VARIOUS

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Содержание

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THE NEW HYPERION.
FROM PARIS TO MARLY BY WAY OF THE RHINE

III.—THE FEAST OF SAINT ATHANASIUS

As I parted from my stout old friend Joliet, I saw him turn to empty the last half of our bottle into the glasses of a couple of tired soldiers who were sucking their pipes on a bench. And again the old proverb of Aretino came into my head: "Truly all courtesy and good manners come from taverns." I grasped my botany-box and pursued my promenade toward Noisy.

The village of Noisy has made (without a pun) some noise in history. One of its ancient lords, Enguerrand de Marigny, was the inventor of the famous gibbet of Montfauçon, and in the poetic justice which should ever govern such cases he came to be hung on his own gallows. He was convicted of manifold extortions, and launched by the common executioner into that eternity whither he could carry none of his ill-gotten gains with him. Here, at least, we succeed in meeting a guillotine which catches its maker. By a singular coincidence another lord of Noisy, Cardinal Balue, underwent a long detention in an iron-barred cage—one of those famous cages, so much favored by Louis XI., of which the cardinal, as we learn from the records of the time, had the patent-right for invention, or at least improvement. Once firmly engaged in his own torture—while his friend Haraucourt, bishop of Verdun, experienced alike penalty in a similar box, and the foxy old king paced his narrow oratory in the Bastile tower overhead—we may be sure that Balue gave his inventive mind no more to the task of fortifying his cages, but rather to that of opening them.

These ugly reminiscences were not so much the cause of a prejudice I took against Noisy, as caused by it. At Noisy I was in the full domain of my ancient foe the railway, where two lines of the Eastern road separate—the Ligne de Meaux and the Ligne de Mulhouse. The sight of the unhappy second-class passengers powdered with dust, and of the frantic nurses who had mistaken their line, and who madly endeavored to leap across to the other train, stirred all my bile. It was on this current of thought that the nobleman who had been hung and the cardinal who had pined in a cage were borne upon my memory. "Small choice," said I, "whether the bars are perpendicular or horizontal. You lose your independence about equally by either monopoly."

I crossed the Canal de l'Ourcq, and watched it stretching like a steel tape to meet the Canal Saint—Denis and the Canal Saint-Martin in the great basin at La Villette—a construction which, finished in 1809, was the making of La Villette as a commercial and industrial entrepôt. I meant to walk to Bondy, and after a botanic stroll in its beautiful forest to retrace my steps, gaining Marly next day by Baubigny, Aubervilliers and Nanterre. "The Aladdins of our time," I said as I leaned over the soft gray water, "are the engineers. They rub their theodolites, and there springs up, not a palace, but a town."

"Who speaks of engineers?" said a strong baritone voice as a weighty hand fell on my shoulder. "Are you here to take the train at Noisy?"

"Let the train go to Jericho! I am trying, on the contrary, to get away from it."

"Do you mean, then, to go on foot to Épernay?"

"What do you mean, Épernay?"

"Why, have you forgotten the feast of Saint Athanasius?"

"What do you mean, Athanasius?"

The baritone belonged to one of my friends, an engineer from Boston. He had an American commission to inspect the canals of Europe on the part of a company formed to buy out the Sound line of steamers and dig a ship-canal from Boston to Providence. The engineer had made his inspection the excuse for a few years of not disagreeable travel, during which time the company had exploded, its chief financier having cut his throat when his peculations came out to the public.

"Are you trying, then, to escape from one of your greatest possible duties and one of your greatest possible pleasures? You have the remarkable fortune to possess a friend named Athanasius; you have in addition, the strange fate to be his godfather by secondary baptism; and you would, after these unparalleled chances, be the sole renegade from the vow which you have extracted from the others."

The words were uncivil and rude, the hand was on my shoulder like a vise; but there floated into my head a recollection of one of the pleasantest evenings I have ever enjoyed.

We were dining with James Grandstone, one of my young friends. I have some friends of whom I might be the father, and doubt not I could find a support for my practice in Sir Thomas Browne or Jeremy Taylor if I had time to look up the quotation. We dined in the little restaurant Ober, near the Odéon, with a small party of medical students, to which order Grandstone's friends mostly belonged. We were all young that night; and truly I hold that the affectionate confusion of two or three different generations adds a charm to friendship.

At dessert the conversation happened to strike upon Christian names. I attacked the cognomens in ordinary use, maintaining that their historic significance was lost, their religious sentiment forgotten, their euphony mostly questionable. Alfred, Henry and William no longer carried the thoughts back to the English kings—Joseph and Reuben were powerless to remind us of the mighty family of Israel.

"I have no complaint to make of my own name," I protested, "which has been praised by Dannecker the sculptor. That was at Würtemberg, gentlemen. 'You are from America,' the old man said to me, 'but you have a German name: Paul Flemming was one of our old poets.' The thought has been a pleasant one to me, though I have not the faintest idea what my ancient godparent wrote. But in the matter of originality my Christian name of Paul certainly leaves much to desire."

I was gay enough that evening, and in the vein for a paradox. I set up the various Pauls of our acquaintance, and maintained that in any company of fifty persons, if a feminine voice were to call out "Paul!" through the doorway, six husbands at least would start and say, "Coming, dear!" I computed the Pauls belonging to one of the grand nations, and proved that an army recruited from them would be large enough to carry on a war against a power of the second order.

"If the Jameses were to reinforce the Pauls," I declared, looking toward my young host, "Russia itself would tremble.—Are you to make your start in life with no better name?" I asked him maliciously. "Must you be for ever kept in mediocrity by an address that is not the designation of an individual, but of a whole nation? Could you not have been called by something rather less oecumenical?"

"You may style me by what title you please, Mr. Flemming," said Grandstone nonchalantly. "I am to enter a great New York wine-house after a little examination of the grape-country here. Doubtless a Grandstone will have, by any other name, a bouquet as sweet."

The idea took. An almanac of saints' days, which is often printed in combination with the *menu* of a restaurant, was lying on the table. Beginning at the letter A, the name of Ambrose was within an ace of being chosen, but Grandstone protested against it as too short, and Athanasius was the first

of five syllables that presented. Our engineering friend, who was present, had in his pocket a vial of water from the Dardanelles, which fouls ships' bottoms; and with that classic liquid the baptism was effected by myself, the bottle being broken on poor Grandstone's crown as on the prow of a ship.

"You are no longer James to us, but Athanasius," I said. "If you remain moderately virtuous, we will canonize you. Meantime, let us vow to meet on the next canonical day of Saint Athanasius and hold a love-feast."

We drank his health, and glorified him, and laughed, and the next day I forgot whether Grandstone was called Athanasius or Epaminondas. And my confusion on the subject had not clarified in the least up to the rude reminder given by my engineer.

"I had quite forgotten my engagement," I confessed. "Besides, Grandstone is living now, as you remind me, at Épernay—that is to say, at seventy or eighty miles' distance."

"Say three hours," he retorted: "on a railway line we don't count by miles. But are you really not here at Noisy to satisfy your promise and report yourself for the feast of Saint Athanasius? If you are not bound for Épernay, where *are* you bound?"

"I am off for Marly."

"You are going in just the contrary direction, old fellow. You can be at Épernay sooner."

"And Hohenfels joins me at Marly to-morrow," I continued, rather helplessly; "and Josephine my cook is there this afternoon boiling the mutton-hams."

"Fine arguments, truly! You shall sleep to-night in Paris, or even at Marly, if you see fit. I have often heard you argue against railroads—a fine argument for a geographer to uphold against an engineer! Now is the instant to bury your prejudice. Do you see that soft ringlet of smoke off yonder? It is the message of the locomotive, offering to reconcile your engagements with Grandstone and Hohenfels. Come, get your ticket!"

And his hand ceased squeezing my shoulder like a pincer to beat it like a mallet. A rapid sketch of the situation was mapped out in my head. I could reach Épernay by five o'clock, returning at eight, and, notwithstanding this little lasso flung over the champagne-country, I could resume my promenade and modify in no respect my original plan; and I could say to Hohenfels, "My boy, I have popped a few corks with the widow Cliquot."

Such was my vision. The gnomes of the railway, having once got me in their grasp, disposed of me as they liked, and quite unexpectedly.

From the car-window, as in a panorama of Banvard's, the landscape spun out before my eyes. Le Raincy, which I had intended to visit at all events on the same day, but afoot, offered me the roofs of its ancient château, a pile built in the most pompous spirit of the Renaissance, and whose alternately round and square pavilions, tipped with steep mansards, I was fain to people with throngs of gay visitors in the costume of the *grand siècle*. Then came the cathedral of Meaux, before which I reverently took off my cap to salute the great Bossuet—"Eagle of Meaux," as they justly called him, and on the whole a noble bird, notwithstanding that he sang his Te Deum over some exceedingly questionable battle-grounds. Then there presented itself a monument at which my engineering friend clapped his hands. It was a crown of buildings with extinguisher roofs encircling the brow of a hill, and presenting the antique appearance of some chastel of the Middle Ages.

"Do you see those round, pot-bellied towers, like tuns of wine stood upon end?" he said—"those donjons at the corners, tapering at the top, and presenting the very image of noble bottles? There needs nothing but that palace to convince you that you have arrived in the champagne region."

"I do not know the building," I confessed.

"Can you not guess? Ah, but you should see it in a summer storm, when the rain foams and spirts down those huge bottles of mason-work, and the thunder pops among the roofs like the corks of a whole basket of champagne! That fine castle, Flemming, is the château of Boursault, apparently built in the era of the Crusades, but really a marvel of yesterday. It rose into being, not to the sound

of a lyre, like the towers of Troy, but at the bursting of innumerable bottles, causing to resound all over the world the name of the widow Cliquot."

At length we entered the station of Épernay. There I received my first shock in learning that the only return-train stopping at Noisy was one which left at midnight, and would land me in the extreme suburbs of Paris at three o'clock in the morning.

Our friend Grandstone, whom we found amazing the streets of Épernay with a light American buggy drawn by a colossal Morman horse, received us with still more surprise than delight. He had relapsed into plain James, and had never dreamed that his second baptism would bear fruit. Besides, he proved to us that we were in error as to the date. The feast of Saint Athanasius, as he showed from a calendar shoved beneath a quantity of vintners' cards on his study-table, fell on the second of May, and could not be celebrated before the evening of the first. It was now the thirtieth of April. He invited us, then, for the next day at dinner, warning us at the same time that the evening of that same morrow would see him on his way to the Falls of Schaffhausen. This idea of dining with an absentee puzzled me.

