; or would he exercise a little common-sense, and make the best of it, now the thing was done?"

"Really," said Lord Musselburgh, who seemed more concerned than one might have expected from his brilliant fashion. "I scarcely know what to say. I look here: I do not seem to my self to be on the brink of a tremendous catastrophe. You have asked for my advice; I will give it you frankly. For goodness sake, don't marry that girl! She may be everything you say; but don't do anything rash—don't do anything irrevocable. Your own and your relations' happiness would be much more to be considered than your own interest; it is no selfish with on their part that you should marry well—marry in your own sphere—marry some one who would do you credit and be a fit companion for you. Mind, I am not saying a word against Mairie Bethune; but I would not even if I could—I am not such a fool—for I should simply anger you without convincing you; but just consider for a moment what her experiences must have been. You know what Mrs Ellison so frequently talks about—the sentimental, romantic, high-flown notions that girls brought up in a secluded noble or beautiful about poverty. I'm afraid she's right. I am afraid that poverty is altogether a debasing and brutalising thing, destroying self-respect, shutting the mind as well as the body."

"Yes," said Vin Harris, rather scornfully, "I am quite aware that is the opinion of poverty held by the rich. They shut it. They refuse to believe what the Sermon on the Mount says about the Kingdom of Heaven being reserved for the poor; but catch any single man-jack of them putting aside his riches in order to secure that other inheritance! Not much. He prefers the kingdom he has got—in console." It was only worrying, Musselburgh said, to be told of the temptations, "of this influence those—those associations might have had on Miss Bethune herself. Not the best training for a young girl, perhaps?"

"If she had been brought up in a thieves' den," said Vincent, hotly, "she would have remained the pure and beautiful creature that she is now. But I see there is no use talking. I have asked for your advice—for your opinion; and you have given it to me. I thank you, and there's an end."

He rose. But his friend also rose at the same moment.

"No, no, Vin, you're not going to quarrel with me. Come into the smoking-room, and we'll have a cigarette."

Nor did he wish to quarrel. They left the coffee-room together. But, as luck would have it, in crossing the hall, he chanced to look towards the front door; and behold! all the outer world was shining in clear sunlight. It suddenly occurred to this young man that he had been sitting nearly all the afternoon in a stuffy room, listening to coward counsels, regarding the future as something dark; while there—out there—the golden pavements and the far shimmering sea, and the wide white skies spoke only of hope, and seemed to say that Mairie Bethune would soon be coming along, proud and tall and sweet. Why, it was to her that he ought to have appealed—not to any timorous, vacillating temporiser; it was her hands he ought to have taken and held, that he might read the future in her true eyes. And so, with some brief words of apology and thanks, he left Lord Musselburgh, and made his way into the outer air: this was to breathe more freely—this was to have the natural courage of youth mounting into his brain.

He walked away along the King's Road, and unconsciously to himself he held his head erect; as if in imitation of the stout-hearted old man who, despite his three score years and ten, could still bear himself so bravely in face of all the world. Moreover, there were some lines in one of Mairie's songs haunting him; but not in any and way; nay, he found himself dwelling on the r's, as if to recall her soft pronunciation:—

Elle fit un' rencontre
De trente matelots.
De trente matelots
Sur la bord de l' lle.
Le plus jeune des trente,
Il se mit à chanter.
Il se mit à chanter
Sur le bord de l' lle.
La chanson que tu chantes,
Je voudrais la savoir.
Je voudrais la savoir
Sur le bord de l' lle.
Embarque dans ma barque,
Je te la chanterai.
Je te la chanterai
Sur le bord de l' lle.

He had thrust aside those coward counsels: out here was the sunlight and the fresh-blowing wind; would it not be a wonderful thing if he could persuade Mairie, ere she came forth for her morning walk, to shake loose her glorious, long-flowing abundant tresses, so that in shifting light and shadow the sober brown might have been and there turn to gold? This was the kind of morning to bring a touch of crimson to the transparent pallor of her cheek; her teeth would glisten when she laughed; her light step would be freer, more buoyant, than ever. *Sursum corda!* Nay, he could have found it in his heart to adopt the proud sounding "Stand fast, Craig-Royston!"—if only to fling it back in the face of those who had brought those monstrous accusations.

His long and swinging stride soon carried him to the house in German Place, where he found George Bethune and his granddaughter just making ready to come out; and the moment he caught sight of her he instinctively knew how impossible it was for him to prefer his audacious request about her hair. Even if she were so extraordinarily complaisant as to comply with his wish—if she were clothed like a simple girl, and walked visibly—naturally and honestly, as I imagine; but I do not see any reason for departing from what I said to you before, that I would rather my granddaughter was not bound by any formal tie or pledge—much less by such a marriage as you propose. For one thing, she may have a future before her that will be the life-work of a man.

Of course, if her happiness were involved, if she came to me and said that only by such and such an arrangement could her peace of mind be secured, then I might alter my views: at present I see no cause to do so. You are both young: if you care for each other you should be content to wait. Nothing is valuable that is not earned, according to your own showing, you are dependent on your father's caprice: some angry objection his part—and where would the fortunes of the young married couple be?"

But Vincent was too impetuous to be easily discouraged. "Even then Mairie need not be quite helpless," he urged.

"And your willingness to work to count for nothing? However, that is not the immediate question. Supposing Mairie's happiness were concerned?—supposing she was a little tired of the uncertainty of her life?—supposing she were willing to trust herself to me—what then? Why, if I see no chance of getting her consent, I know you would consent. Is not that so?—I know it is so—you would consent—for Mairie's sake!"

"Yes," said he. "I have to go down to Mendover on Thursday, to deliver a sort of address—a lecture—and I've only got the heads and divisions sketched out as yet. I wish I could escape it altogether; but I dare not play any trickes at present; I'm on my best behaviour. And this time at least I don't mind telling Lord Musselburgh down with me; I am going alone."

"And after that you return to London?" she asked.

He hardly knew what to say. A single word of encouragement from either of them, and he would at once and gladly have promised to come back to Brighton at the earliest possible moment, but he had not forgotten the implied understanding on which Mairie and her grandfather had come away from their lodgings in Mayfair.

"Yes, to London," he replied vaguely. "But I have no definite plans as present. I dare say my aunt, Mrs Ellison, will want me to come down here at Christmas."

When they were outside, and had gone on to the Parade, he was abundantly glad that he had not asked Mairie to loosen her hair; nay, so jealous was he of all the world that he thought his two companions, instead of taking their accustomed stroll into the town, to come away one into the country. The Downs, he said, would be looking very cheerful on so pleasant a morning. And of course it mattered little to them which way they went. They acceded at once; and by-and-by they had left the wide thoroughfare and the houses behind them, and were walking along the soft turf, alone with the cliffs, and the sea, and the smooth, faintly-coloured uplands. The spring-time was not yet; but there were hues of green and red in the dry scratchbrush of the hill-top, and the sky was of a cloudless blue.

And how strange it was that out here in the open, in the clear sunlight, those dark imaginings of the Private Inquiry Offices seemed to fall helplessly away from these two friends of his, and they themselves stood sharply defined just as they were, two young people of unlikely and striking figures that his fancy had invested with so pathetic an interest. Mentally he addressed Lord Musselburgh: "Come and see them here—in the white light of day—and ask yourself whether you can believe in those midnight things you have heard of them. Look at his girl: say you believe that she is of ordinary beauty; but is there not a still stranger fascination—is there not something that wins the heart to sympathy, and pity, and respect? Look at the pensive character of her mouth—look at the strange resignation in the beautiful eyes; perhaps her life has not been altogether a happy one, but is that a sufficient charge against her? Then this old man—look at his proud bearing—look at the resolute set of his head—his straight glance—the courage of his firm mouth: has he the appearance, the demeanour, of a sharper, of a plausible and specious thief? At this moment, at all events, it did not seem as if George Bethune's mind was occupied with any swindling scheme. As he marched along, with head erect, and with eyes fixed absently on the far horizon, he was reciting to himself, in sonorous tones, the metrical version of the Hundredth Psalm—

"O enter then His gates with praise,
Approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.
For why? the Lord our God is good,
His mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure."

No doubt it was some reminiscence of his youthful days—perhaps a Saturday night's task—that had lain dormant in his memory for sixty years or more.

The two young people were mostly silent; they had plenty to think about—especially in view of Vincent's departure on the morrow. As for him, his one consuming desire was to make sure of Mairie, now that she had disclosed her love; and by-and-by they had left the wide thoroughfare and the houses behind them, and were walking along the soft turf, alone with the cliffs, and the sea, and the smooth, faintly-coloured uplands. The spring-time was not yet; but there were hues of green and red in the dry scratch-br

ON BYWELL BRIDGE.

I stand upon the bridge alone.
The river never lovelier shone:
'Tis Luna's soft, subduing light
That makes so beautiful the night;
Sweet on the waters, and in trees,
Drops down her tranquilizing beams.
And quaintly 'mongst the ivy green
Play fairy shapes of shimmering sheen;
They charm the castle's crumbling wall;
And lightly on the churches fall,
And add they delicatest grace
To Mrs Barnett's lovely place.
What deep solemnity pervades
The calm, unsullied, flowery shades;
And there as Luna in her glory
Lights wood, and stream, and castle hoary,
I'm moved to tenderness, to weave
The holy scene for "Genevieve."

—T. W. LITTLE.

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STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM BLACK,

Author of "A PRINCESS OF THULE," "SABINA ZEMBRA," "THE NEW PRINCE FORTUNATUS," &c.

CHAPTER XVII.—"AND HAST THOU PLAYED ME THIS!"

And now in this time of urgency the appeal was to Maisrie herself; she it was who must determine what definite bond should be between them as a safeguard for the future. Virtually he had her grandfather's permission to speak to her; and how could he doubt what her answer would be, in spite of all those strange and inexplicable forebodings that seemed to haunt her mind? She had made mute confession, and there now remained nothing for him but to claim and bear off the fair lily prize.

But when he got up next morning he found to his dismay that a sudden change in the weather was like to interfere in a very practical manner with his audacious plans. During the night the wind had veered to the south-west, accompanied by a sharp fall of the barometer; and now a stiff gale was blowing, and already a heavy sea was thundering in on the beach. There was as yet no rain, it is true; but along the southern horizon the lowering heavens were even darker than the wind-driven waters; and an occasional shiver of white sunlight that swept across the waves spoke clearly enough of coming wet. Was it not altogether to wild and stormy a morning to hope that Maisrie would venture forth? And yet he was going away that day—with great uncertainty as to the time of his return; and how could he go without having some private speech with her? Nor was there any prospect of a lightening up of the weather outside; the gale seemed to be increasing in fury; and he ate his breakfast in silence, listening to the long, dull roar and reverberation of the heavy breaking-surf.

Nevertheless he was resolute; and something had to be done; so about half-past ten he went along to the lodging-house in German Place. The servant-maid greeted this handsome young man with an approving glance; and informed him that both Mr and Miss Bethune were in the parlour upstairs.

"No, thank you," said he to this implied invitation. "I won't go up. I want to see Miss Bethune by herself; would you ask her if she would be so kind as to come downstairs for just a moment—I won't detain her—"

The girl divined the situation in an instant; and proved herself friendly. Without more ado she turned the handle of a door near her.

"Wont you step in there, sir?—the gentleman 'as gone out."

Vincent glanced into the little parlour. Here, indeed, was a refuge from the storm; but all the same he did not like to invade the privacy of a stranger's apartments.

"Oh, no, thanks," said he hastily. "I will wait here, if Miss Bethune will be kind as to come down for a minute. Will, you ask her, please?"

The girl went upstairs; returned with the message that Miss Bethune would be down directly; then she disappeared, and Vincent was left alone in this little lodging-house, that was not very prepossessing, but, for an interview between two lovers; still, it would serve—especially if the friendly chambermaid were out of earshot, and if no prying landlady should come along. The gale outside was so violent that all the doors and windows of the house were shaking and rattling; he could not ask Maisrie to face such a storm.

But in a second or so here was Maisrie herself, all ready apparelled—hat, muff, gloves, boa, and the furred collar of her jacket turned up.

"Why, Maisrie," he said, "you don't mean you are going out on such a morning—it is far to wild and stormy a day—"

"That is of no consequence," she made answer simply, "if I have something to say to you, Vincent—before you go."

"And I have something to say to you, Maisrie. Still," he continued with some little hesitation (for he was accustomed to take charge of her and protect her from all harm), "I don't like you to get wet and blown about—"

"What does that matter?" she said; it was not of a shower of rain that she was thinking.

"Oh, very well," said he, at last. "I'll tell you what we'll do; we'll fight our way down to the sea-front, and then go out to the end of the Chain Pier. There are some places of shelter out there; there won't be a living soul anywhere about on such a morning. For I am going to ask you to make a promise, Maisrie," he added in a lower voice, "and the sea and the sky will be quite sufficient witnesses."

And truly this was fighting their way, as they discovered the moment they had left the house; for the gust and squalls that came tearing along the street were like to choke them. She clung to his arm tightly, but her skirts were blown about and impeded her; the two ends of her boa went flying away over her shoulders; while her hair was specially to a most untoward state—though her companion declared it was always pretty in that very disorder. Nevertheless they struggled forward against the wind, and drove themselves through it, and eventually got down to the sea-front. Here, again, they were almost stunned by the terrific roar; for the tide was full up; and the huge, brown, conca-vous, white-crested waves, thundering down upon the shelving shingle, filled the air with spray; while light balls of foam went sailing away inland, tossed hither and thither up into the purple-darkened sky. So far the driving squalls had brought no rain, but the atmosphere was surcharged with a salt moisture; more than once Vincent had to shake a second and took his handkerchief to dry Maisrie's lashes and eyebrows, that had got back from her forehead the fine wet threads of her brown hair.

But soon they had got away from this roar of water and grinding pebbles, and were out on the pier, that was sway-ing sluously before these fierce gusts, and trembled to its foundations under each successive shock of the heavy surge. And now they could get a better view of the wide and hurrying sea—a sea of a tawny brownish hue melting into yellow-ish green where the foam was not, and always and everywhere showing swift flashes of white, that seemed to gleam all the more suddenly and sharply where the weight of the purple skies darkened down to the horizon.

"What a change it is," said he at last, cheerfully (perhaps with some affectation of cheerfulness, for she seemed curiously pre-occupied)—"What a shame it is to drag you out on such a morning!"

"I do not mind it," she made answer. "It will be something to remember.

When they reached the end of the pier, which was wholly deserted, they entered by supply in a corner of one of the protected seats, and he was not far away from her when he state down. Her lips had grown pale with the buffeting of the wind; the outside threads and plaits of her hair were damp and disordered; and her eyes were grave even to sadness; and yet never had the strange mystery of her youthness; and yet never had the strange mystery of her youthful beauty so entirely possessed him. Perhaps it was the dim fear of losing her, that dwelt as a sort of shadow in his mind even when he was most buoyed up by the radiant confidence of four-and-twenty; perhaps it was the knowledge that, for a time at least, this was to be farewell; at all events, he sate close to her, and held her hand tight, as allowerets, he sate close to her, and held her hand tight, as allowerets, he sate close to her, and held her hand tight, as though to make sure that she should not to stolen away from him.

"Maisrie," said he, "do you know that I spoke to your grandfather yesterday?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And what did he say?"

"At first," she said, with a bit of a sigh, "he talked of Ballorgy. I was sorry that came up again; he is happier when he does not think of it. And, indeed, I have noticed that of late he has almost given up spending of the possibility of a great change in our circumstances. What chance is there of any such thing? We have no money to go to law, there of any such thing? We have no money to go to law, there of any such thing? We have no money to go to law, and grandfather has already decided against us. Then there is the idea that the estates might come to us through some accident, or series of accidents—what is that but a dream? I am sure he is far more content with his happiness what might have been; when he is not thinking, not of lost courage and self-reliance when he is thinking, not of lost courage and self-reliance when he is thinking, not of lost ceasing, of long, pathetic ballad he means to write about in the *Edinburgh Chronicle*. Poor grandfather!—and yet, who can help admiring his spirit—the very gaiety of his nature —in spite of all his misfortunes?"

"Yes, Maisrie—but—but what did he say about you?"

"About me?" the girl repeated. "Well, it was his usual kindness. He said I was only to think of what would tend to my own happiness. Happiness?" she went on, rather sadly. "As if this world was made for happiness!"

It was a strange speech for one so young—and who, so far as he could make out, had been so gently nurtured and cared for.

"What do you mean, Maisrie?" said he, in his astonishment. "Why should you not have happiness, as well as another? Who can deserve it more than you?—you who are so generous and well-wishing to everyone?"

"I would rather not speak of myself as all, Vincent," she said. "That is nothing. I want to speak of you. I want you to consider—what is best for you. And I understand your position—perhaps more clearly than you imagine. You have made me think, of late, about many things; and now that you are going away, I must speak frankly. It will be difficult. Perhaps—perhaps, if you were more considerate, Vincent—"

"Yes?" said he. That Maisrie should have to beg for consideration!

"There might be no need of speaking," she went on, after that momentary pause. "If you were to go away now, and that momentary pause. "If you were to go away now, and that momentary pause. "If you were to go away now, and never see us any more, wouldn't that be the simplest thing? There would be no misunderstanding—no ill-feeling of any kind. You would think of the time we knew you in Craig-royston—and I'm sure I should always think of it—as a pleasant time: perhaps something too good to last. I have sant time: perhaps something too good to last. I have sant time: perhaps something too good to last. I have s

IN THE NIGHT.

Kope the window-blind and look
Across the night.
Above, the angels trail their robes
Of silver white.

Afar, a cloud hangs in the sky,
'Tis dark below,
And stars hide in the mist, like flowers
Beneath the snow.

To-night, upon my happy heart
The starlight falls,
And care and sorrow stand without
The moonlit walls.

To-night, between some hearts and heaven
Clouds darkly lie,
And some souls wake and weep beneath
A starless sky.—*Clarence Urmy.*

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"STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM BLACK,

Author of "A Princess of Thule," "Sabina Zembra," "The New Prince Fortunatus," &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.—In Vain.—In Vain.

One evening Mr Courtnay Fox, the London correspondent of the Edinburgh *Chronicle*, was as usual in his own room in the office in Fleet Street, when a card was brought to him.

"Show the gentleman up," said he to the boy.

A couple of seconds thereafter Vin Harris made his appearance.

"Mr Fox?" said he, inquiringly.

The heavily-built journalist did not rise to receive his visitor; he merely said—

"Take a chair. What can I do for you?"

"No, thanks," said Vincent. "I don't wish to detain you more than a moment. I only wanted to see if you could give me any information about Mr George Bethune."

"Well, that would be only fair," said the big, ungainly man, with the small, keen blue eyes glinting behind spectacles; "that would be only a fair exchange, considering I remember how Mr Bethune came down here one night and asked for information about you."

Vincent looked astonished.

"And I was able," continued Mr Fox, "to give him all the information he cared for—namely, that you were the son of a very rich man. I presume that was all he wanted to know."

There was something in the tone of this speech—a familiarity bordering on insolence—that Vincent angrily resented; but he was wise enough to show nothing; all his anxiety was to have news of Maisrie and her grandfather; this man's manner did not concern him at all.

