

GEORGE MEREDITH

THE ADVENTURES OF
HARRY RICHMOND.
VOLUME 4

George Meredith

**The Adventures of Harry
Richmond. Volume 4**

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CHAPTER XXIII

MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

Books and dreams, like the two rivers cited by my father, flowed side by side in me without mixing; and which the bright Rhone was, which the brown Arve, needs not to be told to those who know anything of youth; they were destined to intermingle soon enough. I read well, for I felt ground and had mounting views; the real world, and the mind and passions of the world, grew visible to me. My tutor pleased the squire immensely by calling me matter-of-fact. In philosophy and history I hated speculation; but nothing was too fantastic for my ideas of possible occurrences. Once away from books, I carried a head that shot rockets to the farthest hills.

My dear friend Temple was at sea, or I should have had one near me to detect and control the springs of nonsense. I was deemed a remarkably quiet sober thoughtful young man, acquiescent in all schemes projected for my welfare. The squire would have liked to see me courting the girl of his heart, as he termed Janet Ilchester, a little more demonstratively. We had, however, come to the understanding that I was to travel before settling. Traditional notions of the importance of the Grand Tour in the education of gentlemen led him to consent to my taking a year on the Continent accompanied by my tutor. He wanted some one, he said, to represent him when I was out over there; which signified that he wanted some one to keep my father in check; but as the Rev. Ambrose Peterborough, successor to the Rev. Simon Hart, was hazy and manageable, I did not object. Such faith had the quiet thoughtful young man at Riversley in the convulsions of the future, the whirlwinds and whirlpools spinning for him and all connected with him, that he did not object to hear his name and Janet's coupled, though he had not a spark of love for her.

I tried to realize to myself the general opinion that she was handsome. Her eyebrows were thick and level and long; her eyes direct in their gaze, of a flinty blue, with dark lashes; her nose firm, her lips fullish, firm when joined; her shape straight, moderately flexible. But she had no softness; she could admire herself in my presence; she claimed possession of me openly, and at the same time openly provoked a siege from the remainder of my sex: she was not maidenly. She caught imagination by the sleeve, and shut it between square whitewashed walls. Heriot thought her not only handsome, but comparable to Mrs. William Bulsted, our Julia Rippenger of old. At his meeting with Julia, her delicious loss of colour made her seem to me one of the loveliest women on earth. Janet never lost colour, rarely blushed; she touched neither nerve nor fancy.

'You want a rousing coquette,' said Heriot; 'you won't be happy till you've been racked by that nice instrument of torture, and the fair Bulsted will do it for you if you like. You don't want a snake or a common serpent, you want a Python.'

I wanted bloom and mystery, a woman shifting like the light with evening and night and dawn, and sudden fire. Janet was bald to the heart inhabiting me then, as if quite shaven. She could speak her affectionate mind as plain as print, and it was dull print facing me, not the arches of the sunset. Julia had only to lisp, 'my husband,' to startle and agitate me beyond expression. She said simple things—'I slept well last night,' or 'I dreamed,' or 'I shivered,' and plunged me headlong down impenetrable forests. The mould of her mouth to a reluctant 'No,' and her almost invariable drawing in of her breath with a 'Yes,' surcharged the everyday monosyllables with meanings of life and death. At last I was reduced to tell her, seeing that she reproached my coldness for Janet, how much I wished Janet

resembled her. Her Irish eyes lightened: 'Me! Harry'; then they shadowed: 'She is worth ten of me.' Such pathetic humility tempted me to exalt her supremely.

I talked like a boy, feeling like a man: she behaved like a woman, blushing like a girl.

'Julia! I can never call you Mrs. Bulsted.'

'You have an affection for my husband, have you not, Harry?'

Of a season when this was adorable language to me, the indication is sufficient. Riding out perfectly crazed by it, I met Kiomi, and transferred my emotions. The squire had paid her people an annual sum to keep away from our neighbourhood, while there was a chance of my taking to gipsy life. They had come back to their old camping-ground, rather dissatisfied with the squire.

'Speak to him yourself, Kiomi,' said I; 'whatever you ask for, he can't refuse anything to such eyes as yours.'

'You!' she rallied me; 'why can't you talk sensible stuff!'