We both laughed heartily at the engineer's mistake of twenty-four hours, and he for his part made me his excuses.

Athanasius—whose name I obstinately keep, because it gives him, as I maintain, a more distinct individuality,—Athanasius happened to be driving out for the purpose of collecting some friends whom he was about to accompany to Schaffhausen, and whom he had invited to dinner. He contrived to stow away two in his buggy, and the rest assembled in his chambers. We dined gayly and voraciously, and I hardly regretted even that old hotel-dinner at Interlaken, when the landlord waited on us in his green coat, and when Mary Ashburton was by my side, and when I praised hotel-dinners because one can say so much there without being overheard.

Dinner over, we went out for a stroll through the town. The city of Épernay offers little remarkable except its Rue du Commerce, flanked with enormous buildings, and its church, conspicuous only for a flourishing portal in the style of Louis XIV., in perfect contradiction to the general architecture of the old sanctuary. The environs were little note worthy at the season, for a vineyard-land has this peculiarity—its veritable spring, its pride of May, arrives in the autumn.

One very vinous trait we found, however, in the person of a beggar. He was sitting on Grandstone's steps as we emerged. Aged hardly fourteen, he had turned his young nose toward the rich fumes coming up from the kitchen with a look of sensuality and indulgence that amused me. The maid, on a hint of mine, gave him a biscuit and the remainders of our bottles emptied into a bowl. A smile of extreme breadth and intelligence spread over his face. Opening his bag, he laid by the biscuit, and extracted a morsel of iced cake: at the same time he produced an old-fashioned, long-waisted champagne-glass, nicked at the rim and quite without a stand. Filling this from his bowl, he drank to the health of the waitress with the easiest politeness it was ever my lot to see. Ragged as a beggar of Murillo's, courteous as a hidalgo by Velasquez, he added a grace and an epicurism completely French. I thought him the best possible figure-head for that opulent spot, cradle of the hilarity of the world. I gave him five francs.

We proceeded to admire the town. The great curiosities of Épernay, its glory and pomp, are not permitted to see the daylight. They are subterranean and introverted. They are the cellars. Those rich colonnades of Commerce street, all those porticoes surmounted with Greek or Roman triangles in the nature of pediments, of what antique religion are they the representations? They are cellar-doors.

It was impossible to quit the city without visiting its cellars, said Grandstone, and we betook ourselves under his guidance to one of the most renowned.

I only thought of seeing a battle-field of bottles, but I found the Eleusinian mysteries.

In the temple-porch of Eleusis was fixed a large pale face, in the middle parts of which a red nose was glowing like a fuse. Several other personages, in company with this visage, received us on our approach with a world of solemn and terrifying signals.

Directly a man in a cloak and slouched hat, and holding in his hands a wire fencing-mask, extinguished with it the red nose. The latter met his fate with stolid fortitude. All were perfectly still, but the twitching cheeks of most of the spectators betrayed a laugh retained with difficulty. The cloak then advanced, like a less beautiful Norma, to a bell in the portico, and struck three tragical strokes. A strong, pealing bass voice came from the interior: "Who dares knock at this door?"

"A night-bird," said the man in the cloak, who took the part of spokesman. "What has the night-bird to do with the eagle?" replied the strong voice. "What can there be in common between the heathen in his blindness and the Ancient of the Mountain throned in power and splendor?"

"Grand Master, it is in that splendor the new-comer wishes to plunge." After this imitation of some Masonic mystery the red-nosed man was quickly taken by the shoulders and hurtled in at the door, where a flare of red theatrical fire illuminated his sudden plunge.

"What nonsense is this?" I said to Athanasius.

"The man in the iron mask," he explained, "is in that respect what we shall all be in a minute. Without such a protector, in passing amongst the first year's bottles we might receive a few hits in the face."

"And do you know the new apprentice?"

"No: some stranger, evidently."

"It is not hard to guess his extraction," said one of our dinner-party. "In the East there are sorcerers with two pupils in each eye. For his part, he seems to be braced with two pans in each knee. He is long in the stilts like a heron, square—headed and square-shouldered: I give you my word he is a Scotchman. For certain," he added, "I have seen his likeness somewhere—Ah yes, in an engraving of Hogarth's!"

The author of this charitable criticism was a little crooked gentleman, at whose side I had dined—a man of sharpness and wit, for which his hunch gave him the authority. As we penetrated finally into the immense crypt, long like a street, provided with iron railways for handling the stores, and threaded now and then by heavy wagons and Normandy horses, my interest in the surrounding wonders was distracted by apprehensions of the fate awaiting the unfortunate red nose.

The gallop of a steed was heard at length, then a dreadful exploding noise. I should have thought that a hundred drummers were marching through the catacombs.

Relieved of his mask, fixed like a dry forked stick, wrong side foremost, on a frightened steed which galloped down the avenue, and pursued by the racket of empty bottles beaten against the wine-frames, came the Scotchman, like an unwilling Tam O'Shanter. At a new outburst of resonant noises, which we could not help offering to the general confusion, the horse stopped, and assumed twice or thrice the attitude of a gymnast who walks on his hands. The figure of the man, still rigid, flew up into the air like a stick that pops out of the water. The Terrible Brothers received him in their arms.

Hardly restored to equilibrium, the patient was quickly replaced in the saddle, but the saddle was this time girded upon a barrel, and the barrel placed upon a truck, and the truck upon an inclined tramway. His impassive countenance might be seen to kindle with indignation and horror, as the hat which had been jammed over his eyes flew off, and he found himself gliding over an iron road at a rate of speed continually increasing.

He was fated to other tests, but at this point a little discussion arose among ourselves. Grandstone, his fluffy young whiskers quite disheveled with laughter, said, "Fellows, we had better stop somewhere. There will be more of this, and it will be tedious to see in the rôle of uninvited spectators, and it is not certain we are wanted. I always knew there was a Society of Pure Illumination at Épernay. It is not a Masonic order, but it has its signs, its passes, its grips, and in a word its secret. I have recognized among these gentlemen some active members of the order—among others, notwithstanding his disguise, a jolly good fellow we have here, Fortnoye."

"You cannot have seen Fortnoye," said one of the party: "he is at Paris."

"And who is your Fortnoye, pray?" I asked.

"The best tenor voice in Épernay; but his presence here does not give *me* an invitation, you see. The Society of Pure Illumination has its rites and mysteries more important than everybody supposes, and probably complicated with board-of-trade secrets among the wine-merchants. We have hit upon a bad time. Let us go and visit another cellar."

There was opposition to this measure: different opinions were expressed, and I was chosen for moderator.

"My dear boys," I said, "as the grayest among you I may be presumed to be the wisest. But I do not feel myself to be myself. I have received to-day a succession of unaccustomed influences. I have been dragged about by an impertinent locomotive; I have been induced to dine heavily; I have absorbed champagne, perhaps to the limit of my measure. These are not my ordinary ways: I am naturally thoughtful, studious and pensive. The Past, gentlemen, is for me an unfaded morning-glory, whose closed cup I can coax open at pleasure, and read within its tube legends written in dusted gold. But the Present to the true philosopher is also—In fact, I never was so much amused in my life. I am dying to see what they will do with that Scotchman."

Athanasius submitted. At the end of one of the cross galleries we could already see a flickering glimmer of torches. There, evidently, was held the council. We stole on tiptoe in that direction, and ensconced ourselves behind a long file of empty bottle-shelves, worn out after long service and leaning against a wall.

Through the holes which had fixed the bottles in position we could see everything without being discovered. The grand dignitaries, sitting in a semicircle, were about to proceed from physical to moral tests. Before them, his red nose hanging like a cameo from the white bandage which covered his eyes, and relieved upon his face, still perfectly white and calm, stood the Scot. The Grand Master arose—I should have said the Reverend—his head nodding with senility, his beard white as a waterfall: he appeared to be eighty years of age at least. He was truly venerable to look at, and reminded me of Thor. He wore a sort of dalmatica embroidered with gold. Calmness and goodness were so plainly marked on the aspect of this worthy that I felt ashamed of playing the spy, and felt inclined to return humbly to the good counsel of Athanasius, when the latter, pushing my elbow behind the shelves, said, referring to the Ancient of the Mountain, "That's Fortnoye: I knew I couldn't be mistaken."

I was greatly mystified at discovering the first tenor voice of Épernay in an aged man; but the catechism now commencing, I thought only of listening.

"The barleycorns of your native North having been partially cleaned out of your hair by contact with the two enchanted steeds—the steed you bridled without a head, and the steed that ran away with you without legs," said the Ancient—"we have brought you hither for examination. We might have gone much farther with the physical tests: we might have forced you, at the present session, to relieve yourself of those envelopes considered indispensable by all Europeans beneath your own latitude, and in our presence perform the sword-dance."

"So be it," said the disciple, executing a galvanic figure with his legs, his countenance still like marble.

"If we demanded the head of your best friend, would you bring it in?"

"I am the countryman of Lady Macbeth," replied the red nose. "Give me the daggers."

"We would fain dispense with that proof, necessarily painful to a man of such evident sensibility as yours." The red nose bowed. "What is your name?"

He pronounced it—apparently MacMurtagh.

"In future, among us, you are named Meurtrier."

"MacMeurtrier," muttered the Scotchman in a tone of abstraction.

"No! Meurtrier unadulterated. Your business?"

"I am a homoeopathic doctor."

"Are you a believer in homoeopathy? Be careful: remember that the Ancient of the Mountain hears what you say."

The Scot held up his hand: "I believe in the learned Hahnemann, and in Mrs. Hahnemann, no less learned than himself; but," he added, "homoeopathy is a science still in its baby-clothes. I have invented a system perfectly novel. In mingling homoeopathy with vegetable magnetism the most encouraging results are obtained, as may be observed daily in the villa of Dr. Van Murtagh, near Edinburgh—"

"Enough!" cried the Ancient: "circulars are not allowed here. Forget nothing, Meurtrier! And how were you inspired with the pious ambition of becoming our brother?"