"I do not ask for information about Mr Bethune himself; I dare say I know him as well as most do," said he with perfect calmness. "I only wish to know where he is."

"I don't know where he is," said the burly correspondent, examining the stranger with his small shrewd eyes, "but I guarantee he's living on the best. Shooting stags in Scotland most likely—"

"They don't shoot stags in December," said Vincent.

"Or careering down the Mediterranean in a yacht—gad, an auxiliary screw would come in handy for the old man," continued Mr Fox, grinning at his own gay facetiousness, "anyhow, wherever he is, I'll bet he's enjoying himself and living on the fat of the land. Merry as a cricket—bawling away at his Scottish songs: I suppose that was how he managed himself when he was in Sing Sing—perhaps he learnt it there—"

"I thought you would probably know where he is," said Vincent, not paying much heed to these little jocosities, "if he happened to be sending in to you those articles on the Scotch ballads—"

"Articles on Scotch ballads!" said Mr Fox, with a bit of a derisive laugh. "Yes, I know. A collation of the various versions: a cold collation, I should say, by the time he has got done with them. Why, my dear sir, have you never heard of Professor Childs of Harvard College?"

"I have heard of Professor Childs," said Vincent.

"Well, well, well, what is the difference," said the ponderous correspondent, who rolled from side to side in his easy-chair as if he were in a bath, and peered with his minute, twinkling eyes. "And indeed it matters little to me what kind of rubbish he puts into the *Weekly*. If my boss cares to do that kind of thing, for the sake of a 'brither Scot,' that's his own look-out. All I know is that not a scrap of the cold collation has come here, or has appeared in the *Weekly* as yet; so there is no clue that way to the whereabouts of your Father Christmas, your Santa Claus, your Wandering Scotch Jew—if that is what you're after."

"I am sorry to have troubled you to so little purpose," said Vincent, with his hand on the door.

"Stop a bit," said Mr Fox, in his blunt and rather impertinent fashion. "You and I might chance to be of use to each other some day. I like to know the young men in politics. If I can do you a good turn, you'll remember it; or rather you won't remember it, but I can recall it to you when I want you to do me one. Take a seat. Let's make a compact. When you are in the House, you'll want the judicious little paragraph sent through the provincial press and such. I can manage that for you. Those you can give me an occasional tip: you're in Grandison's confidence, people say—as much as any one can expect to be, that is; for I believe he's capable of concealing things not only from his right hand, but from his left: he wheels round like a One-and-Ninepenny Dodger in socials. Won't you take a seat?—thanks, that will be better. I want to know you. I've already made one important acquaintanceship through your friend Mr Bethune; it was quite an event when the great George Morris condescended to visit this humble office—"

"George Morris?" said Vincent.

"Perhaps you know him personally," Mr Fox said, and he went on in the most easy and affable fashion: "I may say without boasting that I am acquainted with most people—most people of any consequence; it is part of my business. Ess George Morris, sonorous George, he had never met. You may imagine, then, that when he came down here to ask a few questions, I was precious glad to be of such service as I could; for I said to myself that here was just the man for me. Take a great scandal, for example—they do happen sometimes, don't they? Some high-and-mighty lord of England: very well, I go to George Morris—a hint from him—and there I am first in the field; before the old mummies of the London press have had time to open their eyes and stare."

Vincent had brought a chair from the side of the room, and was now seated; there was only the table, littered with telegrams and proofs, between those two.

"Did I understand you to say," he asked, with his eyes fixed on this man, "that George Morris had come to you to make inquiries about Mr Bethune?"

"You understood aright."

"Who sent him?" demanded Vincent, abruptly—for there were strange fancies and still darker suspicions flying through his head.

But Mr Courtnay Fox smiled.

"George Morris, you may have heard, was not born yesterday. His business is to get out of you what he can, and to take care you get nothing out of him. It was not likely he would tell me why he came making these inquiries—even if I had cared to ask, which I didn't."

"You told him all you knew, of course, about Mr Bethune?" Vincent went on, with a certain cold austerity.

"I did."

"And how much more?"

"Ah, very good, very neat," the spacious-waisted journalist exclaimed, with a noisy laugh. Very good indeed. But look here, Harris, if the great solicitor was not born yesterday, you were—in a way; and so I venture to ask you why you should take such an interest in Mr Bethune's affairs?"

Vincent answered him without flinching.

"Because, amongst other things, certain lies have been put in circulation about Mr Bethune, and I wished to know where they arose. I am beginning to guess."

For an instant Mr Courtnay Fox seemed somewhat disconcerted; but he betrayed no anger.

"Come, come," said he, with an affectation of good humour, "that is a strong word. Words heard no lies from me, I can assure you. Why, don't we all of us know from me, I can assure you. Why, don't we all of us know who read what old George Bethune is? He may flourish and vapour successfully enough elsewhere; but he doesn't impose on Fleet Street; we know him too well. And I don't imagine I have any dislike to myself; your miserable friend imagine I have any dislike to myself; your miserable friend is not the slightest; in fact I rather admire the jovial old mountebank. You see, he doesn't treat me to too much of his Scotch *blague*; I'm not to the manner born; and he knows it. Oh, he's skilful enough in adapting himself to his surroundings—like a trout, that takes the colour of the pool he finds himself in; and he has his eyes hold of a Scotchpool he finds himself in; and he has his eyes hold of a Scotchman, I am told, of the rugged and manly independent of the Scot—of the Drury Lane Scot, I mean—pendence of the Scot—of the Drury Lane Scot, I mean—pendence of the Scot—of the Drury Lane Scot, I mean—pendence

WHAT IS A GENTLEMAN?

What is a gentleman? Is it a thing
Decked with a scarf-pin, a chain, and a ring,
Dressed in a suit of immaculate style;
Sporting an eye-glass, a lisp, and a smile;
Talking of races, and concerts, and balls,
Evening assemblies and afternoon calls
Sunning himself at "at homes" and bazaars,
Whisking meerschaum and smoking cigars?

What is a gentleman? Say, is it one
Boastful of conquests and deeds he has done?
One who unblushingly glories to speak
Things which shou'd call up a blush to his cheek?
One who, while calling at fashionable rooms,
Robs some young heart of its pureness and trust;
Scorns to steal money, or jewels, or wealth,
Thinks it no wrong to take honour by stealth?

What is a gentleman? Is it not one
Knowing instinctively what he should shun,
Speaking no word that should injure or pain,
Spreading no scandal, and deepening no stain?
One who knows how to put each at his ease,
Striving successfully always to please—
One who can tell by a glance at your cheek
When to be silent and when he should speak?

What is a gentleman? Is it not one
Honestly eating the bread he has won,
Walking in uprightness, fearing his God,
Leaving no stain on the path he has trod;
Caring not whether his coat may be old;
Prizing sincerity far above gold;
Reeking not whether his hand may be hard—
Stretching it boldly to grasp its reward?

What is a gentleman? Is it birth
Makes a man noble or adds to his worth?
Is there a family tree to be had?
Seek out the man who has God for his guide,
Nothing to tremble at, nothing to hide.
Be he a noble or be he in trade,
He is a gentleman Nature has made.

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"STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

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CHAPTER XIX.—Beyond Seas.

Out here on the deck of this great White Star Liner—with the yellow waters of the Mersey lapping in the sunlight, and a brisk breeze blowing, and the various excitement of departure thrilling through all the heterogeneous crowd of passengers—here something of hope came to him, at last. This was better than haunting lonely restaurants, or walking through solitary streets; he seemed to know that Maisrie was no longer in the land he was leaving: she had fled across the ocean—gone back to the home, to some one of the various homes of her childhood and girlhood. And though it was beyond a doubt a thing that a young man should set out to explore so vast a continent in search of his lost love, it was not at all the impossible task that it looked. He had made certain calculations. Newspaper offices are excellent centres of intelligence; and Scotch-American newspaper offices would still further limit the sphere of his inquiries. He had dreamed of a wide and sorrowful sea lying between him and her; but instead of that imaginary and impassable sea, why, there was only the familiar Atlantic, that nowadays you can cross in less than a week. And when he had found her, and seized her two hands fast, he would reproach her—oh, yes, he would reproach her—though perhaps there might be more of gladness than of anger in his tones. "Ah; false love—traitress—coward heart that ran away! What Quixotic self-sacrifice was it, then, that you imagined you owed to your relatives?—what fire of wounded pride? No matter now: you are caught and held. You gave yourself to me: you cannot take yourself away again; nor shall any other. No more sudden disappearances—no more trembling notes of farewell—while I have you by the hand."

The last chorus had been shouted by the people crowded on the deck of the now distant tender, the great ship was cautiously creeping down the stream, and the passengers, having done with the waving of handkerchiefs (and here and there a furtive drying of eyes) set about preparing for the voyage—scouring their places at table, investigating their cabins, and getting into their travelling rugs. Then companionships most of them in their state rooms until close on dinner-time, so that they had not much chance of examining each other; but it is wonderful how rumour runs in a ship—especially if the purser be a cheerful and communicative sort of person; and so it was that when all were assembled in the long saloon, many of them had already become known; first, that the tall and handsome young Englishman who seemed to have no companion or acquaintance on board was the newly-elected member for Meadover; and second, that the extremely pretty woman who had the seat of honour at the captain's table was Mrs de Lara, a South American lady, as might have been guessed from her complexion, her eyes, and hair. It appeared to be a foregone conclusion that Mrs de Lara was to be the belle of the ship on this voyage; such things are very soon settled; perhaps one or two of the commercial gentlemen may have escaped with but a bow, and soon lose courage her way. As for Vin Harris, his unopposed return for such an insignificant place as Meadover would not have secured much notice throughout the country had it not been that, immediately after the election, the great Gladdon had been kind enough to write to the new member a congratulatory note of congratulation, which, unfortunately, had to be published. It was a significant pat on the back, of which any young man might very well have been proud; and Mrs Ellison bought innumerable copies of that morning's newspapers, and sent the letter out, and sent it round to her friends, so that about last dinner-time Mr Vin Verden was also so considerate as to send a similar message—but that was *not* published.

Now, during the first evening on board ship, strangers mostly remain strangers to each other; but next morning things become different, especially if the weather be fine; and even on the first day small courtesies are tendered and accepted; people get introduced, or introduce each other, on the smallest pretence, except the old stagers, the wary ones, who hang aloof, in order to pick and choose. As for Vincent, he was well content with his own society, united by an occasional chat with the purser, the ever ubiquitous official who could spare a few moments. He was not anxious to make acquaintances. His thoughts were far ahead. He saw—not the thin, blue line of the Irish coast that actually was visible on the horizon—but the shallow waters at Sandy Hook, the broad bay, the long dusky line of the city, with its innumerable spires rising up like the white sky. His ears wondered how long ago it was since Maisrie and her grandfather had crossed the Newfoundland Banks; it was a long start, but he would overtake them yet. Perhaps, when he was down in the big and busy town, making his inquiries from one newspaper office to another, he might inquiries from one newspaper office to another, he might suddenly find himself face to face with the splendid old soldier and the beautiful, pensive-eyed girl. "Ah, Maisrie, you thought you would escape, but I have you now—never to let you go again! And if you would rather not return to England—if your pride has been wounded by the ingratitude of what has been said or suspected of you and are indignant at what has been done—I will remain with you here! My love is more to me than my home: we will fight the world together—the three of us together: remaining here, if that pleases you better—only, no further thought of separation between you and me!"

On this brisk and bracing morning he was leaning idly with his elbows on the rail, and looking towards the distant line of the Irish coast that was slowly becoming more definite to form, when Mr Ferguson came up to him.

"There's a very charming lady would like to make your acquaintance," said the officer. "Will you come with me, and I will introduce you?"

"Oh, very well," Vincent said, but with no great eagerness. "Tell me her name now, that I may make sure of it."

"You are favoured—Mrs de Lara."

"Oh, really," he said, indifferently. "She seems to me to have had half the men on the ship fetching and carrying for her all the morning."

And, indeed, when he followed the purser in order to be introduced to this lady, he found her pretty well surrounded introduced to this lady, he found her pretty well surrounded by assiduous gentlemen; and "if you please—if you please," Mr Collins had to keep repeating, before he could bring the new comer into the august presence. Mrs de Lara, who, on closer inspection, turned out to be a very young woman, had a pale, clear, olive complexion, softly-lustrous black with a pale, clear, olive complexion, softly-lustrous black with a pale, clear, olive complexion, softly-lustrous black with

A RHYME OF TO-DAY.

I'm thinking of the wooing
That won my maiden heart
When he—he came pursuing
A love unused to art.
Into the drowsy river
The moon transported flung
Her soul that seemed to quiver
With the songs we two were sung.
And the stars in rapture twinkled
On the slumbrous world below—
You see that, old and wrinkled,
I'm not forgetful—no!

He still should be repeating
The vows he uttered then—
Alas! the years, though fleeting,
Are truer yet than men!
The summer moonlight glistens
In the favourite trysting spot
Where the river ever listens
For a song it heareth not.
And I, whose head is sprinkled
With Time's benumbing snow,
I languish, old and wrinkled,
But not forgetful—no!

What though he elsewhere tarneth
To beauty stangely bold?
Still in his breast he burneth
The tender fire of old—
And the words of love he told me
And the songs he sang me then
Come crowding to uphold me,
And I live my youth again!
For when love's feet have trinkled
On the pathway women go,
Though one be old and wrinkled
She's not forgetful—no!

—EUGENE FIELD.

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"STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

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Author of "A Princess of Thule," "Sabina Zembra," "The New Prince Fortunatus," &c.

CHAPTER XX.—West and East.

When Vincent went along next morning to the office of the *Western Scotsman*, he was at once thrown into the editorial room, and there he found before him a short, thick-set man, with a leonine profusion of light chestnut hair thrown back from a lofty forehead, somewhat irregular features, and clear blue eyes that had at present something of a cold scrutiny in them. To any one else, the editor of the *Western Scotsman* might have appeared a somewhat combustible-looking person; but to Vincent he was far from commonplace. Here was one who had befriended the two world-wanderers; who had known them in the bygone years; perhaps Maisrie herself had sat, in this very room, patiently waiting, while the two men talked. And yet when he asked for news of old George Bethune and his grandaughter, Mr Anstruther's manner was unaccountably reserved.

"Yes," said he, "I know nothing of them, nothing whatever; but I can well understand that George Bethune might be in New York, or might have passed through New York, without calling on me.

"Why?" said Vincent, in surprise.

"Oh, well," said the editor, with some touch of asperity and even of indignation, "I should like to believe the best of an old friend; and certainly George Bethune always seemed to me a loyal Scot—proud of his country—proud of the name he bears, as well he might; but when you find him trying to filch the life of a book—from a fellow-countryman, too—making use of the letter of introduction I gave him to Lord Musselburgh to get money—"

"But that can all be explained," said Vincent, eagerly—and he even forgot his immediate disappointment in his desire to clear away those imputations from Maisrie's grandfather. "The money was repaid to Lord Musselburgh as soon as it was found that the American book was coming out; I know it was; I am certain of it; and when the volume did come out, no one was so anxious to welcome it, and give it a helping hand, as Mr Bethune himself. He wrote the review in the *Edinburgh Chronicle*—"

"Oh, did he?" said the editor, with some slight alteration in his tone. "I am glad of that. I could see it was written by some one with ample knowledge; in fact, I quoted the article in the *Scotsman*, it seemed to me so well done. Yes, I am glad of that," Mr Anstruther repeated.

"And then," continued Vincent, "the old man may easily have persuaded himself that, being familiar with the subject, he was entitled to publish a volume on the other side of the water. But I know this, that what he desired above all was that honour should be done to those Scotchmen who had written about their affection for their native country while living in other lands, and that the people at home should know those widely-scattered poets, and when he found that this work was already being undertaken, and he found that this work was already being done, he was not actually claiming out, there was no jealousy in his mind—not the slightest—he was only anxious that the book should be known everywhere, but especially in Scotland."

"I can assure you I am very glad to hear it," said Mr Anstruther, who was clearly much mollified by this vague and earnest vindication. "And I may say that when some one came here making inquiries about George Bethune, I did not put matters in their worst light—"

"Oh, some one has been here making inquiries?" said Vincent, quickly.

"About a month ago, or more."

"Who was it?"

"I forget the name," the editor replied. In fact, I was rather vexed at the time about my friend Ross's book—and Mr Bethune getting money from Lord Musselburgh; and I did not say very much. I am glad there is some explanation; one likes to think the best of a brother Scot. But you—you are not a Scot?" he demanded, with a swift glance of inquiry.

"No, I am not," said Vincent, "but I am very much interested in Mr Bethune and his granddaughter; and as they quite suddenly disappeared from London, I thought it very likely they had returned to the United States; and also, if they had come to New York, I imagined you would be sure to know."

"One thing is pretty certain," said Mr Anstruther. "If George Bethune is in this city, he will be heard of to-morrow evening."

"To-morrow evening?" Vincent repeated, vaguely.

"The twenty-fifth!" exclaimed the editor, with an astonished stare.

And yet the young man seemed none the wiser.

"It is evident you are no Scotchman," the other said at length, and with good humour. "You don't remember that 'a blast o' Janwar win' blew hansel in on Robin.' The twenty-fifth of January—the birthday of Robert Burns!"

"Oh, yes—oh, certainly," said Vincent, with guilty haste.

"There will be a rare gathering of the clans to-morrow night," the editor continued, "and if George Bethune is on this side the water, he'll either show up himself or somebody will have heard of him."

"I think he must be over here," Vincent said. "At first I imagined he might have gone to Scotland—he was thinking of a topographical work on Antiquarian book on the various places mentioned in the Scotch songs—and had often various places mentioned in the Scotch songs—and had often spoken of making a pilgrimage through the country for that purpose. So I went down to Scotland for a few days, but I could hear nothing of him."

"What do you say—that you have been quite recently in Scotland?" Mr Anstruther said, with a sudden accession of interest.

"About three weeks ago," was the answer.

"Well, well, well!" the editor exclaimed, and he regarded the young man with quite a kindly curiosity. "Do ye'rsel the story justice. The American book was coming out; I know it was; I am certain of it; and when the volume did come out, no one was so anxious to welcome it, and give it a helping hand, as Mr Bethune himself. He wrote the review in the *Edinburgh Chronicle*—"

"Oh, did he?" said the editor, with some slight alteration in his tone. "I am glad of that. I could see it was written by some one with ample knowledge; in fact, I quoted the article in the *Scotsman*, it seemed to me so well done. Yes, I am glad of that," Mr Anstruther repeated.

"And then," continued Vincent, "the old man may easily have persuaded himself that, being familiar with the subject, he was entitled to publish a volume on the other side of the water. But I know this, that what he desired above all was that honour should be done to those Scotchmen who had written about their affection for their native country while living in other lands, and that the people at home should know those widely-scattered poets, and when he found that this work was already being undertaken, and he found that this work was actually coming out, there was no jealousy in his mind—not the slightest—he was only anxious that the book should be known everywhere, but especially in Scotland."