She had grown a superb savage, proof against weather and compliments. Her face was like an Egyptian sky fronting night. The strong old Eastern blood put ruddy flame for the red colour; tawny olive edged from the red; rare vivid yellow, all but amber. The light that first looks down upon the fallen sun was her complexion above the brows, and round the cheeks, the neck's nape, the throat, and the firm bosom prompt to lift and sink with her vigour of speech, as her eyes were to flash and darken. Meeting her you swore she was the personification of wandering Asia. There was no question of beauty and grace, for these have laws. The curve of her brows broke like a beaten wave; the lips and nostrils were wide, tragic in repose. But when she laughed she illuminated you; where she stepped she made the earth hers. She was as fresh of her East as the morning when her ancient people struck tents in the track of their shadows. I write of her in the style consonant to my ideas of her at the time. I would have carried her off on the impulse and lived her life, merely to have had such a picture moving in my sight, and call it mine.

'You're not married?' I said, ludicrously faintly.

'I 've not seen the man I'd marry,' she answered, grinning scorn.

The prizefighter had adopted drinking for his pursuit; one of her aunts was dead, and she was in quest of money to bury the dead woman with the conventional ceremonies and shows of respect dear to the hearts of gipsies, whose sense of propriety and adherence to customs are a sentiment indulged by them to a degree unknown to the stabled classes. In fact, they have no other which does not come under the definite title of pride;—pride in their physical prowess, their dexterity, ingenuity, and tricksiness, and their purity of blood. Kiomi confessed she had hoped to meet me; confessed next that she had been waiting to jump out on me: and next that she had sat in a tree watching the Grange yesterday for six hours; and all for money to do honour to her dead relative, poor little soul! Heriot and I joined the decent procession to the grave. Her people had some quarrel with the Durstan villagers, and she feared the scandal of being pelted on the way to the church. I knew that nothing of the sort would happen if I was present. Kiomi walked humbly with her head bent, leaving me the thick rippling coarse black locks of her hair for a mark of observation. We were entertained at her camp in the afternoon. I saw no sign of intelligence between her and Heriot. On my asking her, the day before, if she remembered him, she said, 'I do, I'm dangerous for that young man.' Heriot's comment on her was impressed on me by his choosing to call her 'a fine doe leopard,' and maintaining that it was a defensible phrase.

She was swept from my amorous mind by Mabel Sweetwinter, the miller's daughter of Dipwell. This was a Saxon beauty in full bud, yellow as mid- May, with the eyes of opening June. Beauty, you will say, is easily painted in that style. But the sort of beauty suits the style, and the well-worn comparisons express the well-known type. Beside Kiomi she was like a rich meadow on the border of the heaths.

We saw them together on my twenty-first birthday. To my shame I awoke in the early morning at Riversley, forgetful of my father's old appointment for the great Dipwell feast. Not long after

sunrise, when blackbirds peck the lawns, and swallows are out from under eaves to the flood's face, I was hailed by Janet Ilchester beneath my open windows. I knew she had a bet with the squire that she would be the first to hail me legal man, and was prepared for it. She sat on horseback alone in the hazy dewy Midsummer morning, giving clear note:

'Whoop! Harry Richmond! halloo!' To which I tossed her a fox's brush, having a jewelled bracelet pendant. She missed it and let it lie, and laughed.

'No, no; it's foxie himself!—anybody may have the brush. You're dressed, are you, Harry? You were sure I should come? A thousand happy years to you, and me to see them, if you don't mind. I'm first to wish it, I'm certain. I was awake at three, out at halfpast, over Durstan heath, across Eckerthy's fields—we'll pay the old man for damage—down by the plantation, Bran and Sailor at my heels, and here I am. Crow, cocks! bark, dogs! up, larks! I said I'd be first. And now I'm round to stables to stir up Uberly. Don't be tardy, Mr. Harry, and we'll be Commodore Arson and his crew before the world's awake.'

We rode out for a couple of hours, and had to knock at a farmhouse for milk and bread. Possibly a sense of independence, owing to the snatching of a meal in midflight away from home, made Janet exclaim that she would gladly be out all day. Such freaks were exceedingly to my taste. Then I remembered Dipwell, and sure that my father would be there, though he had not written of it, I proposed to ride over. She pleaded for the horses and the squire alternately. Feasting was arranged at Riversley, as well as at Dipwell, and she said musically,

'Harry, the squire is a very old man, and you may not have many more chances of pleasing him. To-day do, do! To-morrow, ride to your father, if you must: of course you must if you think it right; but don't go this day.'