"At the hotel table: it was the young clerks from the wine-houses. I mentioned that I wished to be a Free Mason, and the lodge of Épernay—"

"Silence! The words you use, *lodge* and *Free Mason*, are most improper in this temple, which is that of the Pure Illumination, and nothing less. Will you remember, Meurtrier?"

"MacMeurtrier," muttered the novice again. The last proofs were now tried upon him, called the "five senses." For that of hearing he was made to listen to a jewsharp, which he calmly proclaimed to be the bagpipe; for that of touch, he was made to feel by turns a live fish, a hot iron and a little stuffed hedgehog. The last he took for a pack of toothpicks, and announced gravely, "It sticks me." The laughs broke out from all sides, even from behind the bottle-shelves.

Alas! on this occasion the laugh was not altogether on my side of that fatal honeycomb!

They had made him swallow, in a glass, some fearful mixture or other, and he had imperturbably declared that it was in his opinion the wine of Moët: after this evidence of taste the proof of sight was to follow, and the semicircle of purple faces was quite blackening with bottled laughter, when Grandstone touched me on the shoulder. My hour for departure was come, and I had not a minute to spare.

Apparently, the last test of the red nose resulted in a triumph: as we were effecting our covert and hasty retreat we heard all the voices exclaim in concert, "It is the Pure Illumination!"

Gay as we were on entering the great wine-cellar, we were perfectly Olympian when we came out. The crypts of these vast establishments, where a soft inspiration perpetually floats upward from the wine in store, often receive a visitor as a Diogenes and dismiss him as an Anacreon.

Our consumption of wine at dinner had been, like Mr. Poe's conversation with his soul, "serious and sober." In the cellar no drop had passed our mouths. I was alert as a lark when I entered: I came out in a species of voluptuous dream.

All the band conducted me to the railway-station, and I was very much touched with the attention. It was who should carry my botany-box, who should set my cap straight, who should give me the most precise and statistical information about the train which returned to Paris, with a stop at Noisy; the while, Ophelia-like, I chanted snatches of old songs, and mingled together in a tender reverie my recollections of Mary Ashburton, my coming Book and my theories of Progressive Geography.

"Take this shawl: the night will be chilly before you get to the city."

"Don't let them carry you beyond Noisy."

"Come back to Épernay every May-day: never forget the feast of Saint Athanasius."

"Be sure you get into the right train: here is the car. Come, man, bundle up! they are closing the barrier."

I was perfectly melted by so much sympathy. "Adieu," I said, "my dear champanions—"

I turned into an excellent car, first class, and fell asleep directly.

Next day I awoke—at Strasburg! The convivials of the evening before, making for the Falls of Schaffhausen on the Rhine, had traveled beside me in the adjoining car.

My friends, uncertain how their practical joke would be received, clustered around me.

"Ah, boys," I said, "I have too many griefs imprisoned in this aching bosom to be much put out by the ordinary 'Horrid Hoax.' But you have compromised my reputation. I promised to meet Hohenfels at Marly: children, bankruptcy stares me in the face."

Grandstone had the grace to be a little embarrassed: "You wished to dine with me at the Feast of Saint Athanasius, but you mistook the day. Your engineer is the true culprit, for he voluntarily deceived you. The fact is, my dear Flemming, we have concocted a little conspiracy. You are a good fellow, a joyful spirit in fact, when you are not in your *lubies* about the Past and the Future. We wanted you, we conspired; and, Catiline having stolen you at Noisy, Cethigus tucked you into a car with the intention of making use of you at Schaffhausen."

"Never! I have the strongest vows that ever man uttered not to revisit the Rhine. It is an affair of early youth, a solemn promise, a consecration. You have got me at Strasburg, but you will not carry me to Schaffhausen."

He was so contrite that I had to console him. Letting him know that no great harm was done, I saw him depart with his friends for Bâle. For my part, I remained with the engineer, whose professional duties, such as they were, kept him for a short time in the capital of Alsace. In his turn, however, the latter took leave of me: we were to meet each other shortly.

It was seven in the morning. This time, to be sure of my enemy the railroad, I procured a printed Guide. But the Guide was a sorry counselor for my impatience. The first train, an express, had left: the next, an accommodation, would start at a quarter to one. I had five hours and three-quarters to spare.

One of the greatest pleasures in life, according to my poor opinion, is to have a recreation forced on one. Some cherub, perhaps, cleared the cobwebs away from my brain that morning; but, however it might be, I was glad of everything. I was glad the "champanions" were departed, glad I had a stolen morning in Strasburg, glad that Hohenfels and my domestics would be uneasy for me at Marly.

In such a mood I applied myself to extract the profit out of my detention in the city.

EDWARD STRAHAN.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TWO MOODS

All yesterday you were so near to me,
It seemed as if I hardly moved or spoke
But your heart moved with mine. I woke
To a new life that found you everywhere,
As if your love was as some wide-girt sea,
Or as the sunlit air;
And so encompassed me,
Whether I thought or not, it could not but be there.

To-day your words approve me, and your heart
Is mine as ever, yet that heavenly sense
Of oneness that made every hour intense
With Love's full perfectness, is gone from thence;
And, though our hands are clasped, our souls are two,
And in my thoughts I say, "This is myself—this you!"

MARY STEWART DOUBLEDAY.

THE RIDE OF PRINCE GERAINT

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard
The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,
A little vext at losing of the hunt,
A little at the vile occasion, rode
By ups and downs through many a glassy glade
And valley, with fixt eye following the three.

Enid.

Through forest paths his charger strode,
His heron plume behind him flowed,
Blood-red the west with sunset glowed,
Far down the river golden flowed,
And in the woods the winds were still:
No helm had he, nor lance in rest;
His knightly beard flowed down his breast;
In silken costume gayly drest,
Out from the glory of the west
He flashed adown the purple hill.

His sword hung tasseled at his side,
His purple scarf was floating wide,
And all his raiment many-dyed,
As if he came to seek a bride,
And not the combat that he sought;
Yet rode he like a prince, and one
Native to noble deeds alone,
Who many a valiant tilt had run,
And many a prize of tourney won
In Arthur's lists at Camelot.

Cool grasses and green mosses made
Soft carpet for his charger's tread,
As 'neath the oak boughs dark o'erhead,
By belts of pasture scant of shade,
Into the Castle Town he rode:
He heard, as things are heard in dreams,
The sound of far-off falling streams,
The shriller bird-choir's evening hymns:
He saw but only helmet-gleams,
The smith that smote, the fire that glowed,

The sheen of lances, and the cloud
From many a field-forge fire, the crowd
Of gay-clad squires, and, neighing loud,

The war-horse with rich trappings proud,
That arched his neck and pawed the ground;
Old armorers grave and stern in stall,
Where low-crowned morions, helmets tall,
Shone gilt and burnished on the wall;
And, shining brighter than them all,
The eyes of maidens sun-embrowned.

MARTIN I. GRIFFIN.

SKETCHES OF EASTERN TRAVEL

I.—THE COUNT DE BEAUVOIR IN CHINA

Within the last twenty years the East has opened wide its gates, and China, Japan and India are as anxious to become acquainted with the later but more fully developed civilizations of Europe and this country as we are to examine their social, political and industrial systems. We have had accounts from English, American, German and French travelers in the East, each tinged, in a measure, with the national spirit of their respective countries. In the case of the traveler, as of the astronomer, a certain allowance, known as the personal equation, has to be made in receiving the accounts of his observations.

The journey round the world made by the count de Beauvoir in company with the duke de Penthièvre, son of the prince de Joinville, is entitled to especial notice, as the attentions shown to the travelers by the Chinese and Japanese authorities enabled them to obtain the best conditions for investigating various matters of interest.

On landing at Shanghai their hearts were gladdened by seeing "on the quay a French custom-house official, with his kepi over his ear, his rattan in his hand, dressed in a dark-green tunic, and full of the inquisitiveness of the customs inspector—as martial and as authoritative as in his native land." The appearance of the population here struck our travelers as different from that of the native Chinese farther south. Those were yellow, copper-colored, lean, and slightly clad in garments of cotton cloth; these were rosy as children and fat as pigs: they were besides wrapped up in four or five pelisses, worn one over the other, lined with sheepskins, so that a single man smelt like a whole flock of sheep. Their style of dress was this: half a dozen waistcoats without sleeves, covered with a single overcoat with extremely long sleeves, falling down to their knees. These garments made them resemble balls of wool rather than men.

By accident, the party passed first through the quarter of the town devoted to the restaurants. Here they were for every grade of fortune, from the millionaire to the ragged poor. The street filled with these latter was terrible: it swarmed with thousands of beggars, hardly human in form and almost naked, though there was frozen snow upon the ground. A group, seeming even joyous, attracted attention. The cause of their happiness was a dead dog which they had found in one of the gutters. Even, however, in this degradation the politeness of these people struck our Frenchmen forcibly. The guests gathered about this fortuitous repast treated each other with a ceremonious deference strange enough in such surroundings. In a still lower stratum, however, among even a more degraded class, whose feasts were obtained from the live preserves carried upon their own persons, this politeness, the last quality a Chinaman loses from the degradation of poverty, was wanting.

A few miles from Shanghai lies Zi-Ka-Wai, a colony founded by the Jesuits, of which our traveler gives a most interesting account. The road to Zi-Ka-Wai lay over a sandy plain intersected with canals. On both sides of the road were hundreds of coffins resting upon the surface of the ground. In the northern part of China there are no grave-yards, and the coffins were arranged sometimes in piles in the fields. It is said that they thus remain until a change takes place in the reigning dynasty, when they are all destroyed. As the present dynasty has reigned about three hundred years, the accumulation may be imagined. This traditional respect for the inviolability of the dead is one of the chief obstacles in the way of the introduction of the telegraph and railroad in China. A commercial house in Shanghai had built a telegraph to Wo-Soung to announce the arrival of the mail, but in a few days the wire was cut in more than five hundred places—at all the points where its shadow from the rising sun fell upon the coffins lying on the ground.

At Zi-Ka-Wai the Jesuits have an educational institution, and, dressed in the Chinese costume, smoking the long native pipes, received their visitors with great cordiality. Their pupils are divided into three classes. The first consists of the children of the neighboring towns who have been deserted by their parents and left to die of hunger. The majority of them are lepers, and have been more or less perfectly cured by the Fathers. When brought to the institution they are thoroughly cleaned, being rubbed with pumice stone. They receive an industrial as well as a literary education. In one building they are taught to read and write, and in another are the schools for shoemaking, carpentering, printing and other manual arts; so that, being received at the age of five or six, at twenty to twenty-one they are launched upon the world with an education and a trade.