"I can assure you I am very glad to hear it," said Mr Anstruther, who was clearly much mollified by this vague and earnest vindication. "And I may say that when some one came here making inquiries about George Bethune, I did not put matters in their worst light—"

"Oh, some one has been here making inquiries?" said Vincent, quickly.

"About a month ago, or more."

"Who was it?"

"I forget the name," the editor replied. In fact, I was rather vexed at the time about my friend Ross's book—and Mr Bethune getting money from Lord Musselburgh; and I did not say very much. I am glad there is some explanation; one likes to think the best of a brother Scot. But you—you are not a Scot?" he demanded, with a swift glance of inquiry.

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THE SONGS THAT MOTHER SUNG.

Go sing the songs you cherish well,
Each ode and simple lay,
Go where the notes till bosoms swell
With strains that deftly play.
All, all are yours to sacred keep
Your choicest treasured song,
But leave for me, till mem'ries sleep,
The songs that mother sung.

When life's dark paths, plaintive 'round,
Fall cross thro' weary way,
Or heart in sorrow, mournful sound
The dirge of dismal day,
Then softly back lost strains will steal
From cradle anthem sung,
To drown the woes that sorrows feel
In songs that mother sung.

When mirth and sadness—as they will—
Blend thro' times meeting lingering still
To wake the mem'ries lingering still
'Mid life's bright morning dawn;
Then, dreaming vivid, bow the rest,
As when our childhood clung,
We lie and listen, on her breast,
The songs that mother sung.

And when the ebb of eventide,
After across the strand,
Sets out to where the billows ride,
Beyond life's shifting sand:
In fast refrain, above the roar
Of liquid, mad waters' tongue more,
O, back, bring backother song.
The same.

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"STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM BLACK,

Author of "A PRINCESS OF THULE," "SABINA ZEMBRA," "THE NEW PRINCE FORTUNATUS," &c.

CHAPTER XXI.—ENLIGHTENMENT.

Next morning he was up and out betimes—wandering through the town that somehow seemed to be pervaded by Maisrie's presence; or, at least, by recollections of her and associations with her. He had hardly left his hotel when he heard a telegraph-boy whistling the air of "Isabeau s'y promène." He went from one street to another, recognising this and that public building; the polished marble pillars shining in the clear, cold sunlight. Then he walked away up College Avenue, and entered Queen's Park; and there, after some little delay, he obtained permission to ascend to the top of the University tower. But in vain he sought along the southern horizon for the cloud of soft white smoke of which Maisrie had often spoken; the distant Niagara was frozen motionless and mute. When he returned to the more frequented thoroughfares, the business life of the city was now in full flow; nevertheless he kept his eyes on the pass now in full flow; nevertheless he kept his eyes on the pass-ers-by, in case amid this hurrying crowd the figure of George Bethune would not readily escape recognition. But, indeed, he was only seeking to pass the time, for he thought he ought not to call on the banker before mid-day.

Mr Daniel Thompsen he found to be a tall, spare man, of well over sixty, with short white whiskers, a face otherwise clean shaven, and eyes that were shrewd and observant, but far from unkindly. He listened to the young man's tale with evident interest.

"And so you have come all the way across the Atlantic," said he, "to look for my old friend George Bethune and little Maggie."

"Maggie," repeated Vincent, somewhat startled.

"Maisrie, you mean."

"Maisrie!" the banker said, with a certain impatience. "Does he still keep up that nonsense? The girl's name is Margaret—Margaret Bethune—surely a good enough name for any ordinary Christian. But his head is just full of old ballads and stuff of that kind; any fancy thing suffices him just as real as fact to him, as he says he could perceive himself that he was intimately acquainted with Sir Patrick Spens and the Scots lords who were drinking in Dunfermline town—"

"But in any case," Vincent protested (for how could he surrender the name that was so deeply graven on his heart) "Maisrie is only a form of Margaret—as Marjorie is—a pet name—"

"Maisrie!" said the banker, contemptuously. "Who ever heard of any human creature being called Maisrie—outside of poetry-books and old ballads? I warned the little monkey, many and many a day ago, when I first got her to write to me, that she should sign her own name, or she would see what I would do to her. Well, how is the little Omahussy? What does she look like now? A sly little wretch she used to be—making people fond of her with her earnest eyes."

"I don't think you quite understand," said Vincent, who resented the familiar tone, though in truth it only meant an affectionate kindliness. "Miss Bethune is no longer the little girl you seem to imagine; she is quite a young lady now—and taller than most."

"The little Omahussy grown up to be a tall young lady?" said he, in a pleased fashion. "Yes, yes, I suppose so. So she does. And tall, you say? Even when she was here last she was getting on; but the only photograph I have of her was done long before that—when she was hardly more than twelve; and then I'm an old bachelor, you see; I'm not accustomed to watch children grow up. I suppose how I remember her is the result of the first knew her—a shy young thing not yet something of a little woman in her ways. Grown up good-looking, too, I suppose?—both her father and mother were handsome."

"If you saw her now," said Vincent, "I think you would say she was beautiful, though it might not be her beauty that would take your attention the most."

The elderly banker regarded this young man for a second or so—and with a favouring glance; he was clearly well impressed.

"I hope you will not consider me intrusive or impertinent if I ask you a question," said he. "I am an old friend of George Bethune's—perhaps the oldest alive now; and besides that I have always regarded myself as a sort of second father to the little Margaret—though their wanderings over the world have taken her out of my ken. Now—don't say way of life has taken her out of my mind—I am sure you will not mind my own business—but at this one time one would almost infer, from your coming over here in search of them, that you have some particular interest in the young lady——"

"It is the chief interest of my life," said Vincent, with simple frankness. "And that is why I cannot rest until I find them."

"Well, now, one question more," the banker continued. "I don't wish to pry into any young lady's secrets—but—but perhaps there may be some understanding between her and you?"

"I hope so," said Vincent.

"And the young wretch never wrote me a line to tell me of it?" Mr Thompson exclaimed—but it was very obvious that this piece of news had caused him no chagrin. "The little Omahussy grows up to be a fine and tall young lady; chooses her sweetheart for herself; thinks of getting married and all the rest of it, and not a word to me! Here is the first grandchild for you! Why, does she forget what I promised to do for her? Not that I ever said so to her; you don't tell a schoolgirl's head full of wedding fancies; but her grandfather knew; her grandfather must have told her when this affair was settled between you and her——"

But here Vincent had to interpose and explain that nothing was settled; that unhappily everything was unsettled, and further he went on to tell of all that had happened preceding the disappearance of Maisrie and her grandfather. For this man seemed of a kindly nature; he was an old friend of these two; then Vincent had been very much alone for a long time in Omaha in whom he could confide. Mr Thompson listened with close attention; and at last he said—

"I can see that you have been placed in a very peculiar position; and that you have stood the test well. The description of my old friend Bethune that your father put scription of my old friend Bethune that your father put before you would be made to look very plausible; and I before you would be made to look very plausible; and I imagine that most young men would have been staggered by it. I can fancy that a good many young men would have been put to say 'Like grandfather, like granddaughter'—been put to say 'Like grandfather, like granddaughter'—and would have declined to have anything more to do with it. But I understand that, however doubtful or sinister. And yet I understand that, however doubtful or sinister. And yet I understand that, however doubtful or puzzled you may have been, at least you never had any suspicion of Margaret's?"

"Suspicion?" said Vincent. "Of the girl whom I hope to make my wife? I need not answer the question."

Mr Thompson give a bit of a laugh, in a quiet, triumphant manner.

"Evidently my little Omahussy had her eyes widely and wisely open when she made her choice," said he, apparently to himself.

"But she has not made her choice," Vincent had to explain, in a rather despondent fashion. "Indeed, I may say plain, in a rather despondent fashion. "Indeed, I may say plain, in a rather despondent fashion. "Indeed, I may say plain, that she has thrown me over. I am almost certain it was that she got the old man to go away. But who can tell? she who got the old man to go away. But who can tell? she who got the old man to go away. But who can tell? she who

FROM MY WINDOW.

AUTUMN.

I see some pigeons wheeling sportively.
And birds are passing and repassing lightly.
Snow clouds are sailing underneath a blue
And silent sky, and sunny beauties are spreading
A welcome glow on the hazy dull fields.
A mighty shadow stretches o'er the grass
Caus'd by those outer buildings—they're the glasgone—
The clouds have sliddrom heath Sol's heavenly rays.
And all is clear again—how beautiful—
The wind is whistling very plaintively,
And yet I love its mourning, incessant use
The tone so solemn, God hath spoken it.
Yes, truly 'tis a fine November day,
And I am happy sitting gazing here
Upon the pleasant picture fronting me.
Farm houses dot the landscape here and there,
All lonely like, because the woodland robes
Are altogether vanish'd from the scene.
Soon will upon us be the wintry days.
Then let us make the most of this mild weather,
And store it in our memories, to shed
A light upon the darkening, chilly hours
When all the vale is harass'd by the storms
That blow upon it very bitterly.—T. W. LITTLE

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CHAPTER XXII.—MARRIAGE NOT A LA MODE.

London had come to life again; the meeting of Parliament had summoned fathers of families from distant climes and cities—from Algiers and Athens, from Constantinople and Cairo; the light blazed at the summit of the Clock Tower; cabs and carriages rattled into Palace Yard. And here at a table in the ladies' dining-room of the House of Commons, sate Mrs Ellison and her friend Louie Drexel, along with Lord Musselburgh and Vincent Harris, the last-named playing the part of host. This Miss Drexel was rather an attractive-looking little person, brisk and trim and neat, with a healthy complexion, a pair of merry eyes, most astonishingly close eyelashes, and a mouth that was quite ruthless in a way; about as ruthless as the young lady's tongue, when she was heaping contempt and ridicule on some conventionality or social superstition, "Seeva the Destroyer" Vincent used gloomily to call her, when he got a little bit tired of hearing her fling at his head—and the poor wretches who made Venetian lace—they had worked for the princes and nobles; and the common people were not supposed to have anything to do with art or ornament—they could hod bricks. Well, I'm for machinery, mary; they could hod bricks. Well, I'm for machinery, mary; they could hod bricks. Well, I'm for machinery, mary;

SONNET.

PRUDHOE CASTLE.

That castle ever fixes keen my gaze
When I am loitering by its noble tower,
Because it seems a place of mighty power.
How often have the lords and lords of former days
Sung spirit-stirring ditties in its praise.
Which, in the calmness of the twilight hour,
The gentle lady heard within her bower,
As on her pensive face fell Luna's rays.
That lady has been dead five hundred years;
Another lady sits, though, in her place,
And seems with love the castle's glorious face,
And in the evening's solemn silence hears
The same deep songs that moved the tender breast
Of her now lying 'neath the tower at rest.

T. W. LITTLE.

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CHAPTER XXIII.—A SPLIT AT LAST.

The renovation of Musselburgh House took more time than had been hoped; bride and bridegroom remained abroad, basking in the sweet airs and sunlight of the Mediterranean spring; and it was not until well on in the month of May that they returned to London. Immediately after their arrival Vincent called on them—one afternoon on his way down to St. Stephen's. He stayed only for a few minutes; and had little to say. But the moment he had left Lady Musselburgh turned to her husband.

"Oh, Mine, it isn't it dreadful! Did you ever see such a change in any human being? And no one to tell us of it—not even his own father nor a word from Lucie Drexel, though she wrote often enough about him and what he was doing in the House——"

"Yes, I see he's ill," said Musselburgh, with a seriousness not usual with him. "Very ill, indeed. Yet he doesn't seem to know it—declares there is nothing the matter with him—shows a little impatience, even, when you begin to ask questions. I suppose he has been working too hard; too eager and anxious all the way round; too ambitious—not like most young men. He'd better give up that newspaper nonsense for one thing."

"Oh, it isn't that Hubert; it isn't that!" she exclaimed, in rather piteous accents; and she walked away to the window (this was the very room in which Vincent had first set eyes on Maisie Bethune and her grandfather).

She stood there alone for a time. Then her husband went and joined her, and linked his arm within hers. She was crying a little.

"I did it for the best, Hubert," she sobbed.

"Did what for the best?"

"Giving that girl away. I never thought it would come to this."

"Now, now, Madge," said he, in a very affectionate fashion, "don't you worry about nothing—or rather, it isn't nothing, for Vin does look pretty seedy; but you mustn't assume that you are in any way responsible. People don't die crowds of consumption and bronchitis—they've been a-days. He is fagged; he is not used to the late hours of the House of Commons; then there's that newspaper-work——"

"But his manner, Hubert, his manner!" she exclaimed. "He seemed as if he no longer cared for anything in life; he hardly listened when I told him where we had been; he appeared to be thinking of something quite different—as if he were looking at ghosts."

"And perhaps he was looking at ghosts," said her husband. "For it was by that table there he first saw those two people who have made all this trouble. But why should you consider yourself responsible, Madge? It wasn't your marriage that sent Vin off to the country. It wasn't you who found out what they really were."

She passed her handkerchief across her eyes.

"I was quite sure," she went on—not heeding this consolation—"that as soon as she was got away—as soon as she was removed from the fascination of her actual presence—he would begin to see things in their true light. And then, thrown into the society of a charming and clever girl like Louie Drexel, I hope everything for him. And is thisall that has come of it, that he looks as if he were at death's door? It isn't the House of Commons, Hubert; and it isn't the newspaper work: it is simply that he still believes in that girl, and that her letters have been about her absence, and her no one to confide in. For that is the worst of it all: it is all a sealed book now, as between him and us. He was for leaving my house in Brighton—oh, the rage he was in with me about her!—and it would have been for the last time too, I know: only that I promised never again to mention the subject to him, and that I have scrupulously kept on fairly well since. But how am I to keep silence any longer? I cannot see my boy like that. I must speak to him; I must ask him if he is still so mad as to believe in the honesty of those two people; and then, if I find that his infatuation still exists, even after this time, then I must simply tell him that he took the money to go away. How can he get over that? How *can* he get over that, Hubert?"

In her despair this was almost a challenge as well as an appeal. But her husband was doubtful.

"When a young man is in love with a woman," said he, "he can forgive a good deal—almost anything—in her, he can forgive everything in everything, so long as she can persuade him she loves him in return——"

"But not this, Hubert, not this!" the young wife exclaimed. "Even if he could forgive her being a thief and the accomplice of an old charlatan and swindler—and what an old charlatan and swindler! I begin to think it is as proud as Lucifer—imagine that of him!—but even if we could get him to regard those two with the eyes of common sense and common experience, and even if he were willing to forgive all that, how could he forgive her being bought over, her taking money to remain away from him? Now, Hubert; surely there is a limit, even to a young man's folly."

"Of course you know best," her husband said, in a dubious kind of way. "I've seen some queer things in my time, with young men. And Vin is an obstinate devil, and heads are not to be bothered to be re-set in a hurry. Look at him senacious; he sticks to anything he takes up. I look at him and think wonderful newspaper work, for example. If he has persuaded himself of the innocence and honour of this girl, it may be hard to move him. And I remember there was something very winning and attractive about her—some thing that bespoke favour——"

"What would that be useful to that old impostor?" Lady Musselburgh said, vindictively.

"Of course," he admitted, "as you say, here is the undoubted fact of their taking the money. If Vin is to be convinced at all, it is possible that may convince him."

"Very well, then," said she with decision, "he must and shall be convinced; and that no further off than to-morrow morning. I'll tell Harland I'm coming along to lunch; so that he may be in the house, to give me any papers I may want. And surely, surely, when Vincent perceives what these people are, and what an escape he has deceived him all the way through and ended by taking money to leave the country!"

But notwithstanding all this brave confidence, Lady Musselburgh felt very nervous and anxious as she went down next morning to Grosvenor Place. She was alone—her husband was coming along later, for lunch; and she went on foot, to give her a little more time to arrange her plan of procedure. For this was the last bolt, and she knew it. It is fatal obstinacy withstood this final assault, when there is no hope for him, or for her far-reaching schemes with regard to him.

She went into the drawing room; and he came as soon as he was sent for. There two were now alone.

"Do you know, Vin," she began at once, "Hubert and I have been rather concerned about you; for though you have been trying to conceal it, there is something in your appearance struck us yesterday the moment you came in; your appearance struck us yesterday the moment you came in; indeed, it made me quite anxious; and seeing you were poorly, Hubert and I talked a little about you and your affairs—you Hubert and I talked a little about you and your affairs—you may be sure with only the one wish in our minds. Hubert may be sure with only the one wish in our minds. Hubert may be sure that you are over-fagged; that you are too close in your attendance at the House; and that you should give your attendance at the House; and that you should give up your newspaper-writing for a time. I wish it were none——more than that. But I suppose there is something else——"

"Aunt," said he, interrupting her—and yet with something of a kind air, "do you think there is any use in this kind of talk, and inquiring, and suggesting? What has happened, has happened. It is something you don't understand; and something you couldn't put right—with all your good wishes."

"Yes, yes," she said, eagerly, for she was rejoiced to find that he took her interference so amiably: "that is quite right; and mind you, I don't forget the agreement we came to at Brighton, that a certain subject should never be referred to by either of us. I quite remember that; and you know I have never consciously broken it to any way whatever. But your looks yesterday, Vin, frightened me; and ever. But your looks yesterday, Vin, frightened me; and at this moment—why you are not like my dear boy at all. I wish in all seriousness you had come over to the Mediterranean—us—you and Louie—and gone with us to the Mediterranean; we should not have allowed you to fall into this condition——"

"Oh, I'm well enough, aunt!" said he.

"You are not well!" she insisted. "And why? Because your mind is ill at ease——"

"And very little comfort I have to hope for from you," said he, remembering former conversations; but there was no bitterness in his tone—only a sort of resigned hopelessness.

"Now, that is not fair, Vin!" she protested. "If I said things to you you did not like, what motive had I but your happiness? And now at this moment, if I re-open that subject, it is not in the hope of comfort you apparently hope for that I am not the kind of comfort you apparently hope for that I am prepared to bring you, but something quite different, and should like to heal your mental ailment, once and for all, by convincing you of the truth."

"Yes, I think we have heard something of that sort on previous occasions," he said, rather scornfully. "The truth as it is in George Morris! Well, I will tell you what truth as it is in George Morris! Well, I will tell you what would be more useful, more to the point, and more to the would be more useful, more to the point, and more to the——ing. Before saying anything further about that old man ing. Before saying anything further about that old man and his granddaughter, I think you ought to go and seek and his granddaughter, I think you ought to go and seek them out, and go down on your knees to them, and ask them out, and go down on your knees to them, and ask their pardon——"

"For what?"

"For what you have already said of them—and suspected."

"Really, you try my patience too much!" she exclaimed, with some show of temper. "What have I said or suspected of them that was not amply justified by the account of them that your father offered to show you? Of course you wouldn't look at it. Certainly not. Facts are inconvenient things, most uncomfortable things, when one's preconvenient things, most uncomfortable things, when one's preconceptions are involved. But I had no objection to looking at it—"

"I suppose not!" said he.

"And my eyes were not blinded; I could accept evidence when it was put before me."