'Not upset my fortune, Janet?'

'Don't hurt the kind old man's heart to-day.'

'Oh! you're the girl of his heart, I know.'

'Well, Harry, you have first place, and I want you to keep it.'

'But here's an oath I've sworn to my father.'

'He should not have exacted it, I think.'

'I promised him when I was a youngster.'

'Then be wiser now, Harry.'

'You have brilliant ideas of the sacredness of engagements.'

'I think I have common sense, that's all.'

'This is a matter of feeling.'

'It seems that you forgot it, though!'

Kiomi's tents on Durstan heath rose into view. I controlled my verbal retort upon Janet to lead her up to the gipsy girl, for whom she had an odd aversion, dating from childhood. Kiomi undertook to ride to Dipwell, a distance of thirty miles, and carry the message that I would be there by nightfall. Tears were on Janet's resolute face as we cantered home.

After breakfast the squire introduced me to his lawyer, Mr. Burgin, who, closeted alone with me, said formally,

'Mr. Harry Richmond, you are Squire Beltham's grandson, his sole male descendant, and you are established at present, and as far as we can apprehend for the future, as the direct heir to the whole of his property, which is enormous now, and likely to increase so long as he lives. You may not be aware that your grandfather has a most sagacious eye for business. Had he not been born a rich man he would still have been one of our very greatest millionaires. He has rarely invested but to double his capital; never speculated but to succeed. He may not understand men quite so well, but then he trusts none entirely; so if there is a chasm in his intelligence, there is a bridge thrown across it. The metaphor is obscure perhaps: you will doubtless see my meaning. He knows how to go on his road without being cheated. For himself, your grandfather, Mr. Harry, is the soul of honour. Now, I have

to explain certain family matters. The squire's wife, your maternal grandmother, was a rich heiress. Part of her money was settled on her to descend to her children by reversion upon her death. What she herself possessed she bequeathed to them in reversion likewise to their children. Thus at your maternal grandmother's death, your mother and your aunt inherited money to use as their own, and the interest of money tied fast in reversion to their children (in case of marriage) after their death. Your grandfather, as your natural guardian, has left the annual interest of your money to accumulate, and now you are of age he hands it to you, as you see, without much delay. Thus you become this day the possessor of seventy thousand pounds, respecting the disposal of which I am here to take your orders. Ahem!—as to the remaining property of your mother's— the sum held by her for her own use, I mean, it devolved to her husband, your father, who, it is probable, will furnish you an account of it—ah! —at his leisure—ah! um! And now, in addition, Mr. Harry, I have the squire's commands to speak to you as a man of business, on what may be deemed a delicate subject, though from the business point of view no peculiar delicacy should pertain to it. Your grandfather will settle on you estates and money to the value of twenty thousand pounds per annum on the day of your union with a young lady in this district, Miss Janet Ilchester. He undertakes likewise to provide her pin-money. Also, let me observe, that it is his request—but he makes no stipulation of it that you will ultimately assume the name of Beltham, subscribing yourself Harry Lepel Richmond Beltham; or, if it pleases you, Richmond-Beltham, with the junction hyphen. Needless to say, he leaves it to your decision. And now, Mr. Harry, I have done, and may most cordially congratulate you on the blessings it has pleased a kind and discerning Providence to shower on your head.'

None so grimly ironical as the obsequious! I thought of Burgin's 'discerning' providence (he spoke with all professional sincerity) in after days.

On the occasion I thought of nothing but the squire's straight-forwardness, and grieved to have to wound him. Janet helped me. She hinted with a bashfulness, quite new to her, that I must go through some ceremony. Guessing what it was, I saluted her on the cheek. The squire observed that a kiss of that sort might as well have been planted on her back hair. 'But,' said he, and wisely, 'I'd rather have the girl worth ten of you, than you be more than her match. Girls like my girl here are precious.' Owing to her intercession, he winked at my departure after I had done duty among the tenants; he barely betrayed his vexation, and it must have been excessive.

Heriot and I rode over to Dipwell. Next night we rode back by moonlight with matter for a year of laughter, singing like two Arabian poets praises of dark and fair, challenging one to rival the other. Kiomi! Mabel! we shouted separately. We had just seen the dregs of the last of the birthday Burgundy.

'Kiomi! what a splendid panther she is!' cries Heriot; and I: 'Teeth and claws, and a skin like a burnt patch on a common! Mabel's like a wonderful sunflower.'