There are about four hundred children in this class, and the activity, the order and organization of the workshops, and the exquisite cleanliness of the surroundings, are delightful to see. Near at hand is a school of a higher grade, to which the most promising pupils are transferred for the study of Chinese literature. The system of teaching here is peculiar: all the pupils are required to study aloud, and the din is in consequence deafening and incessant. Then there is the highest class, consisting of about two hundred and fifty youths, the sons of rich mandarins, who pay heavily for their instruction. These are destined to become rhetoricians, and, step by step, bachelors, licentiates, doctors, then mandarins and members of the governing class of the Middle Kingdom. The studies are Chinese, and the Fathers have with wonderful patience learned not only the Chinese language, as well as its written characters, but also the nice critical points of its idioms, so as to be able to teach with authority the poetry and legends and the commentaries upon the writings of Confucius. This they have done for the purpose of having an opportunity to convert the orphans they have adopted, and thus by degrees introduce into the government an element which will be essentially Christian. Thus far, the profession of Christianity is not essentially incompatible with the office of mandarin, though it is impossible to hold this position without performing some idolatrous rites.

On the 13th of March the ice was sufficiently broken to open the navigation of the Pei-Ho, and the party started upon the steamer Sze-Chuen for Tien-Tsin and Pekin. They were joined by an English commissioner of the Chinese custom-house, whose position as a high functionary of the Celestial government, together with his knowledge of Chinese, proved of great service. The trip to Pekin was brought to a sudden temporary close by the Sze-Chuen running aground on the bar of the Pei-Ho, where she remained nearly two days, but was finally got off after the removal of a part of her cargo.

The navigation of the Pei-Ho is difficult on account of the narrowness of the stream and its exceedingly sinuous course. Frequently the steamer had to be towed by a line passed on shore and fastened round a tree. At Tien-Tsin the travelers landed, and witnessed a review of some imperial cavalry regiments mounted upon Tartar ponies, with high saddles and short stirrups. The warriors wore queues and were dressed in long robes. Their moustaches gave them, however, a fierce martial air, and they were armed with English sabres and American revolvers.

Tien-Tsin ("Heaven's Ford") is a city of about four hundred thousand inhabitants, and lies at the junction of the Imperial Canal with the Pei-Ho. The country from here to Pekin, about three days' journey by land, is sandy, and the trip is made a very disagreeable one by the clouds of dust, which blind the traveler and effectually prevent any examination of the country passed through.

The cavalcade comprised seven of the native carts, each drawn by two mules. Their construction may be thus described: A sort of barrow made of blue cloth hangs like a box upon an axletree about a yard long, furnished with two clumsy wheels. It is impossible to lie down in them, because they are too short, nor can a bench to sit on be placed in them, because they are too low. As a compensation, however, they are so light that they can go anywhere. The driver sits on the left shaft, where he is conveniently placed for leaping down to beat the mules. These are harnessed, one in the shafts and the other in front, with long traces tied upon the axletree near the left wheel. As they are guided only by the voice, the course of the cart depends chiefly upon the fancy they may take for following

or neglecting the road; while from the manner in which they are harnessed their draught is always sideways, and they therefore trot obliquely.

At Yang-Soun the party was joined by a mandarin with a crystal button, sent by the governor of the province of Tien-Tsin, Tchoung-Hao, with a profusion of passports and safe-conducts. During the rest of the journey this mandarin, Ching, led the way in his cart drawn by a fine black mule, and on arriving at the villages on the route displayed his function, as a man of letters, by putting on an immense pair of spectacles, the glasses of which were about three inches in diameter. At Ho-Chi-Wou the procession halted during the middle of the day, and was photographed by one of its members. The curious crowd of spectators which gathered in every village to inspect the "foreign devils" scattered when the camera was posed, and for a few moments our travelers were freed from their intrusiveness.

Starting next morning at daylight, at three in the afternoon the party entered Pekin. The relief was great to leave the sandy, dusty road for one of the paved ways which radiate from the city. The first sight of the city struck the travelers as the most grandiose spectacle of the Celestial Empire. In front rose a high tower, with a five-storied roof of green tiles, pierced with five rows of large portholes, from which grinned the mouths of cannon; while to the right and left, as far as could be seen, stretched the gigantic wall surrounding the city, built partly of granite and partly of large gray bricks, with salients, battlements and loopholes, wearing a decidedly martial air. This impression was somewhat modified, however, by the discovery that the grinning cannons were made of wood. The entrance was under a vaulted archway, through which streamed a converging crowd of Chinese, Mongols, Tartars, with their various costumes, together with blue carts, files of mules and caravans of heavily-loaded camels.

Pekin was built by Kublai-Khan about 1282, near the site of an important city which dated from the Chow dynasty, or some centuries before the Christian era. The city covers an enclosed space about twenty miles in circumference. It is rectangular in form, and divided into two parts, the Chinese and the Tartar cities. The walls of the Tartar city are the largest and widest, being forty to fifty feet high, and, tapering slightly from the base, about forty feet wide at the top. They are constructed upon a solid foundation of stone masonry resting upon concrete, while the walls themselves are built of a solid core of earth, faced with massive brick: the top is paved with tiles, and defended by a crenelated parapet. Bastions, some of which are fifty feet square, are built upon the outside at distances of about one hundred feet. There are sixteen gates, seven of which are in the Chinese town, six in the Tartar town, and three in the partition wall between these two. In the centre of the Tartar city is an enclosure, also walled, called the Imperial City, and within this another, called the Forbidden City, which contains the imperial palaces and pleasure-grounds. Broad straight avenues, crossing each other at right angles, run through the whole city, which in this respect is very unlike other Chinese towns. A stream entering the Tartar city near its north-west corner divides into two branches, which enter the Imperial City and surround the Forbidden City, and then uniting again pass through the Tartar and Chinese towns, to empty in the Tung-Chau Canal.

The foreign legations are in the southern part of the Tartar city, on the banks of this stream. The top of the walls forms the favorite promenade of the foreign settlers, and from here a fine view of the whole city is obtained. M. de Beauvoir, however, from his more minute examination, comes to the following conclusions: "This immense city, in which nothing is repaired, and in which it is forbidden under the severest penalties to demolish anything, is slowly disintegrating, and every day changing itself into dust. The sight of this slow decomposition is sad, since it promises death more certainly than the most violent convulsions. In a century Pekin will exist no longer; it must then be abandoned: in two centuries it will be discovered, like a second Pompeii, buried under its own dust."

The gates of Virtuous Victory and of Great Purity, the temples to the Heavens, to Agriculture, to the Spirit of the Winds and of the Thunder, and to the Brilliant Mirror of the Mind, occupied the attention of the party. They saw the gilded plough and the sacred harrow with which the emperor

yearly traces a furrow to obtain divine favor for the crops, as well as the yellow straw hat he wears during this ceremony; and also the vases made of iron wire in which he every six months burns the sentences of those who have been condemned to death in the empire. They visited also the magnificent observatory built by Father Verbiest, a Jesuit, for the emperor You-Ching, in the seventeenth century. The instruments are of bronze, and mounted upon fantastic dragons, and are still in good condition, though they have been exposed to the open air all this time. One of them was a celestial sphere eight feet in diameter, containing all the stars known in 1650 and visible in Pekin.

Visits to the theatres, to the temple of the Moon, that of the Lamas, that of Confucius, and to others made the days spent in Pekin pass quickly. Among the wonders shown was the largest suspended bell in the world—the great bell of Moscow has never been hung—twenty-five feet high, weighing ninety thousand pounds, and richly sculptured.

The private life of the Chinese it is almost impossible for a stranger to take part in. To do so requires a knowledge of Chinese, which can be gained only by years of assiduous study, and that the applicant should, as far as possible in dress and general appearance, make himself a Chinese. Even then, complete success is gained only by a fortunate combination of circumstances. The streets devoted to shops of all kinds afford, however, to the traveler a never-ending succession of changing and interesting pictures. Yet the general spirit of the Chinese leads them also to be sparing of all outward decoration, reserving their forces for interior display. The Forbidden City even, though marvelous stories are told of its interior splendors, has outside a mean appearance. "A pagoda of the thirty-sixth rank has more effect than the sacred dwelling of the Son of Heaven."

In the military quarters, and in those inhabited by the nobility, the party in their wanderings were struck with an expression of disdain on the countenances of those natives whom they met. Elsewhere the curiosity to see the foreigners was even greater than the Chinese themselves ever excited in the capitals of Europe; but at home the higher classes passed the foreigners without even turning to look at them, or else glanced at them indifferently or disdainfully. Some of the noble class walked, but generally they rode in carts similar to that of the mandarin Ching. The higher the rank of the owner, the farther behind are the wheels placed. With a prince's cart they are so far behind that the rider hangs between them and the mule. Palanquins, carried upon the shoulders of the porters, offer another and the most convenient means of locomotion used in China: this method is, however, forbidden except for princes and ministers of state.

In the busy streets of trade the scene is most animated. Thousands of scarlet signs with gilded inscriptions hang from oblique poles raised in front of the shops. Carts, palanquins, mules, camels, coolies, soldiers and merchants throng the streets, while to add to the confusion myriads of children play about your legs, and the old men carrying their kites toward the walls add to the singularity of the scene. The kites, representing dragons, eagles, etc., are managed with a dexterity which comes only from a lifelong practice. They are sometimes furnished with various aeolian attachments which imitate the songs of birds or the voices of men. The pigeons also in Pekin are frequently provided with a very light kind of aeolian harp, which is secured tightly to the two central feathers of their tails, so that in flying through the air the harps sound harmoniously. This curious, indistinct note had excited the count's attention, and he learned its cause from a pigeon which fell dead at his feet, having in its flight struck itself against the cord of one of the kites. Their use was explained by the natives as a protection against the hawks which are very common in Pekin.

Passing one day the place of execution, the travelers were shocked to see that the heads of the executed were exposed to the public gaze, labeled with the crimes for which they had suffered. Such sights as this, with the terrible filth of all the Chinese cities, the squalid suffering of the poor and the want of sympathy with indigence and disease, suggested to the count, as they too frequently suggest to European visitors, that the degradation of the Chinese is hopeless. Yet such sights were common a few generations ago in every European capital, and the same causes which have led to their cessation there are at work to-day in China, and bid fair to produce the same results.