"Evidence!" he repeated. "You forget that I have been across the Atlantic since that precious document was compiled. I heard how that evidence had been got; I could see how it could be perverted to suit the malignant theories of a pack of detectives. And if I came back with any settled conviction, it was that you and one or two others—myself, too, in a way—could do no better than go and humble ourselves before that old man and that girl, and beg for their forgiveness and their forgetfulness of the wrongs and insults we have put upon them."

"Oh, this is beyond anything!" she cried—rather losing command of herself. "You drive me to speak plain. Everything your father and I could think of was tried to cure you of this mad infatuation—the most patient inquiry—expenditure of money—representations that would have convinced any same person. Nothing was of any use. What was to be done next? Well, we could only buy up those honourable persons—who were not adventurers in any kind of way—oh, fortunately not!—but all the same they were willing to be bought; and so, on payment of a substantial consideration, they agreed to pack up their traps and be off. What do you think of that? What do you say to that? Where was the old gentleman's indomitable pride? —where was the girl's pretended affection for you?—when they consented to take a good round sum of money and be off. How can you explain that away?"

She was regarded him with a certain defiance—for she was moved to anger by his obduracy. But if she expected him to wince under this attack, she was mistaken.

"How do I know that this is true?" he said, calmly.

"I am not in the habit of speaking untruths!" she said, slightly drawing herself up.

"Oh, of course not," he answered. "But all through this matter there has been a good deal of twisting about and misrepresentation. I should like to know from whom Mr Bethune got this money—and in what form."

Well, she was prepared.

"I suppose you would be convinced," said she, "if I showed you the receipt—a receipt for £5,000—which he signed and gave to George Morris?"

"Where is that receipt?" he asked.

"In this house. I will go to your father and get it. Shall I ask him at the same time for those other documents which you would not read? Perhaps all taken together they might enable you to realise the truth a little more."

"No, thank you," said he, coldly. "I know how these other documents were procured. I shall be glad to see the receipt."

She hurried away, anxious to strike while the iron was hot, and certain she had already made a profound impression. And so she found her husband still unbending. When she left the room, he remained standing, gazing blankly at the sides of the books on the table; outwardly impassive, but with his brain working rapidly enough. He made no manner of doubt that she could produce this receipt. He took it for granted that George Bethune had accepted the money. Of course, Maisie had nothing to do with it; her grandfather kept her in ignorance of his pecuniary affairs; and it would be enough for him to say that she must go away with him from England—she was obedient in all things. And no doubt the old man had been cajoled and tempted into believing he was acting badly and in the best interests of every one concerned; there could have been little difficulty about that; he himself was quick to persuade himself of anything that happened to fall in with the needs of the moment. All this Vincent understood at once. But when he came to consider that it was this own relations who had brought upon him all the long years and suffering of those bygone months—and not only that; for what was he or his hidden pain?—but also that they had driven forth those two tired wanderers once more—the old man who had some wistful notion of ending his days in his own country, the young girl who had seen in her eyes had just made confession of her love secret, then his heart grew hot within him. It was too cruel. When Lady Musselburgh returned with the receipt in her hand, he took the paper, and merely glanced at it.

"And whose clever and original idea was this?" he demanded with what she took to be indifference.

"Due, Vincent, are you convinced at last?" she exclaimed. "Surely you must see for yourself now. You will give up thinking of them, thinking of that girl, especially when you see what she is——"

"Whose idea was it to get them sent away?" he repeated.

"Well, it was my idea," she said; "but your father paid the money."

"Ho was silent for a second or two, and then he said, slowly—

"And you are my nearest relatives; and this is what you have done, not to me only, but to one who is dearer to me than life. So be it. But you cannot expect me to remain longer under this roof, or to sit down at table, anywhere, with my cruellest enemies——"

She turned very pale.

"Vincent!" she exclaimed.

"It is a question of taking sides," he went on, with perfect composure. "And I go over to the other side. They most need help: they are poor and friendless. I hope the mischief you have done is not irreparable; I cannot tell; but I dare say when you and I meet again time will have shown."

She was thunderstruck and stupefied; she did not even seek to detain him as he left the room. For there was a curious air of self-possession, of resolution about his manner: this was no pique of disappointed passion, nor any freak of temper. And she could not but ask herself, in a breathless sort of way, whether after all he might not be in the right about those people; and, if that was the case, what was this that she had done?

Lord Musselburgh arrived, he and Harland Harris came upstairs together; and almost directly afterwards luncheon was announced. As they were about to go down to the dining-room the great Parliament-pitbaiter looked round with a little air of impatience and said—

"But where is Vin?"

"He was here a short time ago," said Lady Musselburgh: she dared not say more.

Mr Harris, from below, sent a message to his son's room: the answer—which Lady Musselburgh heard in silence—was that they were not to wait luncheon for him.

"Too busy with his reply to the *Mirror*," Musselburgh suggested. "Sharp cuts and thrusts going. I wonder that celestial minds should grow so acrid over such a subject as the internationalisation of——"

"Newspaper controversy," remarked Mr Harris, in his sententious and grandiloquent manner, "is an excellent method of thrashing out any subject; but newspaper controversy with an editor, if you wish to get the best of the argument, is folly. It is not only fighting with a phantom, it is fighting with a phantom who prints what he says in large type, and sends you into the outer sheet."

There was some scuffle on the stairs outside, to which nobody (except Lady Musselburgh, whose ears were painfully on the alert) paid any attention; then in a moment Vincent had put his head in at the door, Harland Harris happened to look out.

"What, is he going off somewhere? I never saw any creature so careless about his meals. I presume his indifference means a good digestion."

"Oh, Vin's digestion is all right," Musselburgh said. "I hear he dines every night at the House of Commons—and yet he is alive."

"But there are his permanent ears!" Mr Harris exclaimed, and he even rose and went to the window for a second. Well, he was just in time to see Vincent step into the cab, and drive off; and therewith he returned to his place at table, and proceeded, in his usual bland and somewhat patronising manner, to tell Lord Musselburgh of certain experiments he was having made in copper-plating, and in the least successful method of preventing oxidation; nor did he know that that was the last glimpse of his son he was to have for many and many a day.

And meanwhile Lady Musselburgh sate there frightened, and guilty, and silent. And that without reason; for what she had done she had done with the full concurrence and approval of her husband; and she fancied (from his words somehow she seemed to feel herself entirely answerable for all that had happened—for the failure of all her schemes —for the catastrophe that had resulted. And the moment she got outside her brother-in-law's house, she began and confessed the whole truth to her husband.

"But why didn't you tell Harris?" said he, pausing as if even now he would go back.

"Oh, I couldn't, Hubert; I daren't" she said, evidently in great distress. "I was so confident everything would come right—I advised him—I persuaded him to pay the £5,000——"

"Oh, nonsense!" was the impatient reply. "A man doesn't hand over £5,000 unless he is himself convinced that it is worth while. And he got what he bargained for. Those people have gone away; they don't interfere any more——"

"Ah, but that is not all," Lady Musselburgh put in, rather sadly. "I made so sure that Vin would forget—that as soon as the hallucination had worn off a little, he would see what those people really were, and turn his eyes elsewhere; yet apparently he is more in their power than ever—talks of my going and asking their pardon—and the like; and now he has wholly broke away from us—declares he will never be under the same roof with us, or sit down at the same table with us. He has got some over to the other side, and they are poor and friendless. Poor and friendless!" she repeated, with a snap of anger—"living on the fat of the land through their thieving! And yet——" And here again she paused, as if recalling something to herself: "Do you know, Hubert, I was startled and frightened by Vin's manner to-day; for I had suddenly to ask myself whether after all it was possible that he might be in the right, and we altogether wrong. In all other things he shows himself so clear-headed and able and shrewd; and then he has seen the world; you would not take him to be one who could be easily deceived. Sometimes I hardly know what to think. But, at all events, this is what you must do now, Hubert; you must get hold of him, and persuade him to go back home, before Harland knows anything of what had been intended. He can invent some excuse about the portmanteaux. You can go down to the House to-night, and get him there; and if you persuade him to return to Grosvenor Place, that will be so much of the mischief set straight. That is the first thing to be done; but afterwards——"

It was quite clear that she knew not what to think, for she went on again, almost as if talking to herself—

"Of course if the girl were a perfectly good and honest girl, and above suspicion of every kind, Vin's constancy and devotion to her would be a fine and noble thing; and I for one should be proud of him for it. But as things are, it is a monomania—nothing else than a monomania! In other words, what she is to engage with that old man to get money on false pretences."

"He sees nothing of the kind," said her husband, bluntly. "She may or she may not be; I know little or nothing about her: but she is, Vin doesn't see it; you may make up your mind about that."

"And yet he seems sharp-sighted in other things," said Lady Musselburgh in a pensive sort of way; and then she added: "However, the first step to be taken is to get him back to his own family; and none can do that so well as you, Hubert; you are his old friend; and you stand between us, as it were. And there's one thing about Vin: *he* can't disappear out of the way; you can always get hold of him—at the House of Commons."

Lord Musselburgh had not been long married; he did as he was bid. And very eagerly did Vincent welcome his ambassador, when he encountered him in the Lobby.

"Come out on to the terrace. I was just going to write to you; I want you to do me the greatest service you can imagine!"

Here I am, ready to do anything any number of services," said Musselburgh, as they proceeded to stroll up and down this dark space, with the wide river flowing silently by, and the innumerable small beads of gold showing where London lay in the dusk. "Only too happy. And I am in the best position for being mediator, for I have nothing to gain from either side—except, of course, that I should be extremely sorry to see you quarrelling with your relations. That is always a mistake. Vin, my boy; bad for you, bad for them. And I hope you will let me go back with the important part of my commission done—that is to say, I hope to persuade you to return to Grosvenor Place, just as it nothing had happened. My wife is awfully upset about it—thinks it is entirely owing to her; whereas I don't see that it is at all. She has been trying to do her best for everybody—for your father as well as for yourself. And the notion that you should cut yourself off from your family naturally seems very dreadful to her; and if I can take her the assurance that you don't mean anything of the kind—very well!"

"Oh, but look here, Musselburgh," said Vincent, "you entirely mistake. It was not about that I wished to see you; not at all; on that point it is useless saying anything. You must assure Lady Musselburgh that this is no piece of temper on my part—nothing to be smoothed over, and hushed up. I have seen all along that it was inevitable. From the moment that my aunt and my father took up that opposition against Maisie Bethune and her grandfather—I foresaw that sooner or later this must come. I have tried to reason with them; I have assured them that their suspicions and their definite charges were as cruel as they were false; and all to no purpose. And this last thing—that they should go to the old man and bribe him and cajole, to take his granddaughter away with him and subject her to the homeless life she has led for so many years—perhaps there are some other considerations I need not mention—this is too much. But I knew that sooner or later a severance would come between them and me; and I am only surprised—I wonder at my self-control—that I have not gone paper work, when my father was allowing me a handsome income. Now do you see the use of it? I am independent. I can do as I please. I can't make a fortune; but I can earn enough to live—and something more. Let them go their way, as I go mine; it has not been all my doing."

Lord Musselburgh was disconcerted; but he was a dutiful husband; he went on to argue. He found he might as well attempt to argue with a milestone. Nothing could shake this young man's determination.

"I told Lady Musselburgh that I had gone over to the other side, for the time for good," said he. "We are in opposite camps now. We have been so all along—but not openly. This piece of treachery has been too much for me; we are better apart; I could not sit down at table with people who had acted like that—whatever their motives were. But you, Musselburgh, you were commissioned in that wretched piece of business to find, as I tell you, you can do me the greatest possible service. Will you do it? Or will you rather cast in your lot with them?"

"Oh, well," said Musselburgh, rather disappointedly, "I don't see why I should be compelled to take sides. I want to do good to everybody concerned. I am just come into the family, as you might say; and it seems a pity there should be any quarrel or break up. I had a kind of notion that we should all of us—but particularly my wife and myself and you and—and your wife—I thought our little party at Grosvenor Place might have a very pleasant time together, both at home and abroad. My wife and I have often talked of it, and amused ourselves with sketching out plans. Seems such a pity——"

"Yes," said Vincent, abruptly, "but there are other things in life besides going to Monte Carlo and making five-franc pieces."

"What is this that you want me to do?" his friend asked next—seeing that those inducements did not avail.

"Well," said Vincent, "I suppose you know that Lady Musselburgh showed me this morning the receipt Mr Bethune gave George Morris for the £5,000. It was a simple receipt; nothing more. But everybody knows George Morris is not the man to part with money unconditionally; there must have been arrangements and pledges; and I want to discover what Mr Bethune undertook to do, where he undertook to go. Morris won't tell me, that is certain enough; but he would probably tell you."

Lord Musselburgh hesitated.

"Why," said he, "You know why that money was paid. It was paid for the express purpose of getting them away—so that you should not know where they are——"

"Precisely so," said Vincent. "And you would, therefore, be undoing a part of the wrong that has been done them, by your wife and my father."

"Oh, I don't call it doing a wrong to a man to give him £5,000," said Musselburgh, with a touch of resentment. "He needn't have taken the money unless he liked."

"Do you know other representations were made to him to induce him to take it?" Vincent asked.

"Well, I don't," was the reply. "They settled all that amongst themselves; and I was merely made acquainted with the results. It would hardly have been my place to interfere, you see; it was before my marriage, remember; in my case, I don't know that I should have wanted to have a say in the matter. However, the actual outcome was all of us know; and you must confess, Vin, whatever persuasions were used, it looks a rather shady transaction."

"Yes—on the part of those who induced him to accept the bribe!" Vincent said, boldly.

"Oh, come, now," Musselburgh interposed, rather testily, "don't be so bigoted. It isn't only your considering that girl to be everything that is fine and wonderful—I can understand that—the glamour of love can do anything; but you go too far in professing the greatest admiration and respect for this old man. Leave us some chances of agreeing with you, of believing you, when you can't deny that he took the money: there is the plain and simple fact staring you in the face. More than that, his taking it was the justification of those who offered it: it proved to them that he was not the kind of person with whom you should be connected by marriage. I say nothing of the young lady; I don't know her; perhaps her association all these years with this old—well, I won't call him names—has not affected her in any way; perhaps she believes in him as implicitly as you appear to do. But as for him: well, take any unprejudiced outsider, like myself; what am I to think when I find him accepting this money from strangers?"

"Yes," said Vincent, a little absently. "I suppose to an outsider, that would look bad. But it is because you don't know him, Musselburgh; or the story of his life; you cannot understand that at one time those were the things that disquieted me; I rather shut my eyes to them; but now that I understand what this man is, and what he has gone through, and how he fears himself, it isn't only pity I feel for him, it is respect, and more than respect. That's a long story; and I need not go into it. I only sympathetic as it would be little use telling it to my father or to my aunt—they have the detectives' version before them—they have the detectives' reading of the case."

"Well, tell me, at least," said his friend. "I want to get at the truth. I have no prejudice or prepossession one way or the other. For another thing, I like to hear the best of everybody—and to believe it if I can; it makes life pleasanter; and I can't forget, either, that it was through me you got to know George Bethune."

It was a long story, as Vincent had said; and it was a difficult one to set in order and in a proper light; but it was chiefly based on what had been told him by the Toronto banker; and Mr Thompson's generous interpretation of it ran through it all. Lord Musselburgh listened with the greatest interest and attention. When Vincent seemed to have finished, with the banker's phrase—"Call George Bethune an impostor if you like; but the man he has imposed on, all his life through, has been—George Bethune."

"Well, it's all very extraordinary," he said, when Vin sent had finished. "I wish I had taken the trouble to become a little better acquainted with him; one is so apt to judge by the outside; I thought he was merely a picturesque old fellow with a mad enthusiasm about Scotland. And yet I don't know what to say even now. All that you have told me sounds very plausible and possible—if you take that way of looking at it; but, then, looking seems so pitiable, especially for the girl; he has his delusions and self confidence—she has only her loneliness. But at the same time, Vin, you must admit that these little weaknesses of his might easily be misconstrued——"

"Certainly," said Vincent, with promptitude. "It is just as Mr Thompson said: if you choose to look at George Bethune through blue spectacles his way of life must appear very doubtful; if you choose to look at him through pink spectacles, there is something almost heroic about him. And I think, Musselburgh, if you knew Miss Bon-heur-mons little better, you couldn't shrink from acknowledging that there was something fine and even grand in his character. As for Maisie—as for Miss Bethune—she asks for no generous consideration, or forbearance, or anything of that kind; she asks for no leniency of judgment, and needs none: she is beyond and above all that. I know her better than I know myself; she has only to remain what she is—

"Ein Gott sie erhalte, so schön und rein und hold!"

—here was a break in his voice as he spoke. Lord Musselburgh was silent for a moment or two—he felt like an intruder upon something too sacred. And yet he had his mission to perform, and he addressed himself to resume—

"Well, after all, Vin, I think you must grant that there is something to be said for your relatives, even if they have been mistaken. They could not know all that you know—all that you learned in Canada besides; they could only judge from the outside; they could only believe what they heard——"

"Why did they interfere at all?" Vincent demanded, in his turn. "Why had they Mr Bethune's steps dogged by detectives?"

"You should be the last to protest. It was entirely for your sake that it was done."

"Yes," said Vincent, with a certain scorn. "It was for my sake they were so eager to regard everything from the attorney's point of view? They would not take my word for anything; they would rather rely on the reports of police-officers. I was supposed to be so easily blinded; the swindlers had such a willing dupe; no reliance was to be placed but on the testimony of spies. What childish rubbish! Why, I introduced my aunt to Mr Bethune and his granddaughter; she could not find a word to say against them—but her suspicions remained all the same! And then apparently she went and consulted with my father. It was so dreadful that I was being cheated by those two dangerous characters. Couldn't the lawyers and their private inquiry agents—couldn't they make out some story that would appal me? Couldn't they make up some begging-letter, and an old account —that would terrify me out of my wits? And then when I wasn't appalled by their idle trash of stories—oh, for goodness sake, get those desperate creatures smuggled away out of the country! No safety unless they were hidden away somewhere. And then they went to the old man; and I can imagine how they persuaded him. The greatest kindness to everyone concerned if only he would fall in with their views; he would save his granddaughter from entering a family who had mistaken, but undoubted, prejudices against her; and of course they couldn't allow him to put himself so much about without endeavouring to pay part of the cost. It was no solution to the young lady—oh, no, certainly not!—probably she was destined for much higher things; and it was no gift to himself; it was merely that the relatives of that hot-headed young man were desirous of piecing themselves by showing how much they appreciated his, Mr Bethune's, generosity in making this little sacrifice. Well, they succeeded; but they little knew—and they little know—what they have done!"

Perhaps there was something in the proud and wilful disdainful tones of the young man's voice that was quite as convincing as his words, for Musselburgh said at last—

"Well, I sympathise with you, Vin; I do really. But you see how I am situated. I am an emissary—an intermediary—I want peace——"

"It is no use saying peace where there is no peace," Vincent broke in. "Nor need there be war. Silence is best. Let what has been done be done; it cannot be undone now."

"Vincent—if you would only think how fond your aunt is of you—if you would think of her distress——"

"It was she who ought to have considered first," was the rejoinder. "Do you imagine I have suffered nothing, before I went to America, and then, and since? But that is of little account. I could forgive whatever has happened to myself. It is when I think of someone else—sent adrift upon the world again—but it is better not to talk!"