'Butter and eggs! old Richie, and about as much fire as a rushlight. If the race were Fat she 'd beat the world.'

'Heriot, I give you my word of honour, the very look of her 's eternal Summer. Kiomi rings thin—she tinkles; it 's the difference between metal and flesh.'

'Did she tinkle, as you call it, when that fellow Destrier, confound him! touched her?'

'The little cat! Did you notice Mabel's blush?'

'How could I help it? We've all had a dozen apiece. You saw little Kiomi curled up under the hop and briony?'

'I took her for a dead jackdaw.'

'I took her for what she is, and she may slap, scream, tear, and bite, I'll take her yet-and all her tribe crying thief, by way of a diversion. She and I are footed a pair.'

His impetuosity surpassed mine so much that I fell to brooding on the superior image of my charmer. The result was, I could not keep away from her. I managed to get home with leaden limbs. Next day I was back at Dipwell.

Such guilt as I have to answer for I may avow. I made violent love to this silly country beauty, and held every advantage over her other flatterers. She had met me on the evening of the great twenty-first, she and a line of damsels dressed in white and wearing wreaths, and I had claimed the privilege of saluting her. The chief superintendent of the festivities, my father's old cook, Monsieur Alphonse, turned twilight into noonday with a sheaf of rockets at the moment my lips brushed her cheek. It was a kiss marred; I claimed to amend it. Besides, we had been bosom friends in childhood. My wonder at the growth of the rose I had left but an insignificant thorny shoot was exquisite natural flattery, sweet reason, to which she could not say nonsense. At each step we trod on souvenirs, innocent in themselves, had they recurred to childish minds. The whisper, 'Hark! it's sunset, Mabel, Martha Thresher calls,' clouded her face with stormy sunset colours. I respected Martha even then for boldly speaking to me on the girl's behalf. Mrs. Waddy's courage failed. John Thresher and Mark Sweetwinter were overcome by my father's princely prodigality; their heads were turned, they appeared to have assumed that I could do no wrong. To cut short the episode, some one wrote to the squire in uncouth English, telling him I was courting a country lass, and he at once started me for the Continent. We had some conversation on money before parting. The squire allowed me a thousand a year, independent of my own income. He counselled prudence, warned me that I was on my trial, and giving me his word of honour that he should not spy into my Bank accounts, desired me to be worthy of the trust reposed in me. Speculation he forbade. I left him satisfied with the assurance that I meant to make my grand tour neither as a merchant, a gambler, nor a rake, but simply as a plain English gentleman.

'There's nothing better in the world than that,' said he.

Arrived in London, I left my travelling companion, the Rev. Ambrose Peterborough, sipping his Port at the hotel, and rushed down to Dipwell, shot a pebble at Mabel's window by morning twilight, and soon had her face at the casement. But it was a cloudy and rainbeaten face. She pointed toward the farm, saying that my father was there.

'Has he grieved you, Mabel?' I asked softly.

'Oh, no, not he! he wouldn't, he couldn't; he talked right. Oh, go, go: for I haven't a foot to move. And don't speak so soft; I can't bear kindness.'

My father in admonishing her had done it tenderly, I was sure. Tenderness was the weapon which had wounded her, and so she shrank from it; and if I had reproached and abused her she might, perhaps, have obeyed me by coming out, not to return. She was deaf. I kissed my hand to her regretfully; a condition of spirit gradually dissolved by the haunting phantom of her forehead and mouth crumpling up for fresh floods of tears. Had she concealed that vision with her handkerchief, I might have waited to see her before I saw my father. He soon changed the set of the current.

'Our little Mabel here,' he said, 'is an inflammable puss, I fear. By the way, talking of girls, I have a surprise for you. Remind me of it when we touch Ostend. We may want a yacht there to entertain high company. I have set inquiries afloat for the hire of a schooner. This child Mabel can read and write, I suppose? Best write no letters, boy. Do not make old Dipwell a thorny bed. I have a portrait to show you, Richie. A portrait! I think you will say the original was worthy of more than to be taken up and thrown away like a weed. You see, Richie, girls have only one chance in the world, and good God! to ruin that—no, no. You shall see this portrait. A pretty little cow-like Mabel, I grant you. But to have her on the conscience! What a coronet to wear! My young Lord Destrier—you will remember him as one of our guests here; I brought him to make your acquaintance; well, he would not be scrupulous, it is possible. Ay, but compare yourself with him, Richie! and you and I, let us love one another and have no nettles.'