The service of the custom-house, which has been put into the hands of Europeans, and under the management of Mr. Robert Hart has been thoroughly organized, is having a great influence in civilizing the government, as well as in diffusing European ideas and methods among the people. A fixed rate of charges, an honesty of administration which is beyond question, prompt activity in the transaction of business, have replaced the depredations and the old methods in use under mandarin rule. It is the desire of the manager of the custom-house to inaugurate in China the establishment of a system of lighthouses, to organize the postal system, to introduce railroads and telegraphs and to open the coal-mines of the empire. Success in these reforms means bringing China into the circle of inter-dependent civilized nations; and so far all the steps in this direction have been sure and successful ones.

On leaving Pekin, our party set out to visit the Great Wall of China, which lies about three days' journey from that capital, on the route to Siberia. Mongolian ponies served for the means of transportation on this trip. These shaggy little animals were as full of tricks as they were ugly. The cavalcade was followed by two carts for carrying the money of the expedition. The whole of this capital amounted to about one hundred and fifty dollars, in the form of hundreds of thousands of the copper coins of the country, made with holes in their centres and strung by the thousand upon osier twigs. This is the only money which circulates in the agricultural portions of China, and a "barbarian" has to give a pound weight of them for a couple of eggs. The country soon began to become hilly, with the mountains of Mongolia visible in the distance. Trains of camels were passed, or could be seen winding in the plain below.

The next day the party arrived at the Tombs of the Emperors. These are the tombs of the Ming emperors, one of the most brilliant dynasties of Chinese history. They lie in a circular valley which opens out from a great plain, and is surrounded by limestone peaks and granite domes, forming a barren and waste amphitheatre. The grandeur of its dimensions and the awful barrenness of its desolation make it a fit resting-place for the imperial dead of the last native dynasty. At the foot of the surrounding heights thirteen gigantic tombs, encircled with green trees, are arranged in a semicircle. Five majestic portals, about eight hundred yards apart, form the entrance to the tombs. From the portico giving entrance to the valley to the tomb of the first emperor is more than a league, and the long avenue is marked first by winged columns of white marble, and next by two rows of animals, carved in gigantic proportions. Of these there are, on either side, two lions standing, two lions sitting; one camel standing, one kneeling; one elephant standing, one kneeling; one dragon standing, one sitting; two horses standing; six warriors, courtiers, etc. The lions are fifteen feet high, and the others equally colossal, while each of the figures is carved from a single block of granite.

At the end of the avenue are the tombs, with groups of trees about them. Each tomb is really a temple in which white and pink marble, porphyry and carved teak-wood are combined, not indeed with harmony or taste, but, what is rare in China, with lines of great purity and severity. One of the halls of these tombs is about a hundred feet long by about eighty wide. The ceiling is from forty to sixty feet high, and is supported by rows of pillars, each formed of a single stick of teak timber eleven feet in circumference. These sticks were brought for this purpose from the south of China. Though they have been in position over nine hundred years, they appear as sound as when first posed, nor has the austere splendor of the structure suffered in any degree.

The sombre obscurity well befits these sepulchral dwellings, and the dull sound of the deadened gongs struck by the guardians makes the vaults reverberate in a singular and impressive way. Behind the memorial temple rises an artificial mound about fifty feet high, access to the top of which is given by a rising arched passage built of white marble. On the top of the mound is an imposing marble structure consisting of a double arch, beneath which is the imperial tablet, a large slab, upon which is carved a dragon standing on the back of a gigantic tortoise. The remains of the emperor are buried somewhere within this mound, though the exact spot is not known: this precaution, it is said, was taken to preserve the remains from being desecrated in a search for the treasures which were buried

with him, while the persons who performed this last office were killed upon the spot, in order further to preserve the secret.

From this gigantic effort to preserve the memory of the dead our party hastened to the Great Wall, an equally immense work to preserve the living from the incursions of their neighboring enemies. Perhaps nowhere in the world are to be found in such close proximity two such striking evidences of the waste of human labor when undirected by scientific knowledge. The wall is to-day, and was from the first, as worthless for the purpose it was intended to serve as the temples are for obtaining immortality for the bodies they enclose.

Leaving the town of Nang-Kao, the party soon found themselves at the entrance of the pass of the same name, and during the six leagues which separated them from the wall the spectacle kept increasing in grandeur. The gorge at first was savage and sombre, shut in closely by the steep mountain-sides. Soon the first support of the Great Wall appeared in a chain of walls, with battlements and towers, built over the principal mountain-chain, and as far as the eye could reach following all the peaks. The effect of this wall is most striking. Like some enormous serpent it stretches away in the distance, climbing rocks which appear impracticable, and which would be so without its aid. The count was convinced that it would be as difficult to climb it for the purpose of defending it as it would be to do so in order to attack it. This first support of the wall is in itself a giant work.

As the party advanced in the valley, in the far distance the crenelated outlines of two other similar and parallel walls appeared, situated also upon the crests. The Great Wall was built about 200 B.C. as a barrier against the Tartar cavalry. It is said to have been built in twenty-two years. It was everywhere constructed of the materials at hand. On the plains it was built of a core of earth, pounded, and faced with tiles, the top being also covered with tiles and furnished with a parapet. On the mountains of stratified rock the facing was made of masonry, and the core of earth and cobble-stones. Where the rock is such as fractures irregularly, the wall is of solid masonry, tapering to the top, which is sharp. Throughout its whole length it is defended by towers occurring every few hundred feet. Every mountain-pass and weak point was defended by a fortified tower. At present the wall is in various conditions of preservation, according to the materials used in its construction. In the valleys, which were the points to defend, it has gradually crumbled to a mere heap of rubbish, which the plough year by year still further scatters.

The Great Wall is, however, a wonderful monument of the labor and organization of the Chinese nation two thousand years ago. The illustration is from a photograph taken on the spot by one of the party. In order to take a view which should be most effective the camera was placed upon the wall itself.

On their return to Pekin the party visited the ruins of the famous Summer Palace, Yuen-Ming-Yuen. The avenues were formerly adorned with porticoes, monuments and kiosques, which are now masses of ruins. Only two enormous bronze lions, the largest castings ever made in China, remain, and these simply because the allies could not carry them away. To have attempted it would have required the building of a dozen bridges over the streams between here and Tien-Tsin. The chapel of the Summer Palace escaped destruction only from the fact that it was situated upon a rock so high that the flames did not reach it. Looking at the confused ruins which are all that remain of this wonderful collection of the most admirable products of fifteen ages of civilization, of art and of industry, the count de Beauvoir says truly that no honest man can help shuddering involuntarily. Though his sentiment of national loyalty is very strong, yet he cannot avoid exclaiming, "Let us leave this place: let us run from this spot, where the soil burns us, the very view of which humbles us. We came to China as the armed champions of civilization and of a religion of mercy, but the Chinese are right, a thousand times right, in calling us barbarians."

A PRINCESS OF THULE.
BY WILLIAM BLACK, AUTHOR OF "THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF A PHAETON."

CHAPTER XIV.
DEEPER AND DEEPER

Next morning Sheila was busy with her preparations for departure when she heard a hansom drive up. She looked out and saw Mr. Ingram step out; and before he had time to cross the pavement she had run round and opened the door, and stood at the top of the steps to receive him. How often had her husband cautioned her not to forget herself in this monstrous fashion!

"Did you think I had run away? Have you come to see me?" she said, with a bright, roseate gladness on her face which reminded him of many a pleasant morning in Borva.

"I did not think you had run away, for you see I have brought you some flowers," he said; but there was a sort of blush in the sallow face, and perhaps the girl had some quick fancy or suspicion that he had brought this bouquet to prove that he knew everything was right, and that he expected to see her. It was only a part of his universal kindness and thoughtfulness, she considered.

"Frank is up stairs," she said, "getting ready some things to go to Brighton. Will you come into the breakfast-room? Have you had breakfast?"

"Oh, you were going to Brighton?"

"Yes," she said; and somehow something moved her to add quickly, "but not for long, you know. Only a few days. It is many a time you will have told me of Brighton long ago in the Lewis, but I cannot understand a large town being beside the sea, and it will be a great surprise to me, I am sure of that."

"Ay, Sheila," he said, falling into the old habit quite naturally, "you will find it different from Borvabost. You will have no scampering about the rocks with your head bare and your hair flying about. You will have to dress more correctly there than here even; and, by the way, you must be busy getting ready, so I will go."

"Oh no," she said with a quick look of disappointment, "you will not go yet. If I had known you were coming—But it was very late when we will get home this morning: two o'clock it was."

"Another ball?"

"Yes," said the girl, but not very joyfully.

"Why, Sheila," he said with a grave smile on his face, "you are becoming quite a woman of fashion now. And you know I can't keep up an acquaintance with a fine lady who goes to all these grand places and knows all sorts of swell people; so you'll have to cut me, Sheila."

"I hope I shall be dead before that time ever comes," said the girl with a sudden flash of indignation in her eyes. Then she softened: "But it is not kind of you to laugh at me."

"Of course I did not laugh at you," he said taking both her hands in his, "although I used to sometimes when you were a little girl and talked very wild English. Don't you remember how vexed you used to be, and how pleased you were when your papa turned the laugh against me by getting me to say that awful Gaelic sentence about 'A young calf ate a raw egg'?"

"Can you say it now?" said Sheila, with her face getting bright and pleased again. "Try it after me. Now listen."

She uttered some half dozen of the most extraordinary sounds that any language ever contained, but Ingram would not attempt to follow her. She reproached him with having forgotten all that he had learnt in Lewis, and said she should no longer look on him as a possible Highlander.

"But what are *you* now?" he asked. "You are no longer that wild girl who used to run out to sea in the Maighdean-mhara whenever there was the excitement of a storm coming on."

"Many times," she said slowly and wistfully, "I will wish that I could be that again for a little while."

"Don't you enjoy, then, all those fine gatherings you go to?"

"I try to like them."

"And you don't succeed?"

He was looking at her gravely and earnestly, and she turned away her head and did not answer. At this moment Lavender came down stairs and entered the room.