"Well, yes," persisted Lord Musselburgh, who was in a sad quandary, for the passionless indignation of this young man seemed so much stronger than any persuasive argument that could be brought against it, "I can perfectly understand how you may consider yourself wronged and injured—and how much more you feel that you consider wronged and injury done to others; but you ought to be a little generous, and take motives into account. Supposing your father and your aunt were mistaken in acting as they did, it was not through any selfishness on their part. It was for your welfare, as they thought. Surely you must grant that to them?"

"I will grant anything to them, in the way of justification," said Vincent, "if they will only take the first step to make atonement for the mischief they have wrought. And that they can do through you. They can tell you on what conditions Mr Bethune was persuaded to take the money; so that I may go to him, and bring him back—and her."

"But probably they don't know where he is!" his friend exclaimed, in perfect honesty. "My impression was that Mr Bethune agreed to leave this country for a certain time; I have understood—nothing definite, but hinted at—that he was to go to Shiresnaahar, and so forth, at the house she was in.

Dick arrived a little earlier than usual, and I could see from the window that he was grave and troubled. When he got down from the car he asked if I were in, and being answered in the affirmative, ordered dinner to be put on the table as soon as possible, and went up to his room.

I did not come down until the waiter came to tell me that dinner was ready. Dick had evidently waited also, and followed me down. When he came into the room, he said heartily:

"Well, Art, old fellow, welcome back; I thought you were lost," and shook hands with me warmly.

Neither of us seemed to have much appetite, but we pretended to eat, and sent away plates full of food cut up into the smallest proportions. When the apology for dinner was over, Dick offered me a cigar, and said:

"Come out for a stroll on the sand, Art; I want to have a chat with you." I could feel that he was making a great effort to appear hearty, but there was a hollowness about his voice, which was not usual. As we went through the hall, Mrs Darling looked at us, my landlady had just arrived. There was a larger packet than usual, but somehow, in the face of the ordeal which I felt was before me, the letters were not written which could interest me. I merely glanced at the envelopes and put them in my pocket, intending to open and read them later on. Dick had gone, and I followed him easily along, but as I came up behind him I could not but notice that he was braced up to his full height, and that his square massive shoulders were set well back. Dick had some earnest purpose before him, whatever it might be. I hurried on and overtook him.

We walked on the wide stretch of fine hard sand, which lies westwards from Carnacliff when the tide is out, and were a considerable distance from the town before a word was spoken. Dick turned round to me and said:

"Art, what does it all mean?"

I hesitated for a moment, for I hardly knew where to begin, the question, so comprehensive and sudden, took me aback. Dick went on:

"Art, two things I have always believed: and I wont give them up without a struggle. One is that there are very few things in this world worse than strange or wrong they look, won't bear explanation of some kind; and the other is that an honourable man does not grow crooked in a moment. Is there anything, Art, that you would like to tell me?"

"There is, Dick! I have a lot to tell? but won't you tell me what you wish me to speak about?" I was just going to tell him all, but it suddenly occurred to me that it would be wise to know something of what was amiss with him first, otherwise I might add to his pain and complicate matters still worse.

"Well, then, I will put you a few questions. Did you not tell me that the girl you were to love with was not Norah Joyce?"

"I did; but I was wrong. I did not know it at the time; I only found it out, Dick, since I saw you last."

"Since you saw me last! Did you not then know that I loved Norah Joyce, and that I was only waiting a chance to ask her to marry me?"

"I did." I had nothing to add here; it came back to me that I had spoken and acted all along without a thought of my friend.

"Have you not of late paid many visits to Shleenaahar; and have you not kept such visits quite dark from me?"

"I have, Dick."

"Did you keep me ignorant on purpose?"

"I did. But those visits were made entirely on your account." I stopped, for a look of wonder and disgust spread over my companion's face.

"On my account! on my account! And was it, Arthur Severn, on my account that you asked, as I presume you did, Norah Joyce to marry you—I take it for granted that your conduct was honourable to her, as any one—to whom I had told you I loved, and that I wished to marry, and that you assured me that you did not know that her being fixed on another woman? I hate to speak so, Art, but I have had black thoughts, and am not quite myself—was this all or my account?" This terrible question to answer, and I paused. Dick went on:

"Was it on my account that you, a rich man, purchased the home that she loved; whilst I, a poor one, had to stand by and see her father despoiled day by day, and, begood luck," and with a grin at me over his shoulder, Andy hurried away. I muttered to myself:

"If anyone is a fairy, my bold Andy, I think I can name him. You seem to know everything."

This scene came back to me with renewed freshness. I could not but feel that Andy was giving me some advice, could not but feel that Andy was giving me some advice, He evidently knew more than he pretended; indeed, he must have known all along of the identity of my unknown of Knocknacar with Norah. He now also evidently knew of my knowledge on the subject; and he either knew or guessed that I was off to see Joyce on the subject of his neighbour.

In my present state of embarrassment his advice was a distinct light. He knew the people, and Joyce especially; he also saw some danger to my hopes, and showed me a way to gain my object. I knew already that Joyce was a proud man, and I could quite conceive that he was an obstinate one, and I knew from my own experience of him that there is no obstacle so difficult to surmount as the pride of an obstinate man. With all the fervour of my heart I prayed that, on this occasion, his pride might not in any way be touched or aroused.

When I saw him I went straight towards him, and held out my hand. He seemed a little surprised, but took it. Like Bob Acres, I felt my courage oozing out of the tips of my fingers, but with the remnant of it threw myself into the battle.

"Mr Joyce, I have come to speak to you on a very serious subject."

"It is."

"A serious subject! Is it concernin' me?"

"I hope not, most sincerely. Mr Joyce, I want to have your permission to marry your daughter!" If I had suddenly turned into a bird and flown away, I do not think I could have astonished him more. For a second or two he was speechless, and then said, in an unconscious sort of way:

"Want to marry me daughter!"

"Yes, Mr Joyce. I love her very dearly. She is a pearl amongst women, and if you will give your permission, I shall be the happiest man on earth. I can quite satisfy you as to my means. I am well to do; indeed, as men go, I am a rich man."

"Aye, sir, I don't doubt. I'm content that you are what you say. But you never saw me daughter—except that dark night when you took me home."

"Oh, yes, I have seen her several times, and spoken with her, but, indeed, I only wanted to see her once to love her!"

"Ye have seen her—and she never told me! Come wid me!" He beckoned me to come with him, and at the end a rapid pace to his cottage, opened the door, and motioned me to go in. I entered the room—which was both kitchen and living room—to which he pointed. He followed.

As I entered, Norah, who was seated, saw me and stood up. A rosy blush ran over her face; then she grew as white as snow as she saw the stern face of her father close behind me. I stepped forward and took her hand; when I let it go, her arm fell by her side.

"Norah," said Joyce, and he spoke very sternly, but not unkindly, "do you know this gentleman?"

"Yes, father!"

"He tells me that you and he have met several times. Is it there?"

"Yes, father, but——"

"Ye never could me! How was that?"

"It was by accident we met."

"Always be accident?" Here I spoke:

"Always by accident—on her part." He interrupted me:

"Yer pardon, young gentleman! I wish me daughter to answer me. Speak, Norah!"

"Always, father!—except once, and then I came to give a message—yes! it was a message, although from myself."

"What missage!"

"Oh, father, don't make me speak. We are not alone. Let me tell you alone. I am only a girl—and it is hard to speak."

His voice had a tear in it, for all its sternness, as he answered:

"It is on a subject that this gentleman has spoken to me about—as mayhap he has spoke to you."

"Oh, father!" she said, her hand, which he did not withdraw, and bending over, kissed it and hugged it to her breast. "Oh, father, what have I done that you should seem to mistrust me? You have always trusted me; trust me now, and don't make me speak till we are alone."

I took my hat and went out. My blood began to boil, that she I loved should be so distressed—whatsoever the cause, and at the hands of whomsoever, even her father.

"Mr Joyce, you must let me speak! You would speak yourself to save pain to a woman you loved." He turned to me like to be silent, but suddenly stopped. I went on:

"Norah"—so when under the influence of emotion I entirely blameless. I met her quite by chance at the top of Knocknacar when I went to see the view. I did not know who she was—I had not the faintest suspicion; but from that moment I loved her. I went next day, and waited all the day in the chance of seeing her; I did see her, but again came over her unconsciously. I sought her out again, day after day, day after day, but could get no word of her, for I did not know who she was, or where she came from. Then, by chance, and after many weary days, again I saw her in the Cliff Fields below, three days ago. I could no longer be silent, and told her that I loved her, and asked her to be my wife. She asked a while to think, and left me, promising to give me an answer on the next evening. I came again, and I got my answer." Here Norah, who was sobbing, with her face turned away, looked round, and said:

"Hush! hush! You must not let father know. All the harm will be done!" Her father answered in a low voice:

"All that could be done is done already, daughter. You never told me!"

"Sir! Norah is worthy of all esteem. Her answer to me was that she could not leave her father, who was alone in the world!" Norah turned away again, but her father's arm went round her shoulder. "She told me I must think no more of her; but, sir, you and I, who are men, must not let a woman, who is dear to us both, make such a sacrifice." Joyce's face was somewhat bitter as he answered me:

"Ye think pretty well of yerself, young sir, whin ye consider it a sacrifice for me daughter to shtay wid the father, who loves her, and who she loves. There was nivver a shadda on her life till ye came!" This was hard to bear, but harder to answer, and I stammered as I replied:

"I am not thinking of myself, but of what is best for her, even if it were to break my heart. But she must marry some time; it is the lot of the young and beautiful!" Joyce paused a while, and his look grew very tender as he made answer softly:

"Aye! thruo, thruo. The young birds laive the nest in due season, that's only natural." This seemed sufficient concession for the present; but which was the first grey hair I could not say, however, I was about to speak, when Norah, who had stood up, came to me and held out her hand. I took it and held it to my lips, and went out and shut the door.

Then I wandered to the rocks and climbed down the rugged path into the Cliff Fields. I strode through the tall grass and the weeds, rank with the continuous rain, and gained the table rock. I climbed it, and sat where I first had met my love, after I had lost her; and, heading, I thought of her, and of how I had rested, and of how I had prayed as fervent a prayer as the heart of any lover can yield for every blessing on the future of my beloved, and made high resolves that whatsoever might befall, I would so devote myself that, if a man's efforts could accomplish it, her fair life should be one of unworthy object was myself

TOO YOUNG FOR LOVE.

Too young for love?
Ah, say not so!
Tell reckoning reshuts not to blow?
Wait not for spring to pass away—
Love's summer months begin with May?
Too young for love?
Ah, say not so!
Too young? Too young?
Ah, no! no! no!
Too young for love?
Then say not so,
While daisies bloom and tulips glow!
June soon will come with lengthened day
To practice all love learned in May.
Too young for love?
Ah, say not so!
Too young? Too young?
Ah no! no! no!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

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"STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM BLACK.

Author of "A PRINCESS OF THULE," "SABINA ZEMBRA," "THE NEW PRINCE FORTUNATUS," &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.—NEW WAYS OF LIFE.

But no sooner had he torn open the envelope than his heart ceased to stand still within a sort of fear and amazement. For this was Malcolm's own handwriting that he beheld—as startling a thing as if she herself had suddenly appeared before him, after these long, voiceless months. Be sure the worthy banker's accompanying letter did not win much regard; it was this sheet of thin blue paper that he quickly unfolded, his eyes scarcely daring to glance at the words; and eager to grasp all that she had to say at once. Alas! there was no need for any such haste; when he came to read this message that she had sent to Toronto, it had little to tell him of that which he most wanted to know. And yet it was a marvellous thing—to hear her speak, as it were! There was no more mention mentioned in this letter; but none the less had this actual thing come all the way from her; her fingers had penned these lines; she had folded up this sheet of paper that now lay in his hands. It appeared to have been written on board ship; further than that all was uncertain and unknown.

He went into the library, and brought out a quiet corner; there was something in the strange reticence of this communication that he wished to study with care. And yet there was an apparent simplicity, too. She began by telling Mr Thompson that her grandfather had asked her to write to him, merely to relieve them of them to his memory; and she went on to say that they often talked of him, and thought of him, and of bygone days in Toronto. "Whether we shall ever surprise you by an unexpected visit in Yonge Street," she proceeded, "I cannot tell, for grandfather's plans seem to be very vague at present and, in fact, I do not think that he has yet made up his mind. So far as I can judge he does not enjoy travelling as much as he used; it appears to fatigue him more than formerly; and from my heart I wish he would settle down in some quiet place, and let me care for him better than I can do in long voyages and and railway journeys. Though, indeed, he becomes at times so excitable, indeed, becomes a little impatient if you show any anxiety on his behalf; still I can see he is not what he was; and I think he should rest now. Why not in his own country?—that has been his talk for many a day; but I suppose he considers my child-self, as well, a very poor confidante in me; so that when I try to persuade him that we should go to Scotland, and settle down to a quiet life in some place familiar to him, he grows quite angry, and tells me I don't understand such things. But I know his own fancy goes that way. The other morning I was reading to him, and quite unconsciously I came to a name that was not listening; so I raised my head; and I saw there were tears running down his cheeks—he did not seem to know I was there at all—and I heard him say to himself—

"The beach-woods of Balloray—one look at them—before I die!' And now I never read to him any of the Scotch songs that remind him—such as Yarrow or Cheviot, or Logan Braes—he becomes so strangely excited; for some time afterwards he walks up and down, by himself, repeating the word, as if he saw the place before him; and I know that he is constantly thinking about Scotland, but won't acknowledge to me or to any one.

"There is another piece of news, which is all the news one can send on board a ship; and it is that poor dear grandfather has grown very peremptory! Can you believe it? Can you imagine him irritable and impatient? You know how he has always scorned to be vexed about trifles; how he could always get from everything its appearance and exasperations into his own dream-world; but of late it has been quite different; and as I am constantly with him, I am the chief sufferer. Of course, I don't mind it, not in the least; if I minded it I wouldn't mention it, you may be sure; I know what his heart really is in these words now. And indeed it amuses me a little; it is as if I had grown a child again; it is 'Do this' and 'Do that'—and no reason given. Ah, well, there is not much amusement for either of us two; it is something." And here she went on to speak of certain common friends in Toronto, to whom she decided to put the office in commission; that is to say, he proposed to have two private secretaries, the one to look after his own immediate affairs and correspondence, the other to serve as his "devil," so to speak, in political matters; and the latter post he offered to Vincent, he having the exceptional qualification of being a member of the House. It is not to be supposed that the ex-Minister was influenced in his choice by the fact that the young man was now on the staff of two important papers, one a daily journal, the other a weekly; for such mundane considerations do not enter the sublime sphere of politics; nor, on the do not enter the sublime sphere of politics; nor, on the other hand, is it to be imagined that Vin Harris accepted the offer with all the more alacrity that his hold on these two papers might probably be strengthened by his confidential relations with the great man. Surmises and conjectures in such a case are fruitless—the mere playthings of one's enemies. It needs only to be stated that he accepted the office with every expectation of hard work; and that he got it. Such hunting up of authorities; such verification of quotations; such boiling-down of blue-books; such consistent attendance at the House of Commons: it was all hardly earned at a salary of £400 a year. But very well he knew that there were many young men in this country who would have rejoiced to accept that position at nothing a year; for it is quite wonderful how private secretaries of Parliamentary chiefs manage, subsequently, to tumble in for good things.

Then it is probable that his journalistic enterprises—which necessarily became somewhat more intermittent after his acceptance of the secretaryship—brought him in, on the average, another £400 a year. On this income he set seriously to work to make himself a miser. His tastes had always been simple—and excellent health may have been at once the cause and effect of his abstemiousness; but now he made a fine art of it—lived himself, and his rigidly economical habits in every way, and a very definite aim in view. He was saving money; he was building up a miniature fortune—by half-crowns and pence. Food and drink cost him next to nothing; if he smoked at all, it was a pipe the last thing in the morning before going to bed. Omnibuses served his turn—unless some urgent business on behalf of his chief demanded a hansom. He could not give up his club; for that was in a way a political institution; and oftentimes he had to rush up thither to find someone who was not in the precincts of St. Stephen's; but then, on the other hand, a good club things was much cheaper than in any restaurant or in the members' dining-room of the House of Commons. It was remarkable how the little fortune accumulated; and it was a kind of amusement in a fashion. He pinched himself—and laughed. He debated moral questions—for example and chiefly, whether it was lawful to use club-stationery in writing articles for newspapers; but he knew something of the ways of Government offices, and perhaps his conscience was salved by evil example. What the manager of the Westminster Palace Hotel thought of his manner of living can be imagined—if so august an official cared to enquire into such details. His solitary room, breakfast, and washing; no money; these were small bills that he called for week by week. And so his little hoard of capital gradually augmented—very gradually, it is true, but surely, as the rate of interest on deposits rose and fell.

In the meanwhile Lord Musselburgh had not been very successful in his endeavours to bring about a reconciliation between Harris and his family; nor had he been able to obtain the information that Vincent demanded.

"You see, Vin," he said (they were again walking up and down the lamp-lit Terrace, by the side of the deep-flowing river), "your wife is peculiarly upset over this affair. She thinks it is entirely owing to her mismanagement. She would never have told you about the £5,000 if she had not been certain that that would be conclusive proof to you of the character of those two people; and now that she sees what less come of her telling you so much, she is afraid to tell you more. Not that I suppose there is much to tell. Mr Bethune and Miss Bethune are no longer in this country; but I doubt whether any one can say precisely where they are——"

"Nonsense!" Vincent broke in, impatiently. "They're bamboozling you, Musselburgh. Consider this for a moment. Do you imagine that Leonard Harris has paid over that £5,000 as a lump sum, without making stipulations, and very definite stipulations? Do you imagine he would be content to take the word of a man whom he considered a thief? It is absurd to think so. *Do ut facias* would be his motto; and he would take precious good care to keep control over the money in case of non-fulfilment——"

"But there is the receipt!" put in Lord Musselburgh.

"A receipt for theatrical purposes!" said Vincent, with something like contempt. "You may depend on it the money was not handed over in that unconditional fashion; that is not the way in which the George Morris world do business. He has got some hold over Mr Bethune; and he must know well enough where he is. Supposing Mr Bethune had that money in his pocket, what is to prevent his returning to this country to-morrow? Where would be the penalty for his breaking of bail? Or, if there is to be a man whom you consider a swindler; you must have some guarantee; and the guarantee means that you must be able to get at him when you choose. It stands to reason!"

"Yes, I suppose so—it would seem so," said Lord Musselburgh, rather doubtfully; "but at all events Mr George Morris was to have the money upon his mother. I've been to him—he declines; refers me to your family. And then, you see, Vin, I'm rather in an awkward position. I don't want to take sides. I don't want to be a partisan; I would rather act as the friend of all of you; but then you won't help me to do anything I am met by a challenge—and a particularly inconvenient challenge it is. Do I believe with them, or do I believe with you? I told your aunt what you said about Mr Bethune—how you described his character, and all that; and I offered to do it as well as you; for her remains unconvinced. As you told the story, it seemed natural and plausible; but as I told it—and I was conscious of it at the time—it was less satisfactory. And mind you, if you stick to hard facts, and don't allow for any interpretation——"

"If you look through my blue spectacles, in short——"

"Precisely. Well, then, you are confronted with some extremely awkward things. I don't wonder that your aunt asks pertinently why you are to begin and extend this liberal construction of conduct—this allowing for motives—this convenient doctrine of forgiving everything to self-deception—this forbearance from imputing sinister motives? I don't wonder that she asks why anybody should be sent to prison at all."