He flourished me away to London, into new spheres of fancy. He was irresistible.

In a London Club I was led up to the miniature of a youthful woman, singular for her endearing beauty Her cheeks were merry red, her lips lively with the spark of laughter, her eyes in good union with them, showing you the laughter was gentle; eyes of overflowing blue light.

'Who is she?' I asked.

The old-fashioned building of the powdered hair counselled me to add,

'Who was she?'

Captain DeWitt, though a member of the Club, seemed unable to inform me.

His glance consulted my father. He hummed and drawled, and said:

'Mistress Anastasia Dewsbury; that was her name.'

'She does not look a grandmother,' said my father.

'She would be one by this time, I dare say,' said I.

We gazed in silence.

'Yes!' he sighed. 'She was a charming actress, and one of the best of women. A noble-minded young woman! A woman of cultivation and genius! Do you see a broken heart in that face? No? Very well. A walk will take us to her grave. She died early.'

I was breathing 'Who?' when he said, 'She was my mother, my dear.'

It was piteous.

We walked to an old worn flat stone in a London street, where under I had to imagine those features of beautiful humanity lying shut from us.

She had suffered in life miserably.

CHAPTER XXIV

I MEET THE PRINCESS

Hearing that I had not slept at the hotel, the Rev. Ambrose rushed down to Riversley with melancholy ejaculations, and was made to rebound by the squire's contemptuous recommendation to him to learn to know something of the spirit of young bloods, seeing that he had the nominal charge of one, and to preach his sermon in secret, if he would be sermonizing out of church. The good gentleman had not exactly understood his duties, or how to conduct them. Far from objecting to find me in company with my father, as he would otherwise have done by transmitting information of that fact to Riversley, he now congratulated himself on it, and after the two had conversed apart, cordially agreed to our scheme of travelling together. The squire had sickened him. I believe that by comparison he saw in my father a better friend of youth.

'We shall not be the worse for a ghostly adviser at hand,' my father said to me with his quaintest air of gravity and humour mixed, which was not insincerely grave, for the humour was unconscious. 'An accredited casuist may frequently be a treasure. And I avow it, I like to travel with my private chaplain.'

Mr. Peterborough's temporary absence had allowed me time for getting ample funds placed at our disposal through the agency of my father's solicitors, Messrs. Dettermain and Newson, whom I already knew from certain transactions with them on his behalf. They were profoundly courteous to me, and showed me his box, and alluded to his Case—a long one, and a lamentable, I was taught to apprehend, by their lugubriously professional tone about it. The question was naturally prompted in me, 'Why do you not go on with it?'

'Want of funds.'

'There's no necessity to name that now,' I insisted. But my father desired them to postpone any further exposition of the case, saying, 'Pleasure first, business by-and-by. That, I take it, is in the order of our great mother Nature, gentlemen. I will not have him help shoulder his father's pack until he has had his, fill of entertainment.'

A smooth voyage brought us in view of the towers of Ostend at sunrise. Standing with my father on deck, and gazing on this fringe of the grand romantic Continent, I remembered our old travels, and felt myself bound to him indissolubly, ashamed of my recent critical probings of his character. My boy's love for him returned in full force. I was sufficiently cognizant of his history to know that he kept his head erect, lighted by the fire of his robust heart in the thick of overhanging natal clouds. As the way is with men when they are too happy to be sentimental, I chattered of anything but my feelings.

'What a capital idea that was of yours to bring down old Alphonse to Dipwell! You should have heard old John Thresher and Mark Sweetwinter and the others grumbling at the interference of "French frogs;" with their beef, though Alphonse vowed he only ordered the ox to be turned faster, and he dressed their potatoes in six different ways. I doubt if Dipwell has composed itself yet. You know I sat for president in their tent while the beef went its first round; and Alphonse was in an awful hurry to drag me into what he called the royal tent. By the way, you should have hauled the standard down at sunset.'

'Not when the son had not come down among us,' said my father, smiling.