"Hillo, Ingram, my boy! glad to see you! What pretty flowers! It's a pity we can't take them to Brighton with us."

"But I intend to take them," said Sheila firmly.

"Oh, very well, if you don't mind the bother," said her husband. "I should have thought your hands would have been full: you know you'll have to take everything with you you would want in London. You will find that Brighton isn't a dirty little fishing-village in which you've only to tuck up your dress and run about anyhow."

"I never saw a dirty little fishing-village," said Sheila quietly.

Her husband laughed: "I meant no offence. I was not thinking of Borvabost at all. Well, Ingram, can't you run down and see us while we are at Brighton?"

"Oh do, Mr. Ingram!" said Sheila with quite a new interest in her face; and she came forward as though she would have gone down on her knees and begged this great favor of him. "Do, Mr. Ingram! We should try to amuse you some way, and the weather is sure to be fine. Shall we keep a room for you? Can you come on Friday and stay till the Monday? It is a great difference there will be in the place if you come down."

Ingram looked at Sheila, and was on the point of promising, when Lavender added, "And we shall introduce you to that young American lady whom you are so anxious to meet."

"Oh, is she to be there?" he said, looking rather curiously at Lavender.

"Yes, she and her mother. We are going down together."

"Then I'll see whether I can in a day or two," he said, but in a tone which pretty nearly convinced Sheila that she should not have her stay at Brighton made pleasant by the company of her old friend and associate.

However, the mere anticipation of seeing the sea was much; and when they had got into a cab and were going down to Victoria Station, Sheila's eyes were filled with a joyful anticipation. She had discarded altogether the descriptions of Brighton that had been given her. It is one thing to receive information, and another to reproduce it in an imaginative picture; and in fact her imagination was busy with its own work while she sat and listened to this person or the other speaking of the seaside town she was going to. When they spoke of promenades and drives and miles of hotels and lodging-houses, she was thinking of the sea-beach and of the boats and of the sky-line with its distant ships. When they told her of private theatricals and concerts and fancy-dress balls, she was thinking of being out on the open sea, with a light breeze filling the sails, and a curl of white foam rising at the bow and sweeping and hissing down the sides of the boat. She would go down among the fishermen when her husband and his friends were not by, and talk to them, and get to know what they sold their fish for down here in the South. She would find out what their nets cost, and if there was anybody in authority to whom they could apply for an advance of a few pounds in case of hard times. Had they their cuttings of peat free from the nearest moss-land? and did they dress their fields with the thatch that had got saturated with the smoke? Perhaps some of them could tell her where the crews hailed

from that had repeatedly shot the sheep of the Flannen Isles. All these and a hundred other things she would get to know; and she might procure and send to her father some rare bird or curiosity of the sea, that might be added to the little museum in which she used to sing in days gone by, when he was busy with his pipe and his whisky.

"You are not much tired, then, by your dissipation of last night?" said Mrs. Kavanagh to her at the station, as the slender, fair-haired, grave lady looked admiringly at the girl's fresh color and bright gray-blue eyes. "It makes one envy you to see you looking so strong and in such good spirits."

"How happy you must be always!" said Mrs. Lorraine; and the younger lady had the same sweet, low and kindly voice as her mother.

"I am very well, thank you," said Sheila, blushing somewhat and not lifting her eyes, while Lavender was impatient that she had not answered with a laugh and some light retort, such as would have occurred to almost any woman in the circumstances.

On the journey down, Lavender and Mrs. Lorraine, seated opposite each other in two corner seats, kept up a continual cross-fire of small pleasantries, in which the young American lady had distinctly the best of it, chiefly by reason of her perfect manner. The keenest thing she said was said with a look of great innocence and candor in the large gray eyes; and then directly afterward she would say something very nice and pleasant in precisely the same voice, as if she could not understand that there was any effort on the part of either to assume an advantage. The mother sometimes turned and listened to this aimless talk with an amused gravity, as of a cat watching the gambols of a kitten, but generally she devoted herself to Sheila, who sat opposite her. She did not talk much, and Sheila was glad of that, but the girl felt that she was being observed with some little curiosity. She wished that Mrs. Kavanagh would turn those observant gray eyes of hers away in some other direction. Now and again Sheila would point out what she considered strange or striking in the country outside, and for a moment the elderly lady would look out. But directly afterward the gray eyes would come back to Sheila, and the girl knew they were upon her. At last she so persistently stared out of the window that she fell to dreaming, and all the trees and the meadows and the farm-houses and the distant heights and hollows went past her as though they were in a sort of mist, while she replied to Mrs. Kavanagh's chance remarks in a mechanical fashion, and could only hear as a monotonous murmur the talk of the two people at the other side of the carriage. How much of the journey did she remember? She was greatly struck by the amount of open land in the neighborhood of London—the commons between Wandsworth and Streatham, and so forth—and she was pleased with the appearance of the country about Red Hill. For the rest, a succession of fair green pictures passed by her, all bathed in a calm, half-misty summer sunlight: then they pierced the chalk-hills (which Sheila, at first sight, fancied were of granite) and rumbled through the tunnels. Finally, with just a glimpse of a great mass of gray houses filling a vast hollow and stretching up the bare green downs beyond, they found themselves in Brighton.

"Well, Sheila, what do you think of the place?" her husband said to her with a laugh as they were driving down the Queen's road.

She did not answer.

"It is not like Borvabost, is it?"

She was too bewildered to speak. She could only look about her with a vague wonder and disappointment. But surely this great gray city was not the place they had come to live in? Would it not disappear somehow, and they would get away to the sea and the rocks and the boats?

They passed into the upper part of West street, and here was another thoroughfare, down which Sheila glanced with no great interest. But the next moment there was a quick catching of her breath, which almost resembled a sob, and a strange glad light sprang into her eyes. Here at last was the sea! Away beyond the narrow thoroughfare she could catch a glimpse of a great green plain—yellow-green it was in the sunlight—that the wind was whitening here and there with tumbling waves. She had not noticed that there was any wind in-land—there everything seemed asleep—but here there

was a fresh breeze from the south, and the sea had been rough the day before, and now it was of this strange olive color, streaked with the white curls of foam that shone in the sunlight. Was there not a cold scent of sea-weed, too, blown up this narrow passage between the houses? And now the carriage cut round the corner and whirled out into the glare of the Parade, and before her the great sea stretched out its leagues of tumbling and shining waves, and she heard the water roaring along the beach, and far away at the horizon she saw a phantom ship. She did not even look at the row of splendid hotels and houses, at the gayly-dressed folks on the pavement, at the brilliant flags that were flapping and fluttering on the New Pier and about the beach. It was the great world of shining water beyond that fascinated her, and awoke in her a strange yearning and longing, so that she did not know whether it was grief or joy that burned in her heart and blinded her eyes with tears. Mrs. Kavanagh took her arm as they were going up the steps of the hotel, and said in a friendly way, "I suppose you have some sad memories of the sea?"

"No," said Sheila bravely, "it is always pleasant to me to think of the sea; but it is a long time since—since—"

"Sheila," said her husband abruptly, "do tell me if all your things are here;" and then the girl turned, calm and self-collected, to look after rugs and boxes.

When they were finally established in the hotel Lavender went off to negotiate for the hire of a carriage for Mrs. Kavanagh during her stay, and Sheila was left with the two ladies. They had tea in their sitting-room, and they had it at one of the windows, so that they could look out on the stream of people and carriages now beginning to flow by in the clear yellow light of the afternoon. But neither the people nor the carriages had much interest for Sheila, who, indeed, sat for the most part silent, intently watching the various boats that were putting out or coming in, and busy with conjectures which she knew there was no use placing before her two companions.

"Brighton seems to surprise you very much," said Mrs. Lorraine.

"Yes," said Sheila, "I have been told all about it, but you will forget all that; and this is very different from the sea at home—at my home."

"Your home is in London now," said the elder lady with a smile.

"Oh no!" said Sheila, most anxiously and earnestly. "London, that is not our home at all. We live there for a time—that will be quite necessary—but we shall go back to the Lewis some day soon—not to stay altogether, but enough to make it as much our home as London."

"How do you think Mr. Lavender will enjoy living in the Hebrides?" said Mrs. Lorraine with a look of innocent and friendly inquiry in her eyes.

"It was many a time that he has said he never liked any place so much," said Sheila with something of a blush; and then she added with growing courage, "for you must not think he is always like what he is here. Oh no! When he is in the Highlands there is no day that is nearly long enough for what has to be done in it; and he is up very early, and away to the hills or the loch with a gun or a salmon-rod. He can catch the salmon very well—oh, very well for one that is not accustomed—and he will shoot as well as any one that is in the island, except my papa. It is a great deal to do there will be in the island, and plenty of amusement; and there is not much chance—not any whatever—of his being lonely or tired when we go to live in the Lewis."

Mrs. Kavanagh and her daughter were both amused and pleased by the earnest and rapid fashion in which Sheila talked. They had generally considered her to be a trifle shy and silent, not knowing how afraid she was of using wrong idioms or pronunciations; but here was one subject on which her heart was set, and she had no more thought as to whether she said *like-a-ness* or *likeness*, or whether she said *gyarden* or *garden*. Indeed, she forgot more than that. She was somewhat excited by the presence of the sea and the well-remembered sound of the waves; and she was pleased to talk about her life in the North, and about her husband's stay there, and how they should pass the time when she returned to Borva. She neglected altogether Lavender's injunctions that she should not talk about fishing or cooking or farming to his friends. She incidentally revealed to Mrs. Kavanagh and her

daughter a great deal more about the household at Borva than he would have wished to be known. For how could they understand about his wife having her own cousin to serve at table? and what would they think of a young lady who was proud of making her father's shirts? Whatever these two ladies may have thought, they were very obviously interested, and if they were amused, it was in a far from unfriendly fashion. Mrs. Lorraine professed herself quite charmed with Sheila's descriptions of her island-life, and wished she could go up to Lewis to see all these strange things. But when she spoke of visiting the island when Sheila and her husband were staying there, Sheila was not nearly so ready to offer her a welcome as the daughter of a hospitable old Highlandman ought to have been.

"And will you go out in a boat now?" said Sheila, looking down to the beach.

"In a boat! What sort of boat?" said Mrs. Kavanagh.

"Any one of those little sailing boats: it is very good boats they are, as far as I can see."