"Oh, as for that," said Vincent, frankly, "I don't say it would be good for the commonwealth if all of us were George Washingtons. But there are men who are capable of magnificent lunis nature; and I would not have him other than he is—not in any one particular. But a nation of George Bethunes?—it would soon strike its head against the stars."

"Very well, then," said Lord Musselburgh, "you are not contending for any general principle. I don't see why you and your family shouldn't be prevailed to agree. You may both of you be right. You don't insist upon having the justifications you extend to Mr Bethune extended to everyone else, or to any one else; you make him the exception; and you needn't quarrel with those who take a more liberal view of the matter."

"Literal?" said Vincent, with a certain coldness.

"Blindness—want of consideration—want of understanding—is that to be literal? Perhaps it is. But I thought you said something just now about Mr Bethune and a prison? You don't mean to tell me any one action of his that would suggest imprisonment?"

"Your aunt has been merely talking of theories," said Musselburgh, rather uneasily, for he had not intended to use the phrase. "What I urge is this—why shouldn't both of you agree that Leonard Harris should be trusted by the two of Mr Bethune, and agree to differ? I stand between you: I can see now much can be advanced on both sides."

"And so you would patch up a truce," said Vincent.

"How long would it last? Of course I do not know for what period of imprisonment the man has been mulcted in £5,000 in a considerable sum to pay; I suppose they bargained that Mr Bethune and his granddaughter should remain away from England for some time. But not for ever? Even then, is it to be imagined that they cannot be found? Very well, then. Either in this country or abroad, Miss Bethune and I meet face to face once more; and what becomes of my wife—I hope. It is what I live for. And then? Where will your patched-up truce be then? Besides, I don't want any sham friendships with people who have acted as they have done——"

"It was in your interest, Vin," his friend again urged.

"Why not judge a little of the lenient judgment you so freely extended to those others——"

"To those others?" replied Vincent, firing up hotly. "To whom?"

"To Mr Bethune, then," was the pacific reply.

"I don't think Mr Bethune has ever consciously wronged any human being. But they—were they not aware what they were wreaking when they played this underhand trick?—sending that girl out into the world again, through her devotion to her grandfather? I have told you before: there is no use crying for peace, peace, when there is no peace. Let them wade to some of one miserable thing or two miserable things we will see. And look at this silly affectation of secrecy! They told me too much when they told me they had paid money to get George Bethune out of the country; then I understood why Maisie went; then I knew I must have patience until she came back—in a few months, as they said she left. And I have been well. I was puzzled before, and sometimes anxious; but now I understand; now I am content to wait. And I have plenty to do in the meantime. I have to gain a proper foothold—and make some provision for the future as well; already I am independent of anybody and everybody. And perhaps, perhaps, when it is all over, when all these things have been set right, I may be able to forgive; but I shall not be able to forget."

This was all the message that Lord Musselburgh had to take home with him, to his wife's profound distress. For she was very fond of her nephew, very proud of him, too, and of the position he had already won for himself; and what she and done she had done with the best intentions towards him. Once, indeed, she confessed to her husband that in spite of herself she had a sort of sneaking admiration for Vincent's obstinacy and courage and faith in mankind (she said) that—if only the old man and all his obliqueries were out of the way—she could almost find it in her heart to try to like the girl, for Vincent's sake.

"The real question," she continued, "the thing that concerns me most of all to think of is this; can a girl that has been so dragged through the mire have retained her purity of mind and her proper self-respect? Surely she must have known that her grandfather was wheedling people out of money right and left—and that he took her about with him to enlist sympathy? Do you suppose she was not perfectly aware that Vincent Harris had paid his hotel and restaurants? When tradespeople were pressing for money, do you fancy that she was in ignorance all the time? Very well; what a life for any one to lead? How could she hold up her head amongst ordinarily honest and solvent people? And supposing that she herself was all that she ought to be, the humiliation must have sunk deep. And even if one were to try to like her, there would always be that consciousness between her and you. You might be sorry for her, in a kind of way; but you would be still sorrier for Vincent; and that would be deadly."

"My dear Madge," her husband said—in his character of mediator and peacemaker, "you are arguing on a series of assumptions and prejudices. If Vin does hold on to his faith in those two—and if he does in the end marry Miss Bethune—I shall comfort myself with the conviction that he was likely to know more about the matter than anybody else. He could hardly have been on terms of closest intimacy, and for a long time; and you may be sure that the girl Vin wants to marry is no tarnished kind of a person—in his eyes."

"Ah, yes—in his eyes!" said Lady Musselburgh, rather sadly.

"Well, his eyes are as clear as most folks'—at least, I've generally found them so," her husband said—trying what a little vague optimism would do.

One afternoon Vincent was walking along Piccadilly—and walking rapidly, as was his wont, for the twin purposes of exercise and economy—when he saw, some way ahead of him, Lady Musselburgh crossing the pavement to her carriage. She saw him too, and stopped—colour mounting to her cheeks. When he came up he merely lifted his hat, and would have kept on in the way but that she addressed him.

"Vincent!" she said, in an appealing, half-reproachful fashion.

And then she said—

"I want you to come into the house for a few minutes—I must speak with you."

"Is there any use?" he asked, rather coldly.

However, she was very much embarrassed, as her heightened colour showed; and he could not keep her standing here in Piccadilly; he said "Very well," and followed her up the steps and into the house.

When they had got into the drawing-room she shut the door behind them, and began at once—with not a little piteous agitation in her manner.

"Vin, this is too dreadful! Can nothing be done? Why are you so implacable? I suppose you don't understand what you have been to me, always, and how I have looked to your future as something almost belonging to me, something that I was to be proud of; and now they had got into such a tangle, and I could not help, was helpless to forgive; but I shall not be able to forget."

"I wish you could see how worn and ill you are looking——"

"Well, I've had some things to think of lately—thanks to my kind relatives!" said he.

"But really I must be off——"

"Vincent," she said, making one last despairing effort to bring things back to their former footing, "when are you going to ask Louie Drexell and me to dine with you at the Foreign Office last night; and I cannot say 'Don't you know; he has gone and made himself a stranger to us—?"

"I wonder who it was who made a stranger of me!" he interposed—but quite impassively.

"I can only say, again and again, that it was done for the best, Vin!" she answered him. "The mistake I made was in letting you know. But I took it for granted that as soon as you were told that those people had accepted money of us to go away——"

"Those people? What people?" he demanded, with a sterner air.

"Oh, I meant only Mr Bethune himself," said she, hastily. "Oh, yes, certainly, only him; there were no negotiations with anyone else."

"Negotiations!" he said, with a touch of scorn. "Well, perhaps you can tell me what these negotiations were? How long did Mr Bethune undertake to remain out of this country?"

"Three years, Vin," said she, timidly regarding him.

"Three years?" he repeated, in an absent way.

"But there is no reason," she added quickly, "why he should not return at any moment if he wishes: so I understand: of course, I do not make the arrangement—but I believe that is so."

"Return at any moment!" he said, slowly. "Do you mean to tell me that you put £5,000 into that old man's hands, on condition he should leave the country for three years, and that all the same you left him free to return at any moment?"

"Of course he would forfeit the money," said she, rather nervously.

"But how could he forfeit the money if he already has it? He has got the money: you showed me the receipt. Come, aunt," said he, in quite a different tone. "Let us be a little more honest and above-board. Shall I tell you how I read the whole situation? You can contradict me if I am wrong. Let that receipt you showed me—was it in proper form for merely theatrical purposes? Wasn't it meant to crush and overwhelm me as a piece of evidence? The money wasn't handed over like that, was it? Supposing I were to conjecture that somebody representing you or representing my father has still got control over that money; and that it is to be paid in instalments as it is earned—by absence? Well, isn't that so?"

He fixed his eyes on her: she hesitated—and was a little confused.

"I tell you, Vin," she said, "I had personally nothing to do with making the arrangement; all that was left in George Morris's hands; and of course he would take whatever precautions he thought necessary. And why should you talk about theatrical purposes? I really did think that when I could show you Mr Bethune was ready to take money from strangers to go away from England you would change your opinion of him. But apparently, in your eyes, he can do no wrong. He is not to be judged by ordinary rules and standards. Everything is to be twisted about on his behalf, and forgiven, or even admired. Nobody else is allowed such latitude of construction; and everything is granted to him because he is George Bethune. But I don't think it is quite fair, or that you should take sides against your own family."

This was an adroit stroke, following upon a very clever attempt to extricate herself from an embarrassing position; but his thoughts were otherwise occupied.

"I should like you to tell me," said he, "if you can, what moral wrong was involved in Mr Bethune consenting to accept that money. Where was the harm—or the ignominy? Do you think I cannot guess at the representations and inducements put before him, to get him to stay abroad for three years? Why, I could almost tell you, word for word, what was said to him! Here was an arrangement that would be of incalculable benefit to everybody concerned. He would be heading up family dissensions. He would be guarding his grandaughter from a marriage that could do it no good to you; for that remains unconvinced. As you told the story, it seemed natural and plausible; but as I told it—and I was conscious of it at the time—it was less satisfactory. And mind you, if you stick to hard facts, and don't allow for any interpretation——"

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"Vincent," she said, making one last despairing effort to bring things back to their former footing, "when are you going to ask Louie Drexell and me to dine with you at the Foreign Office?"

"I'm so busy, aunt, just now," said he, as he opened the door for her. Then he saw her into her carriage; and she drove away—a most perplexed and unhappy woman.

These rooms that Vincent had taken at the foot of Buckingham Street were right up at the top of the building; and commanded a glorious prospect of the river, the Embankment gardens, the bridges, the great dusky world of London lying all around, and the dome of St. Paul's rising dim and phantasmal in the east. They were bachelor chambers, that had doubtless seen many tenants (the vagaries of an income-tax had driven many a man into humbler quarters); but the young man had no sooner entered into possession than he began a series of alterations and improvements that bache'or chambers did not seem to demand. Now in any hurry, however; nor pressed to do so at a certain hour; on the contrary, he would linger here with a kind of strange instant pleasure in the thought that at that odd half-hour he could snatch from his multifarious duties. To begin with, he had the woodwork painted a deep Indian red, and the walls a pearly-blue grey, while the former colour was repeated in the Japanese window-curtains, and the latter by the great sofa and cushions, on the tawboard writing-table, sometimes in the awakening of the dawn, as he lay in a low easy-chair, and watched the vast, silent city coming out of its sleep. This top-floor was a very still place, except for the early chattering of the tree-sparrows, in whose nests, swaying on the branches just beneath him, he would have liked to throw biscuits. And then his peregrinations through London, rapid though they were as a rule, occasionally brought him face-to-face with a bric-a-brac shop; and from time to time he picked up one thing or another, just as it happened to strike his fancy. Perhaps these purchases were just a trifle too elegant for a bachelor's apartments; the sitting room away in that lofty situation came to look rather like a boudoir; for example, there was a music-stand in rosewood and ormolu—a tall stand it was, as if for a violin player—which he himself never used. Pictures, too, he began to hang; his books he could not add the volumes which were one by one added to these shelves were of a more graceful and literary stamp than you would have expected to find in the library of a young and busy member of Parliament. It was not a lordly palace of art, this humble suite of apartments in the neighbourhood of the Strand; but there was a prevailing air of selection and good taste; perhaps, one ought to say, of expectancy, also, in the presence of things not yet in use. Then the two large and low windows of the sitting room were all surrounded with ivy, of long training; but besides that, there were flower-boxes; and at a moment's notice, and at small expense, these could be filled with potted geraniums, if one wished to be gay. And always outside was the varied panorama of the great city; the wide river and the bridges, the spires and the towers, the masses of buildings becoming more and more spectral as they receded into the grey and wavering mist. Sometimes the rose and saffron of the dawn were there, ascending with a soft suffusion behind the purple dome of St. Paul's; sometimes there were blown and breezy days, with flying showers and watery gleams of sunlight; and sometimes the night lay blue and still and clear, the Surrey side in black and mysterious shadow, the white moon high in the south. Those silent altitudes were a fine place for dreaming, after all the toil and moil of the working hours were over; and a fine place for listening, too; sometimes, towards the morning, just as the leaves began to stir, you could fancy the wind was bringing a message with it—it seemed, coming from far away, to say something about "Claire Fontaine,"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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THE SNAKE'S PASS.

By BRAM STOKER, M.A.

CHAPTER XIII.—BOG-FISHING AND SCHOOLING.

In the morning early we drove over. We left Andy, as usual, in the horses at the foot of the hill, and walked up together. I left Dick at Murdock's gate, and then hurried as fast as my legs could carry me to Joyce's.

Norah must have had wonderful ears. She heard my footsteps in the lane, and when I arrived at the gate she was there to meet me. She said "Good morning" shyly, as we shook hands.

Joyce was away in the fields. We sat hand in hand, and talked for a good while, but I took no note of time.

Suddenly Norah looked up and said, "Hush!" she said, "there is a step in the boreen: it is your friend, Mr Sutherland." We sat just a little further apart and let go hands. Then the gate clicked, and even I heard Dick's steps as he quickly approached. He knocked at the door; we both called out "Come in," almost unconsciously, and then looked at each other and blushed. The door opened and Dick entered. He was very, pale, but in a couple of seconds his pallor passed away. He greeted Norah cordially, and she sweetly bade him welcome; then he turned to me:

"I am very sorry to disturb you, old fellow, but would you mind coming down to Murdock's for a bit? There is some work which I wish you to give me a hand with."

I started up and took my hat, whispered good-bye to Norah, and went with him. She did not come to the door; but from the gate I looked back and saw her sweet face peeping through the diamond pane of the lattice.

"What is it, Dick?" I asked, when we were down the lane.

"A new start to-day. Murdock evidently thinks we have got on the track of something. He went into Galway for a big grapnel; and now we are making an effort to lift it—whatever 'it' is out of the bog."

"By Joye!" said I, "things are getting clear."

"Yes," said Dick, "I am inclined to think he is right. There is most probably a considerable mass of iron in the bog. We have located the spot, and are only waiting for you, so as to be strong enough to make a cast."

When we got to the edge of the bog we found Murdock standing beside a temporary jetty, arranged out of a big plank, with one end on the ground and the centre supported on a large stone, placed on the very edge of the solid ground, where a rock cropped up. Beside him was a a very large grappling-iron, some four feet wide, attached to a coil of strong rope. When we came up, he saluted me to a coil of strong rope. When we came up, he saluted me in a half surly manner, and we set to work, Dick saying, as we began:

"Mr Severn, Mr Murdock has asked us to help in raising something from the bog. He prefers to trust us, whom he knows to be gentlemen, than to let his secret be shared in with any peasant."

Dick got out on the end of the plank, holding the grapnel and a coil of the rope in his hand, whilst the end of the coil was held by Murdock.

I could see from the appearance of the bog that some one had been hastily working at it, for it was all broken about as though to make a hole in it, and a long pole that lay beside where Listool was covered with wet and slime.

Dick poised the grapnel carefully, and then threw it out. It sank into the bog, slowly at first, but then more quickly; an amount of rope ran out which astonished me, for I knew that the bog must be bottomless.

Suddenly the ran of the rope ceased, and we knew that the grapnel had gone as far as it could. Murdock and I then held the rope, and Dick got to the end and poked and pushed to assure himself that the hook had got to the rock where we stood. Then he, too, joined us, and we all began to pull.

For a few feet we pulled in the slack of the rope. Then there was a little more resistance for some three or four feet, and we knew that the grapnel was dragging on the bottom. Suddenly there was a check, and Murdock gave a suppressed shout:

"We have got it! I feel it! Pull away for your lives!"

We kept a steady pull on the rope. At first there was simply a dead weight, and in my own mind I was convinced that we had caught a piece of projecting rock; but presently would have to mobilise assistance and turn out of the bog whatever it was that we had got hold of, even if he had to tear up rocks by the roots; but Dick kept his head, and directed a long steady pull.

There was a sudden yielding, and then again resistance. We continued to pull, and then the rope began to come, but very slowly, and there was a heavy weight attached to it. Even Dick was excited now. Murdock shut his teeth, and scowled like a demon; it would have gone hard with any one who came then between him and his prize. As for myself, I was all a tremble. In addition to the natural excitement of the time, there rose to my memory Joyce's words:—"When the treasure is found you may claim her the benefit of her wife's schooling." I was in terror lest the whole thing should end in a fiasco. Mind ye this—if I could see me way to do it meself, I'd work me arms off before I'd let you or any one else come between her an' me in such a thing. But it'd be only a poor kind of pride that'd hurt the poor child's feelin's and mar her future—an' so it'll be as ye both wish. Ye must find out these things for yerselves, an' settle about them when ye go back to the counthry with yer own kind."

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"Hush! man; hush!" said Dick sternly, as we turned away. "You do not tempt Him, but be warned in time."

"Let Him look after himself, an' I'll look out for meself," he answered with a sneer. "I'll find the treasure—an' ye need be in spite of God an' iv the devil too!"

CHAPTER XIV.—A PROPOSAL.

I think it was a real pleasure to Dick to get Norah's message that he was expected to ten that evening. Like the rest of his sex, he was not free from vanity; for when I told him, that first sad was to lock down at himself ruefully, and his first words were:

"But I say, old lad, look at the mess I'm in; and these clothes are not much, anyhow."

"Never mind, Dick, you are as good as I am."

"Oh, well," he laughed, "if you'll do, I suppose I must; but I'll have to make a call on the pervasive Murdock for a clean shirt and collar, at any rate. I'll go round to cleanliness, anyhow. I say, Art, who's been tidying you up? Oh, I see! Forgive me, old lad; and quite natural, too. Miss Joyce should see you blush, Art! Why, you are as rosy as a girl!"

"Call her 'Norah,' Dick; it is more natural, and I am sure she will like it better. She is to look on you as a brother, you know."

"All right, Art," he answered heartily, "but you must manage it for me, for I think I should be alarmed to do so unless I got a lead; but it will come easy enough after the first go off. Remember, we both always thought of her as 'Norah!'"

We went down towards the brook and met with Andy, who had the car all ready for us.

"Begor, yer 'an'rs," said he, "I thought yez was lost entirely, or that the fairies had carried yez off; both iv yez this time." This with a sly look at me, followed by a portentous wink to Dick. "An' I'm thinkin' it's about time for somethin' to ate. Begor! but me stummick is cryin' out that me throat is cut!"

"You're quite right, Andy, as to the fact," said Dick, "but you are a little antecedent."

"An' now what's that, sure? I never was called that name afore. Shure, an' I always thry to be dacent—divil a man but can tell me that! Antidacent, indeed! Well, now, what nixt?"

"It means, Andy, that we are going to be carried off by the fairies, and to have some supper with them too: and if any protection is required from a thing like that!" The scorn of her voice made even Murdock wince, and seemed to cool both Joyce and myself, and also Dick, who now stood beside us.