'Well, I forgot to tell you about Alphonse. By the way, we'll have him in our service. There was he plucking at me: "Monsieur Henri-Richie, Monsieur Henri-Richie! mille compliments . . . et les potages, Monsieur! —a la Camerani, a la tortue, aux petits pois . . . c'est en vrai artiste que j'ai su tout retarder jusqu'au dernier moment . . . Monsieur! cher Monsieur Henri-Richie, je vous en supplie, laissez-la, ces planteurs de choux." And John Thresher, as spokesman for the rest: "Master Harry, we beg to say, in my name, we can't masticate comfortably while we've got a notion Mr. Frenchman

he 's present here to play his Frenchified tricks with our plain wholesome dishes. Our opinion is, he don't know beef from hedgehog; and let him trim 'em, and egg 'em,' and bread-crumb 'em, and pound the mess all his might, and then tak' and roll 'em into balls, we say we wun't, for we can't make English muscle out o' that."—And Alphonse, quite indifferent to the vulgar: "He! mais pensez donc au Papa, Monsieur Henri-Richie, sans doute il a une sante de fer: mais encore faut-il lui menager le suc gastrique, pancreatique"

'Ay, ay!' laughed my father; 'what sets you thinking of Alphonse?'

'I suppose because I shall have to be speaking French in an hour.'

'German, Richie, German.'

'But these Belgians speak French.'

'Such French as it is. You will, however, be engaged in a German conversation first, I suspect.'

'Very well, I'll stumble on. I don't much like it.'

'In six hours from this second of time, Richie, boy, I undertake to warrant you fonder of the German tongue than of any other spoken language.'

I looked at him. He gave me a broad pleasant smile, without sign of a jest lurking in one corner.

The scene attracted me. Laughing fishwife faces radiant with sea-bloom in among the weedy pier-piles, and sombre blue-cheeked officers of the douane, with their double row of buttons extending the breadth of their shoulders. My father won Mr. Peterborough's approval by declaring cigars which he might easily have passed.

'And now, sir,'—he used the commanding unction of a lady's doctor,—'you to bed, and a short repose. We will, if it pleases you, breakfast at eight. I have a surprise for Mr. Richie. We are about to beat the drum in the market-place, and sing out for echoes.'

'Indeed, sir?' said the simple man.

'I promise you we shall not disturb you, Mr. Peterborough. You have reached that middle age, have you not, when sleep is, so to put it, your capital? And your activity is the interest you draw from it to live on. You have three good hours. So, then, till we meet at the breakfast- table.'

My father's first proceeding at the hotel was to examine the list of visitors. He questioned one of the waiters aside, took information from him, and seized my arm rather tremulously, saying,

'They are here. 'Tis as I expected. And she is taking the morning breath of sea-air on the dunes. Come, Richie, come.'

'Who's the "she"?' I asked incuriously.

'Well, she is young, she is of high birth, she is charming. We have a crowned head or two here. I observe in you, Richie, an extraordinary deficiency of memory. She has had an illness; Neptune speed her recovery! Now for a turn at our German. Die Strassen ruhen; die Stadt schlaft; aber dort, siehst Du, dort liegt das blaue Meer, das nimmer- schlafende! She is gazing on it, and breathing it, Richie. Ach! ihr jauchzende Seejungfern. On my soul, I expect to see the very loveliest of her sex!

You must not be dismayed at pale cheeks- blasse Wangen. Her illness has been alarming. Why, this air is the top of life; it will, and it shall, revive her. How will she address him?—"Freund," in my presence, perchance: she has her invalid's privilege. "Theure Prinzessin" you might venture on. No ice! Ay, there she is!

Solitary, on the long level of the sand-bank, I perceived a group that became discernible as three persons attached to an invalid's chair, moving leisurely toward us. I was in the state of mind between divination and doubt when the riddle is not impossible to read, would but the heart cease its hurry an instant; a tumbled sky where the break is coming. It came. The dear old days of my wanderings with Temple framed her face. I knew her without need of pause or retrospect. The crocus raising its cup pointed as when it pierced the earth, and the crocus stretched out on earth, wounded by frost, is the same flower. The face was the same, though the features were changed. Unaltered in expression, but wan, and the kind blue eyes large upon lean brows, her aspect was that of one who had been half caught away and still shook faintly in the relaxing invisible grasp.

We stopped at a distance of half-a-dozen paces to allow her time for recollection. She eyed us softly in a fixed manner, while the sea-wind blew her thick redbrown hair to threads on her cheek. Colour on the fair skin told us we were recognized.

'Princess Ottilia!' said my father.