"No, thank you," said the elder lady with a smile. "I am not fond of small boats, and the company of the men who go with you might be a little objectionable, I should fancy."

"But you need not take any men," said Sheila: "the sailing of one of those little boats, it is very simple."

"Do you mean to say you could manage the boat by yourself?"

"Oh yes! It is very simple. And my husband, he will help me."

"And what would you do if you went out?"

"We might try the fishing. I do not see where the rocks are, but we would go off the rocks and put down the anchor and try the lines. You would have some ferry good fish for breakfast in the morning."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Kavanagh, "you don't know what you propose to us. To go and roll about in an open boat in these waves—we should be ill in five minutes. But I suppose you don't know what sea-sickness is?"

"No," said Sheila, "but I will hear my husband speak of it often. And it is only in crossing the Channel that people will get sick."

"Why, this is the Channel."

Sheila stared. Then she endeavored to recall her geography. Of course this must be a part of the Channel, but if the people in the South became ill in this weather, they must be rather feeble creatures. Her speculations on this point were cut short by the entrance of her husband, who came to announce that he had not only secured a carriage for a month, but that it would be round at the hotel door in half an hour; whereupon the two American ladies said they would be ready, and left the room.

"Now go off and get dressed, Sheila," said Lavender.

She stood for a moment irresolute.

"If you wouldn't mind," she said after a moment's hesitation—"if you would allow me to go by myself—if you would go to the driving, and let me go down to the shore!"

"Oh, nonsense!" he said. "You will have people fancying you are only a school-girl. How can you go down to the beach by yourself among all those loafing vagabonds, who would pick your pocket or throw stones at you? You must behave like an ordinary Christian: now do, like a good girl, get dressed and submit to the restraints of civilized life. It won't hurt you much."

So she left, to lay aside with some regret her rough blue dress, and he went down stairs to see about ordering dinner.

Had she come down to the sea, then, only to live the life that had nearly broken her heart in London? It seemed so. They drove up and down the Parade for about an hour and a half, and the roar of carriages drowned the rush of the waves. Then they dined in the quiet of this still summer evening, and she could only see the sea as a distant and silent picture through the windows, while the talk of her companions was either about the people whom they had seen while driving, or about matters of which she knew nothing. Then the blinds were drawn and candles lit, and still their conversation murmured around her unheeding ears. After dinner her husband went down to the smoking-room

of the hotel to have a cigar, and she was left with Mrs. Kavanagh and her daughter. She went to the window and looked through a chink in the Venetian blinds. There was a beautiful clear twilight abroad, the darkness was still of a soft gray, and up in the pale yellow-green of the sky a large planet burned and throbbed. Soon the sea and the sky would darken, the stars would come forth in thousands and tens of thousands, and the moving water would be struck with a million trembling spots of silver as the waves came onward to the beach.

"Mayn't we go out for a walk till Frank has finished his cigar?" said Sheila.

"You couldn't go out walking at this time of night," said Mrs. Kavanagh in a kindly way: "you would meet the most unpleasant persons. Besides, going out into the night air would be most dangerous."

"It is a beautiful night," said Sheila with a sigh. She was still standing at the window.

"Come," said Mrs. Kavanagh, going over to her and putting her hand in her arm, "we cannot have any moping, you know. You must be content to be dull with us for one night; and after to-night we shall see what we can do to amuse you."

"Oh, but I don't want to be amused!" cried Sheila almost in terror, for some vision flashed on her mind of a series of parties. "I would much rather be left alone and allowed to go about by myself. But it is very kind of you," she hastily added, fancying that her speech had been somewhat ungracious —"it is very kind of you indeed."

"Come, I promised to teach you cribbage, didn't I?"

"Yes," said Sheila with much resignation; and she walked to the table and sat down.

Perhaps, after all, she could have spent the rest of the evening with some little equanimity in patiently trying to learn this game, in which she had no interest whatever, but her thoughts and fancies were soon drawn away from cribbage. Her husband returned. Mrs. Lorraine had been for some little time at the big piano at the other side of the room, amusing herself by playing snatches of anything she happened to remember, but when Mr. Lavender returned she seemed to wake up. He went over to her and sat down by the piano.

"Here," she said, "I have all the duets and songs you spoke of, and I am quite delighted with those I have tried. I wish mamma would sing a second to me: how can one learn without practicing? And there are some of those duets I really should like to learn after what you said of them."

"Shall I become a substitute for your mamma?" he said.

"And sing the second, so that I may practice? Your cigar must have left you in a very amiable mood."

"Well, suppose we try," he said; and he proceeded to open out the roll of music which she had brought down.

"Which shall we take first?" he asked.

"It does not much matter," she answered indifferently, and indeed she took up one of the duets by haphazard.

What was it made Mrs. Kavanagh's companion suddenly lift her eyes from the cribbage-board and look with surprise to the other end of the room? She had recognized the little prelude to one of her own duets, and it was being played by Mrs. Lorraine. And it was Mrs. Lorraine who began to sing in a sweet, expressive and well-trained voice of no great power—

Love in thine eyes for ever plays;

and it was she to whom the answer was given—

He in thy snowy bosom strays;

and then, Sheila, sitting stupefied and pained and confused, heard them sing together—

He makes thy rosy lips his care,
And walks the mazes of thy hair.

She had not heard the short conversation which had introduced this music; and she could not tell but that her husband had been practicing these duets—her duets—with some one else. For presently they sang "When the rosy morn appearing," and "I would that my love could silently," and others, all of them in Sheila's eyes, sacred to the time when she and Lavender used to sit in the little room at Borva. It was no consolation to her that Mrs. Lorraine had but an imperfect acquaintance with them; that oftentimes she stumbled and went back over a bit of the accompaniment; that her voice was far from being striking. Lavender, at all events, seemed to heed none of these things. It was not as a music-master that he sang with her. He put as much expression of love into his voice as ever he had done in the old days when he sang with his future bride. And it seemed so cruel that this woman should have taken Sheila's own duets from her to sing before her with her own husband.

Sheila learnt little more cribbage that evening. Mrs. Kavanagh could not understand how her pupil had become embarrassed, inattentive, and even sad, and asked her if she was tired. Sheila said she was very tired and would go. And when she got her candle, Mrs. Lorraine and Lavender had just discovered another duet which they felt bound to try together as the last.

This was not the first time she had been more or less vaguely pained by her husband's attentions to this young American lady; and yet she would not admit to herself that he was any way in the wrong. She would entertain no suspicion of him. She would have no jealousy in her heart, for how could jealousy exist with a perfect faith? And so she had repeatedly reasoned herself out of these tentative feelings, and resolved that she would do neither her husband nor Mrs. Lorraine the injustice of being vexed with them. So it was now. What more natural than that Frank should recommend to any friend the duets of which he was particularly fond? What more natural than that this young lady should wish to show her appreciation of those songs by singing them? and who was to sing with her but he? Sheila would have no suspicion of either; and so she came down next morning determined to be very friendly with Mrs. Lorraine.

But that forenoon another thing occurred which nearly broke down all her resolves.

"Sheila," said her husband, I don't think I ever asked you whether you rode."

"I used to ride many times at home," she said.

"But I suppose you'd rather not ride here," he said. "Mrs. Lorraine and I propose to go out presently: you'll be able to amuse yourself somehow till we come back."

Mrs. Lorraine had, indeed, gone to put on her habit, and her mother was with her.

"I suppose I may go out," said Sheila. "It is so very dull in-doors, and Mrs. Kavanagh is afraid of the east wind, and she is not going out."

"Well, there's no harm in your going out," answered Lavender, "but I should have thought you'd have liked the comfort of watching the people pass, from the window."

She said nothing, but went off to her own room and dressed to go out. Why she knew not, but she felt she would rather not see her husband and Mrs. Lorraine start from the hotel door. She stole down stairs without going into the sitting-room, and then, going through the great hall and down the steps, found herself free and alone in Brighton.

It was a beautiful, bright, clear day, though the wind was a trifle chilly, and all around her there was a sense of space and light and motion in the shining skies, the far clouds and the heaving and noisy sea. Yet she had none of the gladness of heart with which she used to rush out of the house at Borva to drink in the fresh, salt air and feel the sunlight on her cheeks. She walked away, with her face wistful and pensive, along the King's road, scarcely seeing any of the people who passed her; and the noise of the crowd and of the waves hummed in her ears in a distant fashion, even as she walked along the wooden railing over the beach. She stopped and watched some men putting off a

heavy fishing-boat, and she still stood and looked long after the boat was launched. She would not confess to herself that she felt lonely and miserable: it was the sight of the sea that was melancholy. It seemed so different from the sea off Borva, that had always to her a familiar and friendly look, even when it was raging and rushing before a south-west wind. Here this sea looked vast and calm and sad, and the sound of it was not pleasant to her ears, as was the sound of the waves on the rocks at Borva. She walked on, in a blind and unthinking fashion, until she had got far up the Parade, and could see the long line of monotonous white cliff meeting the dull blue plain of the waves until both disappeared in the horizon.

She returned to the King's road a trifle tired, and sat down on one of the benches there. The passing of the people would amuse her; and now the pavement was thronged with a crowd of gayly-dressed folks, and the centre of the thoroughfare brisk with the constant going and coming of riders. She saw strange old women, painted, powdered and bewigged in hideous imitation of youth, pounding up and down the level street, and she wondered what wild hallucinations possessed the brains of these poor creatures. She saw troops of beautiful young girls, with flowing hair, clear eyes and bright complexions, riding by, a goodly company, under charge of a riding-mistress, and the world seemed to grow sweeter when they came into view. But while she was vaguely gazing and wondering and speculating her eyes were suddenly caught by two riders whose appearance sent a throb to her heart. Frank Lavender rode well, so did Mrs. Lorraine; and, though they were paying no particular attention to the crowd of passers-by, they doubtless knew that they could challenge criticism with an easy confidence. They were laughing and talking to each other as they went rapidly by: neither of them saw Sheila. The girl did not look after them. She rose and walked in the other direction, with a greater pain at her heart than had been there for many a day.

What was this crowd? Some dozen or so of people were standing round a small girl, who, accompanied by a man, was playing a violin, and playing it very well, too. But it was not the music that attracted Sheila to the child, but partly that there was a look about the timid, pretty face and the modest and honest eyes that reminded her of little Ailasa, and partly because, just at this moment, her heart seemed to be strangely sensitive and sympathetic. She took no thought of the people looking on. She went forward to the edge of the pavement, and found that the small girl and her companion were about to go away. Sheila stopped the man.