Murdock looked from one to another of us for a moment in amazement, and then with a savage scowl, as though he were looking who and where to strike with venom, he fixed on Norah, God forgive him!

"An' so ye have him at home already, have ye! An' yer father present, too, an' a witness. It's the sharp grirrl ye are, Norah Joyce, but I suppose this wan is not the first!"

I restrained myself sternly because Norah's hand was laid on my mouth. Murdock went on:

"And so ye thought I wanted ye for yerself! Oh no! It's no bankrup's daughther for me; but I may as well tell ye why I wanted ye. It was because I've had in me hands, wan time or another, every inch iv this mountain bit to bit, all except the Cliff Fields; and think I wanted for purposes iv me own—thim as knowe why, has swore not to tell"—this with a scowl at Dick and me—"but I'll have thim yit; an' have thim to widout thinkin' that me wife likes sthrollin' there wid sthrange min?"

Here I could restrain myself no longer; and to my joy on the instant—and since then whenever I have thought of it—Norah withdrew her hand as it to set me free. I stepped forward, and with one blow fair in the lips knocked the foul-mouthed ruffian head over heels. He rose in an instant, his face covered with blood, and rushed at me. This time I stopped out, and with an old football trick, taking him on the breast bone with my open hand again tumbled him over. He arose livid—but this time his passion was cold—and standing some yards off, said

WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN, O MY SOUL?

O Soul, O trammelled Soul, so sore beset
By the ignoble cares which warp and fret,
Realise the downward stress—renew the strife!
Hid in deep darkness is the dawn of light.

Thus did I think. Now doubt assaults my mind
Lest that it be not night but I am blind:
That what I hold as Fate's relentless blows,
The careful chastening of a Father shows.

Say that my dearest hopes have been denied,
My fond ambitions crushed, humbled my pride;
The door I would have opened has been closed—
Coerced to do what most my will opposed:

Had I a claim to joyous days and nights—
To a serene procession of delights?
Is happiness man's birthright; this true quest
To seek and seize what serves his selfish Best?

So far from this the mystic law obtains
From Death springs Life, and loss yields highest gains:
"Perfect through suffering" the stern decree.
Working through Godhead downwards o'en to me.

Perfect! It is a trumpet note which rings
To the reserves of being, and that brings
Strength adequate to lift once more the load
And bear it till we reach the feet of God.

M. A. N.

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"STAND FAST, CRAIG-ROYSTON!"

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM BLACK,

Author of "A PRINCESS OF THULE," "SABINA ZEMBRA," "THE NEW PRINCE FORTUNATUS," &c.

CHAPTER XXV.—IN A NORTHERN VILLAGE.

But there were to be no three years of absence, still less of forgetfulness. One afternoon, on Vincent's going down to the House, he found a telegram along with his letters. He opened it mechanically, little thinking; but the next moment his eyes were staring with amazement. For these were the words he saw before him:—"Grandfather very ill; would like to see you. Maisrie Bethune. Cressmains, by Cupar." Then through his bewilderment there flashed the sudden thought: why, the lands of Balloray were up in that Fifeshire region; had, then, the old man, tired of his world-wanderings, and feeling this illness coming upon him, had he at length crept home to die, perhaps as a final protest? And Maisrie was alone there, among strangers, with this weight of trouble fallen upon her. Why could not these intervening hours and the long night, and the distance, be annulled? Why could not he suddenly appear in the room, and see Maisrie waiting for him, with piteous eyes and outstretched hands.

He never could afterwards recall with any accuracy how he passed those hours; it all seemed a dream. And a dream it seemed next day, when he found himself in a dogcart, driving through a placid and smiling country, with the sweet summer air blowing all around him. He talked to the driver, to free his mind from anxious and futile forecasts. Cressmains, he was informed, was a small place. There was but one inn in it, the Balloray Arms. Most likely, if two strangers were to arrive on a visit, they would put up at the inn; but very few people did go through—perhaps an occasional commercial traveller.

"And where is Balloray House—or Balloray Castle?" said the next question.

"Just in there, sir," said the man, with a jerk of his whip towards the woods past which they were driving.

And of course it was with a strange and curiosity that Vincent looked out for this place of which he had heard so much. At present nothing could be seen but the high stone wall that surrounds so many Scotch estates; and, branching over that, a magnificent row of beeches; but by-and-by they came to a clearing in the "policies"; and there once his castle appeared in sight—a tall, rectangular building, with a battlemented parapet and corner turrets, perched on a spacious and lofty plateau. It looked more modern than he had imagined to himself; but perhaps it had been recently renovated. From the flagstaff overtopping the highest of the turrets, a flag idly drooped and swung in the shine of the summer sky; no doubt the proprietor was at home—in proud possession; while the old man who considered himself the rightful owner of the place was lying, perhaps stricken nigh unto death, in some adjacent cottage or village inn. Then the woods closed round again; and the mansion of Balloray was lost from view.

Vincent was not in search of the picturesque, or he might have been disappointed with this village of Crossburn—which consisted of but one long and wide thoroughfare, bordered on each hand with a row of bare and mean-looking cottages and insignificant houses. When they drove up to the inn, he did not notice that it was a small, two-storied drab-hued building of the most common-place appearance; that was not what he was thinking of at all; his heart was beating high with emotion—what wonder might not meet his eager gaze at any instant? And indeed he had hardly entered the little stone passage when Maisrie appeared before him; she had heard the vehicle arrive, and had quickly come downstairs; and now she stood quite speechless—her trembling, warm hands clasped in his, her face upturned to him, her beautiful sad eyes all dimmed with tears, and yet having a kind of joy in them, too, and pride. She could not say a single word; he would have to understand that she was grateful to him for his instant response to her appeal. And perhaps there was more than gratitude; she seemed to hunger to look at him—for she had not seen him for so long a while; perhaps she had never thought to see him again.

"Have you any better news, Maisrie?" said he.

She turned and led the way into a little parlour.

"Yes," said she (and the sound of her voice startled him), the Misses of the inn were dressing, sleeping and waking, had been all so silent). "Grandfather is rather better. I think he is asleep now—or almost asleep. It is a fever—a nervous fever—and he has been so weak—and often delirious; but he is quieter now—rest is everything—"

"Maisrie," he said again (in a bewilderment) "it is a wonderful thing to hear you speak! I can hardly believe it. Where have you been all this while? Why did you go away from me?"

"I went because grandfather wished it," said she. "I will tell you some other time. He is anxious to see you. He has been fretting about so many things; and he will not confide in me—not entirely—I can see that there is concealment. And Vincent," she went on, with her appealing eyes fixed on him, "don't let him speak about it. You know, when he got ill in Cairo, it was more home-sickness than anything else, as I think; and he said he wanted to go and die in his own country and among his own people; and so we began to come to Scotland by slow stages. And now that we are here, there is no one whom he knows; and he is quite as much alone here as he was in Egypt; for more alone than we used to be in Canada. I fancy he expects that a message may come for me from Ballochmorlan—that I am to go there and be consoled: and of course that is quite impossible; I do not know them, they do not know me; I don't suppose they are even aware that we are living in this place. But I think he will be disappointed in that, it is Craig-Royston he will think of instead; he will want to see those to seek out relatives on my account. Well, Vincent, about Craig-Royston—"

She hesitated; and the pale and beautiful face became suffused with a sort of piteous embarrassment.

"This I understand, Maisrie—quite well!" said he, boldly. "Why should you be troubled about that? You have found out there is no such place?—but I could have told you so long ago! There was a district so named at one time—and it is quite enough for young children's fathers—a picturesque name that excites their imaginations, and he brings it into his own talk. Where is the harm of that? There may have been Greenats living there at one time—and they may have invented themselves and their grandfather has married with the Bethunes; anyhow your grandfather has talked himself into believing there was such a relationship; called himself into believing there was such a relationship; and even if it is a delusion, what injury does it do to any human creature? Why," he went on quite cheerfully, to reassure her and give her comfort, "I am perfectly well informed that no Scotch family ever had a Land Past Craig-Royston! as its motto. But if you have caught your grandfather's fancy, why should not he choose it for his motto? Every one, with a touch of romance in him, has thought of some motto had been worn by his family, what harm is there in that? It is only a fancy—it is an innocent delusion—it injures no one—"

"Yes, but, Vincent," she said—for these heroic excuses did not touch the immediate point—"grandfather is quite convinced about the Craig-Royston; and he will convince all about the Craig-Royston; and I may be going away in search of them, so that I may find relatives and shelter. And the disappointment will be terrible. For he has got into a habit of fretting that never leaves him. He has its fit of depression by himself, too, and begins to worry about having done this or done that; and you know how unlike that is to his old courage, when he never doubted for a moment but that everything he had done was done for the best. And to think that he should have died alone for the best. And to think that he should have died alone for the best. And to think that he should have died alone

THINKING OF THE OLD CAPE.

Soft is the light of the summer sea,
When the sun in west is low,
And the billows sigh to the shells that lie
In the sunset's mellow glow;
But the beauty gleams in vain,
And the tints that wax and wane,
And the songs of the surge
At the ocean's verge,
Seems naught but a dirge,
For O!
My thoughts fly far, 'neath the evening star,
To my love in the long ago.

The wind comes up from the sighing sea,
And the sea hints wing of snow
Fades from my sight in the clasp of night,
Like joy in the arms of woe:
And I dream by the billows blue
Of a heart that was leal and true;
And I vow by the tide,
Though fate may divide,
My faith shall abide,
And ever;
And my heart ever turn while the bright stars burn
To my love in the long ago.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.

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A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM BLACK.

Author of "A Princess of Thule," "Sabina Zembra," "The New Prince Fortunatus," &c.

CHAPTER XXVI.—A Babble o' Green Fields.

The End.

There was a wonderful vitality, especially of the brain, in this old man; after long periods of languor and exhaustion, with low moanings and mutterings quite unintelligible to the patient watchers, he would flame up into something like his former self, and his speech would become eager and voluble, and almost consecutive. It was in these intervals that he showed himself proud of his recovered memory; again and again they could hear him repeat the lines that for a time had baffled him—

"How sweet to roam by Allandor, to breathe the balmy air,
When cloudless are the summer skies, when woods and fields are fair;
To see the skylark soaring high, and chanting on the wing,
While in you woods near Calder Kirk, the wild birds sweetly sing."

He was busy with the new book—choosing and arranging; and Maisrie, as his amanuensis, jotted down memoranda as to the poets to be included, and the pieces most characteristic of them. For he was not to be pacified into silence and acquiescence—in those clearer moods. There was nurry, he said. Some one else might step in. And he crossexamined Vincent about his quotations that Hugh Antstruther had made at the Burns Celebration in New York.

"I hardly remember," Vincent answered him. "There were a good many. But there was one piece I thought rather pathetic—I don't recall the name of it—but it was about a little pair of shoes—the mother thinking of her dead child."

"What—what?" said the old man, quickly. "Not James Smith's? Not 'The Wee Fair o' Shoon?'"

"Well, yes, I think that was the title," said Vincent.

An anxious and troubled expression came into the sick man's eyes: he was labouring with his memory—and Maisrie saw it.

"Never mind, grandfaitler; never mind just now; if you want it, I'll write to Mr Anstruther for it. See, I will put it down in the list; and I'll send for it; and it will be back here in plenty of time."

"But I know it quite well," he said fretfully. "The last verse ang way. 'The caaslin wind blawa cauld, Jamie —the snaw's on the hill and the ice—'" He repeated those two lines over and over again, with half-shut eyes; and then all at once he went on with the remainder—

"'The flowers that decked my lammie's grave)
Are faded noo, an' gane!
O, clima spaik! her heart aboe dwells
In yon fair land aboon;
But sair's the sicht that blin's my e'e
That wee, wee pair shoon!'"

There was a kind of proud look in his face as he finished. "Yes, yes; a fine thing to have a good memory—and I owe that to my father—he said there never was a minute in the day that need be wasted—you could always repeat to yourself a verse of the Psalms of David. I think the first word of approval—I ever got from him—ye see, Maisrie, we were brought up under the strictest government in those days—was when I repeated the oxix Psalm—the whole twentytwo parts—with hardly a mistake. And what a talisman to carry about with ye—on the deck of a steamer—on Lake Ontario—in the night—with the stars overhead—then the oxxiii Psalm comes into your mind—and ye look in Scotland—you see its small hills and green valleys, just arrived. tion; and I sent to Edinburgh; and there was his manuscript, all ready and published, he might cease fretting—"

"Cease fretting!" Vincent exclaimed, with a stare of astonishment. And then he hesitated. "Well, you are an older man than I, and you have more experience in these matters than I have had; but I should have said that a cruel disappointment such as this is sure to cause would distress his mind beyond measure. He must occupy himself with something; his brain is incessantly working; and should he be talking of getting out his book, he is not looking forward with hope. But if you show him this volume, it will be a crushing blow: the very thing he seems to live for will be taken from him; he will feel injured by being anticipated, and his brood over it. Of course, I have no right to speak; I am no doctor—"

"Perhaps you are right—perhaps you are right," said the little doctor. "It was merely an idea of mine—thinking it would quiet him. But on reflection I will not risk it; it may be better not to visit it."

"I think case," Vincent said, struck in, promptly, "will you let me look at the book in paper, and will you take it away with you when you go? I mean, that I don't wish Miss Bethune to see it. She has plenty to think of at present; don't worry her with a trifling matter like this. It is of no consequence to her, or to any human being, how many collections of Scotch poems may be published—the more the merrier—so long as readers can be found for them; but she is anxious and nervous and tired at present—and it might surprise her, perhaps vex her, to find that this volume had been published."

"Oh, certainly, certainly," the doctor said, taking the failure of his ingenious little scheme with much equanimity. "I will put the book into that sideboard drawer until I come down; and then I can take it away with me without her or any one having seen it."

The next day brought Vincent an unexpected and welcome surprise. He had been out-of-doors for a brief breathing space, and was returning to the inn, when he saw in the distance, coming down Cupar Road, a waggonette and pair. He seemed somehow to recognise the two figures seated in the carriage; looked again; at last made certain—they were Lord and Lady Musselburgh. Of course, in such circumstances, when they drove up to the door of the inn, there was no great joyfulness of greeting; only a few anatomary questions, and professions of hope for the best; but at the same time Vincent, who was touched by this friendly act, could not help saying—

"Well, this is like you, aunt."

"Oh, your letter was too much for me, Vin," she said, with frank good nature. "I did not wait for the telegram, —I trust there will be no need to telegraph for anybody. But I don't want you to give me any credit. I want to appear as I am; and I've always told you I'm a selfish woman—the generous creature is Hubert here, who insisted on coming all this distance with me. And now I want you to understand the full extent of my selfishness. You are doing no good here—of course. You are probably in the way. But all your affairs in London will be compromised if you remain here: Grandison's private secretary cannot be absent at such a time."

"There's St. John," Vincent exclaimed, referring to his colleague in the office that had been put in commission.

"He's not in the House," rejoined this practical and very charming person; "and the short and the long of it is that you must get back to London at once. That is part of my scheme; the other is, that I shall take your place. I shall be of more use. You say there is no immediate danger. So much the better. Go away back to your post. If anything should happen—I could be of more service than you. What could you do? Miss Bethune could not return to London with you—and go into lodgings of your choosing. I will look after her—and she will allow me—if she will let bygones be bygones. I will ask her pardon, or do anything; but I don't suppose she is thinking of that at present. You go back with Hubert and leave me here. I can shift for myself."

"I think it is a sensible arrangement," her husband said, idly looking around at the rather shabby furniture.

"It is very kind of you, aunt," Vincent said—"and very far from being selfish. But it is impossible. I must remain here. I have duties here as well as elsewhere—perhaps more important in my own sight. But—but—now that you are here—"

"Oh, yes, I'll stay," said she, good-naturedly. "Well, Hubert, it is yourwho are packed off; I suppose you can return to Edinburgh to-night. I brought a few things with me, Vincent, in case I should be wanted; will you fetch them in from the waggonette? Still, I wish I could persuade you to go back to London?"

And in this manner it was that Lady Musselburgh became installed in the inn, making some little excuses to Maisrie. She and her husband had been in the neighbourhood. They had heard of Mr Bethune's serious illness, and of Vincent's having come down from town. Could she be of any help to Beth. Maisrie thanked her, of course; but did not take much notice of her; the girl just then having many things on her mind. For her grandfather's delirium was at times more pronounced now; and in these paroxysms she alone could soothe him.

Lady Musselburgh, indeed, rather hung back from entering the sick room, without stating her reasons to any one. On every occasion that she saw Maisrie she was most kind and considerate, and solicitous about the girl herself; but she betrayed no great concern about the old man, further than by making the usual inquiries. When Vincent suggested to her, that if she did not go into the room and see Mr Bethune, his grand-daughter might think it strange, she said in reply—

"But he won't remember me, Vin! We never met but at Henley."

"He remembers everything that ever happened to him," was the answer. "His memory is wonderful. And perhaps —afterwards—you may wish you had said a civil word or two."

"Oh, very well," she said. "Whatever you think right. Will you come with me now?"

She seemed a little apprehensive—she did not say why. They went upstairs together. The door of the sick room was open. Maisrie, when she perceived this visitor, rose from her seat by the bedside; but Lady Musselburgh motioned her to keep her place, while she remained standing in the middle of the room, waiting to see if Mr Bethune would take any notice of her. But his eyes were turned away; and he was muttering to himself almost inaudibly—they could only catch a word here and there—Galashiels—Torwoodlee—Selkirk—Jedburgh—no doubt he was going over in his own mind those scenes of his youth. Then Maisrie said, very gently:

"Grandfather!"

He turned his eyes, and they rested on the stranger for a second or so, with a curiously puzzled expression. She went forward to the bedside.

"I'm afraid you don't remember me," she said, diffidently. "It was at Henley we met—"

"I remember you very well, madam, very well indeed," said he, receiving her with a sort of old-fashioned and ceremonious politeness—as far as the wasted frame and poor wandering wits would allow. "I am sorry—to have to welcome you—to so poor a house—these are troublous times truly—but it was still looking mirthful at her. "Yes, yes, I remember you well, madam—and—and I will not fail to send you my monograph on the—the Brants of the Western Isles—I will not fail to send it—but if ye will forgive me—my memory is so treacherous—will you forgive me, madam, if your name has escaped me for the moment—"

"This is Lady Musselburgh, grandfather," Maisrie interposed, quietly.

"Musselburgh—Musselburgh," he said; and then he went on, amid the pauses of his laborious breathing: "Ah, yes—your husband, madam, is a fine young man—and a good fellow—boisterous, intrepid, and gallant—perhaps a little cynical in public affairs—great measures want earnest convictions—it may be that his lot has fallen in over pleasant places—and he has chosen the easier path. Well, it is to—to fight a—why not? There are many battles to be fought; and he's hard fighting; while others—others find nothing but smoothness and peace—let them thank heaven for it—and enjoy it. I hope he will hold on his way with a noble cheerfulness—despising the envy of enemies—a noble cheerfulness—I hope it may be his always—indeed, I know none deserving of better fortune."