"Will you let your little girl come with me into this shop?"

It was a confectioner's shop.

"We were going home to dinner," said the man, while the small girl looked up with wondering eyes.

"Will you let her have dinner with me, and you will come back in half an hour?"

The man looked at the little girl: he seemed to be really fond of her, and saw that she was very willing to go. Sheila took her hand and led her into the confectioner's shop, putting her violin on one of the small marble tables while they sat down at another. She was probably not aware that two or three idlers had followed them, and were staring with might and main in at the door of the shop.

What could this child have thought of the beautiful and yet sad-eyed lady who was so kind to her, who got her all sorts of things with her own hands, and asked her all manner of questions in a low, gentle and sweet voice? There was not much in Sheila's appearance to provoke fear or awe. The little girl, shy at first, got to be a little more frank, and told her hostess when she rose in the morning, how she practiced, the number of hours they were out during the day, and many of the small incidents of her daily life. She had been photographed too, and her photograph was sold in one of the shops. She was very well content: she liked playing, the people were kind to her, and she did not often get tired.

"Then I shall see you often if I stay in Brighton?" said Sheila.

"We go out every day when it does not rain very hard."

Perhaps some wet day you will come and see me, and you will have some tea with me: would you like that?"

"Yes, very much," said the small musician, looking up frankly.

Just at this moment, the half hour having fully expired, the man appeared at the door.

"Don't hurry," said Sheila to the little girl: "sit still and drink out the lemonade; then I will give you some little parcels which you must put in your pocket."

She was about to rise to go to the counter when she suddenly met the eyes of her husband, who was calmly staring at her. He had come out, after their ride, with Mrs. Lorraine to have a stroll up and down the pavements, and had, in looking in at the various shops, caught sight of Sheila quietly having luncheon with this girl whom she had picked up in the streets.

"Did you ever see the like of that?" he said to Mrs. Lorraine. "In open day, with people staring in, and she has not even taken the trouble to put the violin out of sight!"

"The poor child means no harm," said his companion.

"Well, we must get her out of this somehow," he said; and so they entered the shop.

Sheila knew she was guilty the moment she met her husband's look, though she had never dreamed of it before. She had, indeed, acted quite thoughtlessly—perhaps chiefly moved by a desire to speak to some one and to befriend some one in her own loneliness.

"Hadn't you better let this little girl go?" said Lavender to Sheila somewhat coldly as soon as he had ordered an ice for his companion.

"When she has finished her lemonade she will go," said Sheila meekly. "But I have to buy some things for her first."

"You have got a whole lot of people round the door," he said.

"It is very kind of the people to wait for her," answered Sheila with the same composure. "We have been here half an hour. I suppose they will like her music very much."

The little violinist was now taken to the counter, and her pockets stuffed with packages of sugared fruits and other deadly delicacies: then she was permitted to go with half a crown in her hand. Mrs. Lorraine patted her shoulder in passing, and said she was a pretty little thing.

They went home to luncheon. Nothing was said about the incident of the forenoon, except that Lavender complained to Mrs. Kavanagh, in a humorous way, that his wife had a most extraordinary fondness for beggars, and that he never went home of an evening without expecting to find her dining with the nearest scavenger and his family. Lavender, indeed, was in an amiable frame of mind at this meal (during the progress of which Sheila sat by the window, of course, for she had already lunched in company with the tiny violinist), and was bent on making himself as agreeable as possible to his two companions. Their talk had drifted toward the wanderings of the two ladies on the Continent; from that to the Niebelungen frescoes in Munich; from that to the Niebelungen itself, and then, by easy transition, to the ballads of Uhland and Heine. Lavender was in one of his most impulsive and brilliant moods—gay and jocular, tender and sympathetic by turns, and so obviously sincere in all that his listeners were delighted with his speeches and assertions and stories, and believed them as implicitly as he did himself. Sheila, sitting at a distance, saw and heard, and could not help recalling many an evening in the far North when Lavender used to fascinate every one around him by the infection of his warm and poetic enthusiasm. How he talked, too—telling the stones of these quaint and pathetic ballads in his own rough—and—ready translations—while there was no self-consciousness in his face, but a thorough warmth of earnestness; and sometimes, too, she would notice a quiver of the under lip that she knew of old, when some pathetic point or phrase had to be indicated rather than described. He was drawing pictures for them as well as telling stories—of the three students entering the room in which the landlady's daughter lay dead—of Barbarossa in his cave—of the child who used to look up at Heine as he passed her in the street, awestricken by his pale and strange face—of the last of the band of companions who sat in the solitary room in which they had sat, and drank to their memory—of the king of Thule, and the deserter from Strasburg, and a thousand others.

"But is there any of them—is there anything in the world—more pitiable than that pilgrimage to Kevlaar?" he said. "You know it, of course. No? Oh, you must, surely. Don't you remember the

mother who stood by the bedside of her sick son, and asked him whether he would not rise to see the great procession go by the window; and he tells her that he cannot, he is so ill: his heart is breaking for thinking of his dead Gretchen? *You* know the story, Sheila. The mother begs him to rise and come with her, and they will join the band of pilgrims going to Kevlaar, to be healed there of their wounds by the Mother of God. Then you find them at Kevlaar, and all the maimed and the lame people have come to the shrine; and whichever limb is diseased, they make a waxen image of that and lay it on the altar, and then they are healed. Well, the mother of this poor lad takes wax and forms a heart out of it, and says to her son, 'Take that to the Mother of God, and she will heal your pain.' Sighing, he takes the wax heart in his hand, and, sighing, he goes to the shrine; and there, with tears running down his face, he says, 'O beautiful Queen of Heaven, I am come to tell you my grief. I lived with my mother in Cologne: near us lived Gretchen, who is dead now. Blessed Mary, I bring you this wax heart: heal the wound in my heart.' And then—and then—"

Sheila saw his lip tremble. But he frowned, and said impatiently, "What a shame it is to destroy such a beautiful story! You can have no idea of it—of its simplicity and tenderness—"

"But pray let us hear the rest of it," said Mrs. Lorraine gently.

"Well, the last scene, you know, is a small chamber, and the mother and her sick son are asleep. The Blessed Mary glides into the chamber and bends over the young man, and puts her hand lightly on his heart. Then she smiles and disappears. The unhappy mother has seen all this in a dream, and now she awakes, for the dogs are barking loudly. The mother goes over to the bed of her son, and he is dead, and the morning light touches his pale face. And then the mother folds her hands, and says—"

He rose hastily with a gesture of fretfulness, and walked over to the window at which Sheila sat and looked out. She put her hand up to his: he took it.

"The next time I try to translate Heine," he said, making it appear that he had broken off through vexation, "something strange will happen."

"It is a beautiful story," said Mrs. Lorraine, who had herself been crying a little bit in a covert way: "I wonder I have not seen a translation of it. Come, mamma, Lady Leveret said we were not to be after four."

So they rose and left, and Sheila was alone with her husband, and still holding his hand. She looked up at him timidly, wondering, perhaps, in her simple way, as to whether she should not now pour out her heart to him, and tell him all her griefs and fears and yearnings. He had obviously been deeply moved by the story he had told so roughly: surely now was a good opportunity of appealing to him, and begging for sympathy and compassion.

"Frank," she said, and she rose and came close, and bent down her head to hide the color in her face.

"Well?" he answered a trifle coldly.

"You won't be vexed with me," she said in a low voice, and with her heart beginning to beat rapidly.

"Vexed with you about what?" he said abruptly.

Alas! all her hopes had fled. She shrank from the cold stare with which she knew he was regarding her. She felt it to be impossible that she should place before him those confidences with which she had approached him; and so, with a great effort, she merely said, "Are we to go to Lady Leveret's?"

"Of course we are," he said, "unless you would rather go and see some blind fiddler or beggar. It is really too bad of you, Sheila, to be so forgetful: what if Lady Leveret, for example, had come into that shop? It seems to me you are never satisfied with meeting the people you ought to meet, but that you must go and associate with all the wretched cripples and beggars you can find. You should remember you are a woman, and not a child—that people will talk about what you do if you go on in this mad way. Do you ever see Mrs. Kavanagh or her daughter do any of these things?"

Sheila had let go his hand: her eyes were still turned toward the ground. She had fancied that a little of that emotion that had been awakened in him by the story of the German mother and her son might warm his heart toward herself, and render it possible for her to talk to him frankly about all that she had been dimly thinking, and more definitely suffering. She was mistaken: that was all.

"I will try to do better, and please you," she said; and then she went away.

CHAPTER XV.
A FRIEND IN NEED

Was it a delusion that had grown up in the girl's mind, and now held full possession of it—that she was in a world with which she had no sympathy, that she should never be able to find a home there, that the influences of it were gradually and surely stealing from her her husband's love and confidence? Or was this longing to get away from the people and the circumstances that surrounded her but the unconscious promptings of an incipient jealousy? She did not question her own mind closely on these points. She only vaguely knew that she was miserable, and that she could not tell her husband of the weight that pressed on her heart.

Here, too, as they drove along to have tea with a certain Lady Leveret, who was one of Lavender's especial patrons, and to whom he had introduced Mrs. Kavanagh and her daughter, Sheila felt that she was a stranger, an interloper, a "third wheel to the cart." She scarcely spoke a word. She looked at the sea, but she had almost grown to regard that great plain of smooth water as a melancholy and monotonous thing—not the bright and boisterous sea of her youth, with its winding channels, its secret bays and rocks, its salt winds and rushing waves. She was disappointed with the perpetual wall of white cliff, where she had expected to see something of the black and rugged shore of the North. She had as yet made no acquaintance with the sea-life of the place: she did not know where the curers lived; whether they gave the fishermen credit and cheated them; whether the people about here made any use of the back of the dog-fish, or could, in hard seasons, cook any of the wild-fowl; what the ling and the cod and the skate fetched; where the wives and daughters sat and spun and carded their wool; whether they knew how to make a good dish of cockles boiled in milk. She smiled to herself when she thought of asking Mrs. Lorraine about any such things; but she still cherished some vague hope that before she left Brighton she would have some little chance of getting near to the sea and learning a little of the sea-life down in the South.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.