It was now abundantly clear to Lady Musselburgh that he did not in any way associate her with the arrangement that had been affected by George Morris; and the was much relieved.

"I mustn't disturb you any longer," said she. "Indeed I only came along to see if I could be of any assistance to Miss Bethune. I hear she has been doing far too much. Now that is very unwise; for when you are getting better, and need constant care, then she will find herself quite worn out."

"Yes, yes, that is right," said he, "I wish ye would persuade her—take her in hand—make her look after herself—but she has a will of her own, the creature—a slim bit of a lass, ye might think—but it's the spirit that endures—shining clear—clearer and clearer in dark times of trouble. And she—she has had her own troubles—and suffering—but never a word of complaining—obedient —willing—ready at all times and seasons—loyal—dutiful—and brave. What more could I say of her?—what more? Sometimes I have thought to myself—there was she—the courage of a man in that slim bit creature—and the gentleness of all womankind as well—"

"Grandfather," said Maisrie, "you mustn't talk any more now—you are keeping Lady Musselburgh waiting."

"But, madam," he continued, not heeding the girl at all, "you must remember her descent—she comes of an inflexible race—she is of pure blood—it is the thoroughbred that will endure—it is the heart breaks in two. How could she keep holds on till its heart breaks in two. How could she keep proud-spirited, and silent in endurance, and brave? Perhaps you may know that it was one of her ancestors—as he lay in his grave—that some one said—'There lies one who never feared the face of man,'—a noble inscription on a tombstone—'who never feared the face of man.'—"

Maisrie leant over and said to him, quite gently—

"Grandfather, you are forgetting; it was of John Knox that was said."

He looked at her doubtfully; and then seemed to be puzzling with his own memory.

"Perhaps—perhaps," he said; and then he added, quite humbly, "I beg your pardon for misleading you, madam—I did not intend it—but I forget things—and Maisrie is generally right. John Knox?—perhaps—perhaps—I thought it was a Beaton or a Bethune—but I cannot remember which of them—perhaps she is right—"

He closed his eyes, and turned away a little, as if to debate this question with himself; perhaps to seek some rest; seeing which Lady Musselburgh and Vincent quietly withdrew, and went downstairs.

"Poor old man!" said she, when they were in the parlour. "There is a great change in him, entirely apart from his illness. Even in manner he is more—so gracious as he used to be; sometimes he was quite humble. And as for her—my heart bleeds for her. I will do anything you like, Vin—if she will accept. What is more, I will confess to you now that, as far as she is concerned, I am convinced I was quite wrong. You were right; your eyes were wide open after all. How can we judge of any one by an afternoon call on evening at Henley? That was my only chance. Then perhaps there was a little excuse for prejudice—there was the association—. But we'll say no more about that. I confess I was wrong; you were right. That girl is as true as steel. If she gives her husband half the devotion she bestows on that old man, he'll do very well." She looked at her nephew. Then she said suddenly: "Vin, you don't say a word. I believe you have never forgiven me one bit."

"Oh, yes, I have, aunt," he made answer, uneasily. "But there are some things that need never have happened."

She regarded him again.

"Vin, you are too unforgiving. But can I not make up? See, now! If Miss Bethune is left alone—I should like to call her Maisrie, if she will let me; indeed, I should; but is it so difficult to get any nearer her—she is all wrapped up in her anxiety about the grandfather; well, if she is left alone, I will take her with me. I will take her to London. She will stay with me; there will be a home for her there, at any rate; and we may become better friends. Oh, I know we shall; it is only that at present she cares for nothing, and thinks of nothing but her duty towards her grandfather. I intend to be very kind to her—I intend to win her affection if I can—"

"And I shall be very grateful to you, aunt," said he, "But it is hardly time yet to speak of such a thing; Mr Bethune has always had a wonderful constitution."

"Did you notice how pleased the doctor was this morning?" she seized; and he did not answer.

But at least one thing that Lady Musselburgh had observed and mentioned was true; much, if not all, of the old grandiose manner had gone away from George Bethune. He could speak of his misfortunes now in a subdued way—willing—ready at all times and seasons—loyal—dutiful—and brave. What more could I say of her?—what more? Sometimes I have thought to myself—there was she—the courage of a man in that slim bit creature—and the gentleness of all womankind as well—"

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But at least one thing that Lady Musselburgh had observed and mentioned was true; much, if not all, of the old grandiose manner had gone away from George Bethune. He could speak of his misfortunes now in a subdued way—as if on rare occasions some touch of defiance flamed up—as if he were still trying to clean with adversity and disappointment, he were still trying to lean with adversity and disappointment, and determined not to abate one jot of his pride and independence—he was ordinarily quite gentle, and even humble, especially towards Maisrie. On this same evening he said—

"Margaret," (as he sometimes called her now, forgetting) "will ye read to me out of the Psalms?"

She went and got the book and began—

"God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid;
Therefore, although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid:
Though hills amidst the seas be cast;
Though waters roaring make,
And trouble all the land be;
Yea, though the hills by swelling seas do shake.

A river is, whose streams do glad
The city of our God;
The holy place, wherein the Lord
Most high hath his abode.
God in the midst of her doth dwell;
Nothing shall her remove:
The Lord to help her doth her well,
And that right early, prove."

But when she had got so far, he said—

"Margaret—I hope ye will not take it ill—if I interrupt ye—it is no unkindness I mean, my lass—but, ye see, ye've got the English speech, as is natural—and I was trying to get the English speech, as is natural—and I was trying to think how my father used to read out the Psalm at family worship—and ye've not got the Scotch way—nor the strong emphasis—how could ye?—how could ye? Ye'll not take it ill, he went on, with the most piteous concern visible in his face—ye'll not think it's any unkindness—"

"No, no, no, grandfather!" she said.

Shall I ask Mrs MacGill to come up to read to you in the Scotch way?"

"No, no one but you, Maisrie—no one but you—perhaps, if you take the oxxvi. Psalm—'When Sion's bondage God turned back, as men that dreamed we're we'—I mind, God turned back, as men that dreamed we're we'—I mind, and they used to sing that to the tune of 'Kilmarnock'—and the young women's voices sounded beautiful. But you're not vexed, Maisrie?—for I did not mean any unkindness to ye, my dear—"

"No, no, grandfather," she said; and she turned to this other Psalm, and read it to him; and even after that it was some time before she could assure him that she had not been for the least hurt.

Two more of those long and anxious days went by; the fever waxing and waning by turns; but all the time the strength of that once powerful frame was slowly ebbing away. For one thing, his mind was well content. He had no more anxiety about Maisrie; he appeared to regard her future as well assured. He lay quietly murmuring to himself; and they could make out, from chance sentences here and there, that he was going over his boyhood's days again—the long wanderings in the spring woods, making swaying seats out of the shelving branches of the beeches, guddling for trout in the small hill burns. An old refrain seemed to haunt him—

"Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O to be lying beyond thee;
O sweetly, soundly, sweet may he sleep,
That's laid in the bed beyond thee."

"Die Vöglein schweigen im Walde"—that phrase also returned again and again. And then he would go back to his school days, and tell Maisrie about a little patch of garden that had been given all to himself; how he had watched the yellow spears of the crocuses pierce the dry earth, and the green buds begin to show on the currant-bushes; how he had planted scarlet-runners and stuck the wands in, and trained the young shoots; how he had waited for the big red globes of the peonies to unroll; how he had watched, unnoticed, and four distinct sequences of columbine. Then his pets; his diversions; his terrible adventures—halfdrowned in a mill-dam—lost in a snowstorm on Laidlaw moor—the horrors of a certain churchyard which he had sometimes to pass, alone, on the dark winter evenings. Maisrie did not seek to interrupt him. Others was no quicker than in these wanderings reminiscences. Nay, they seemed to soothe him; and sometimes he sank into an altogether dozing state,

"Vincent," said Lady Musselburgh, when these two happened to find themselves together, in the room below, "I have you no authority over that girl? She is killing herself!"

"It is no use remonstrating," said he. "She knows what the doctor has not dared to tell her. She sees that her grandfather is so weak he may slip away at any moment without a word or a sign. It is killing her."

But on the evening of this second day, the old man, with such remnant of his former resolution and defiance as still clung to him, seemed to try to shake off this fatal lethargy —if only to say farewell. And in this last hour or so of his life, the spectacle that George Bethune presented was no unworthy one. Whether the approach of death, which ennobles even the poorest and the meanest, was now dealing with this man; and all the husks and histrionic integuments that had obscured or hidden his true nature seemed to fall away from him. He stood out himself—no pressure of poverty distorting his principles, no regrets or ambitions, and as I was but a few feet from them, I heard every word which passed. Murdock began by saying to Moynahan:

"Now, keep yer wits about ye, if ye can. Ye'll get lashins iv drink whin we get back, but remimber ye promised to go over the ground where yer father showed ye that the Frinchmin wint wid the gun carriage an' the horses. Where was it now that he tuk ye?" Moynahan evidently made an effort to think and speak.

"It was just about this spot where he seen thim first. They crep' over the sthrame—there wor no bridge thin nigher nor Galway—an' wint up the side iv the hill sthraight up."

"Now, couldn't ye folla the way yer father showed ye? Jist think. It's all dark, and there's nothin' that ye know to the contrary, even there. All the scenery will look different from the other side. They an' remimber, an' ye'll have lashins iv drink this night, an' half the gould white we find it."

"I can go. I can show the shpot. Come on!" He made a sudden bolt down into the river, which was running unusually high. Murdock scrambled after him; but Moynahan was beside him in a moment, crying out:

"Go an' the wather isn't deep! Don't be afeerd; I'm wid ye.' When I heard tha I ran round and across the bridge, and was waiting behind the hedge on the other side they came up again. Then two men went up the hill straight for a hundred yards, I still close to them; then Moynahan stopped.

"'Here's about the shpot me father tould me that he seen the min whin the moon shone out. Thin they wint off sthraight to the south. The struggle through the sthream had evidently sobered him somewhat, for he spoke much more clearly.

"'Come on this,' cried Murdock, and they moved off.

"'Here's wheer they wint to, thin,' said Moynahan, as he stopped on the south side of the hill. 'I knew it to be from the loudness sound of the surf which was borne in by the western gale.

"'Here they wor, jist about here, an' me father wint away to hide from thim beside the big shtone at the Shleenanaher so that they wouldn't see him. Then he paused, and went on in quite a different voice.

"'There, now I've done enough for one night. Come home; I'm chilled to the hart I am, an' shtarved wid the cowld. Come home! I'll tell no more this night.' The next sound I heard was the popping of a cork, and then the voice of Murdock, in a cheery tone:

"'Here, take a sup of this, me lad man. It's chilled we both are, an' shtarved wid cowld. Take a good dhraw, ye must want it if ye're as bad as I am.' The gurgle that followed showed that he had obeyed orders; this was confirmed with in an incredibly short time by his voice as he spoke again.

"'Ate father bid there beyant. Come on!' We all, each in his own way, moved down to the Shleenanaher, and stood there. Moynahan spoke first.

"'From here, he seen them jist over the ridge iv the hill. I can go there now; come on!' He hurried up the slope, Murdock holding on to him. I followed, now crouching low, for there was but littleshelter here. Moynahan stopped and said:

"'It was just here!'

"'How do ye know?' asked Murdock, doubtfully.

"'How do I know! Hasn't me father been over the shpot wid me a score iv times; aye, an' a hundred times afore that he himself. It was here, I tell ye, that he seen the thief wid the gun carriage for the last time. Do ye want to arrest it?'

"'Not me,' said Murdock, and as he spoke I saw him stoop—for as I was at the time lying on the ground I could see his outline against the dark sky. He was looking away from me, and as I looked too I could see him start as he whispered to himself:

"'Be God! but it's thrue! there's the gun carriage!' There it was, Art, true enough before my eyes, not ten feet feet away on the edge of the bog! Moynahan went on:

"Me father tould me that the mountain was different at that time; the bog only kem down about as low as this. Musha! but it's the quare lot it has shifted since thin!" There was a pause, broken by Murdock, who spoke in a hoarse, hard voice:

"An' where did he see them nixt?' Moynahan seemed to be getting drunker and drunker, as was manifest in his later speech; his dose of whisky had no doubt been a good one.

"He seen them next to the north beyant—higher up towards Murdock's house.'

"Towards Murdock's house! Ye mane Joyce's?'

"No, I mane Black Murdock's; the man he had before he robbed Joyce. But begor! he done himself! It's on Joyce's ground the money is! He's a nagur, anyhow—Black Murdock the Gombeen—bloody end to him!' and he relapsed into silence. I could hear Murdock grind his teeth; then after a pause he spoke as the bottle popped again.

"'Have a sup; it'll kape out the cowld.' Moynahan took the bottle.

"'Here's death and damnation to Black Gombeen!' and the gurgling was heard again.

"'Come! now, show me the shpot where yer father last saw the min!' Murdock spoke authoritatively, and the other responded mechanically, and ran rather than walked along the side of the hill. Suddenly he stopped.

"'Here's the shpot!' he said, and incontinently tumbled down.

"Git up! Wake up!' shouted Murdock in his ear. But the whisky had done its work; the man slept, breathing heavily and stentoriously, heedless of the storm and the drenching rain. Murdock gathered a few stones and placed them together—I could hear the sound as they touched each other. Then he, too, took a pull at the bottle, and sat down beside Moynahan, and fell a little to and when I knew I was safe. Then two men went up the hill straight for a hundred yards, I still close to them; then Moynahan stopped.

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OVER THE SNOW.

He shouted for joy at the mantle of white
Which silently fell through the long winter night;
With smiles wreathed him, and with cheeks all aglow,
He hounded light-hearted out over the snow.

Over the snow.

With rosy-red fingers he kneaded the balls,
And scaled with his playmates the cold, snow-built walls,
'Mid volleys of snow-balls from friend and from foe,
While happy child-voices rang over the snow.

Over the snow.

He always was foremost to lead to the way
Where, glistening like silver, the polished slide lay;
Wherever he went they would all of them go,
And followed him joyfully over the snow.

Over the snow.

I gaze at the moon through the frost-covered pane,
And sigh for the days that will ne'er come again;
I shudder whenever the winter wind blow,
For now he is lying deep under the snow.

Under the snow.

Heaton. EDITH HELENA COOKE.

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THAT OTHER FACE.

By THOMAS LIGHTFOOT.

It was with much difficulty that my poor mother could be brought to consent to my spending that memorable holiday of mine with my artist friend, in a wild moorland district of the north—he to sketch the picturesque features and I to be in the well-reputed trout streams of that, then, out-of-the-way locality. This was the first vacation I had ever asked to be allowed to spend apart from herself, and my mother shrank from the idea with a dread that was pitiable to witness.

"Will but, Eleanor, my dear," cried Uncle Phipps (of the firm of Brankhouse, Phipps, Whalter, Brankhouse, and Co.)—with a tear in his own eye as he looked across the tea-table at the troubled face of his sister—"really, you know, Charles is of age now, you know. Quite the man, I declare, and has fully earned a very fine and enjoyable holiday by the last and devotion and down-right hard work through critical times at the bank, and, dear me, what harm can befall him?—and in 'fighting Stanton's' charge, too! Besides, that precious brother-in-law of yours, the Edward Cranston fellow, he's decided the death of the sensational enemy is not about—take my word for it—and at the end of the year, mark likely! There!"

How much more dear Uncle Phipps pleaded in his quaint, emphatic way, it were needless to relate; but the upshot of our united prayers was that they prevailed, and it was agreed that I should go.

My dear mother—the widow of impoverished, broken-hearted Gregory Cranston, and then "keeping house" for her bachelor brother Phipps—had one great dread in life, and that was that I, the other of her darling twin-sons, might also "fall into the clutches" of this fearful Edward Cranston, who, after betraying his trustful brother into ruinous speculations, of which, as afterwards found, he had himself been the arch-promoter, had "stolen" little Henry from his so wickedly and grievously wrecked home. Of this latter fact my mother was firmly convinced—"and beyond all reason," Uncle Phipps would say.

The story of this man's villainy briefly told.

As has been intimated, this lost little Henry Cranston was my twin-brother, and "as like as two peas in a pod we were," the country people would say—so much so, indeed, that a blue ribbon on his and a red one on my wrist were considered necessary to distinguish us from each other. Our less by our old Scotch nurse, who had read something like this in her "Tales of the Borders," and so revelled in the notion. But there can be no doubt that we really did very resemble each other, and that, as we grew older, the resemblance became all the more marked.

Before terrible morning, however, after a week of heavy rains, we children had been permitted to go abroad, and when my more quiet and sensitive brother had been left on the river bank drawing his precociously clever little sketches, the disappeared—and beyond ever the finding, search as all would, I found on the return home—a mile away, and a shred of his dress on a bush near where he had sat. Yes, it was all clear enough—little Henry had fallen into the river and had been carried away to the sea. But the distracted mother could hear of no other explanation of the terrible mystery than that Henry had been "spirited away" by that evil Edward Cranston, as a last black deed of treacherous cruelty to his dying brother, who had, in an after visit as such a time, refused to see him, or to respond to his wretched appeals for money." The then shabby, broken-down outcast had gone away "muttering threats," and mother-strack-by-calamity—and so my mother was sure!

But of all this there has never yet been any kind of proof, you know, Eleanor," Uncle Phipps would gently and pitifully observe; "and as Edward Cranston has disappeared, and for good (or bad) and all, it would seem, why then not for good (or bad) and all, its would seem, why then not real truth of this terrible thing may now never be fairly got at to."

But as to this let my story tell.

It was, however, quite ten days before Stanton and I would get fairly away—for a variety of things had come upon the back, and it was nothing less than the influx of forged notes, and so exquisitely executed that several had been "passed" before detection. Beyond being warned, we, juniors, of course, were not taken into the confidence of the management, which at once instituted secret investigations, chiefly carried on by Uncle Phipps—and just been into the serious business—and Uncle Phipps had just been elected chief detective when I went to his private office to bid him "good-bye."

"Well, Charlie, then, good-bye, and a pleasant jaunt to you," he cried. "Hum—let me see now. Forest-cross, Biddleton's the place you're off to, isn't it?—well, then, I hope you will enjoy yourselves, Charles, and—oh!—if you should happen to come across our forger-friend there-away just let us know—will you?"

I thought this a queer remark even for Uncle Phipps to make, and kept wondering about it as we journeyed along by the north express.

Well, Stanton and I enjoyed ourselves hugely in the clear healthy air of those wonderfully free and open fells—he sketching and I fishing—and so next week slipped away during the day. It was in our second week that the great excellent sport in the tumbling streams I found had "swollen" into a "spate," and that "a mountain storm" had come on, one, we were looking blankly about over the grave, water, sea, and was looking blankly about over the grave, swelling, and apparently unbelievably increasing, and returned from the fells to find that the storm that I was "not as far as from the Hunter's Rest," which I would find at the bottom of the "gully place up by a bit, as in quoits time if I looked out of the window.

This was welcome news, and I hurried away in the direction indicated. But the storm "took" more than I did, and presently I was quite wet through, drenched me to the skin, and presently I was quite wet through, drenched me to the skin, and presently I was quite wet through, drenched me to the skin