'It is I, my friend,' she answered. 'And you?'

'With more health than I am in need of, dearest princess.'

'And he?'

'Harry Richmond! my son, now of age, commencing his tour; and he has not forgotten the farewell bunch of violets.'

Her eyelids gently lifted, asking me.

'Nor the mount you did me the honour to give me on the little Hungarian,' said I.

'How nice this sea-air is!' she spoke in English. 'England and sea go together in my thoughts. And you are here! I have been down very low, near the lowest. But your good old sea makes me breathe again. I want to toss on it. Have you yet seen the Markgräfin?'

My father explained that we had just landed from the boat.

'Is our meeting, then, an accident?'

'Dear princess, I heard of your being out by the shore.'

'Ah! kind: and you walked to meet me? I love that as well, though I love chance. And it is chance that brings you here! I looked out on the boat from England while they were dressing me: I cannot have too much of the morning, for then I have all to myself: sea and sky and I. The night people are all asleep, and you come like an old Marchen.'

Her eyelids dropped without closing.

'Speak no more to her just at present,' said an English voice, Miss Silbey's. Schwartz, the huge dragoon, whose big black horse hung near him in my memory like a phantom, pulled the chair at a quiet pace, head downward. A young girl clad in plain black walked beside Miss Sibley, following the wheels.

'Danger is over,' Miss Sibley answered my gaze. 'She is convalescent.'

You see how weak she is.'

I praised the lady for what I deemed her great merit in not having quitted the service of the princess.

'Oh!' said she, 'my adieux to Sarkeld were uttered years ago. But when I heard of her fall from the horse I went and nursed her. We were once in dread of her leaving us. She sank as if she had taken some internal injury. It may have been only the shock to her system and the cessation of her accustomed exercise. She has a little over-studied.'

'The margravine?'

'The margravine is really very good and affectionate, and has won my esteem. So you and your father are united at last? We have often talked of you. Oh! that day up by the tower. But, do you know, the statue is positively there now, and no one—no one who had the privilege of beholding the first bronze Albrecht Wohlgemuth, Fürst von Eppenwelzen- Sarkeld, no one will admit that the second is half worthy of him. I can feel to this day the leap of the heart in my mouth when the statue dismounted. The prince sulked for a month: the margravine still longer at your father's evasion. She could not make allowance for the impulsive man: such a father; such a son!'

'Thank you, thank you most humbly,' said I, bowing to her shadow of a mock curtsy.

The princess's hand appeared at a side of the chair. We hastened to her.

'Let me laugh, too,' she prayed.

Miss Sibley was about to reply, but stared, and delight sprang to her lips in a quick cry.

'What medicine is this? Why, the light of morning has come to you, my darling!'

'I am better, dearest, better.'

'You sigh, my own.'

'No; I breathe lots, lots of salt air now, and lift like a boat. Ask him—he had a little friend, much shorter than himself, who came the whole way with him out of true friendship—ask him where is the friend?'

Miss Sibley turned her head to me.

'Temple,' said I; 'Temple is a midshipman; he is at sea.'

'That is something to think of,' the princess murmured, and dropped her eyelids a moment. She resumed 'The Grand Seigneur was at Vienna last year, and would not come to Sarkeld, though he knew I was ill.'

My father stooped low.

'The Grand Seigneur, your servant, dear princess, was an Ottoman Turk, and his Grand Vizier advised him to send flowers in his place weekly.'

'I had them, and when we could get those flowers nowhere else,' she replied. 'So it was you! So my friends have been about me.'

During the remainder of the walk I was on one side of the chair, and her little maid on the other, while my father to rearward conversed with Miss Sibley. The princess took a pleasure in telling me that this Aennchen of hers knew me well, and had known me before ever her mistress had seen me. Aennchen was the eldest of the two children Temple and I had eaten breakfast with in the forester's hut. I felt myself as if in the forest again, merely wondering at the growth of the trees, and the narrowness of my vision in those days.

At parting, the princess said,

'Is my English improved? You smiled at it once. I will ask you when I meet you next.'

'It is my question,' I whispered to my own ears.

She caught the words.

'Why do you say—" It is my question"?''

I was constrained to remind her of her old forms of English speech.

'You remember that? Adieu,' she said.

My father considerably left me to carry on my promenade alone. I crossed the ground she had traversed, noting every feature surrounding it, the curving wheel-track, the thin prickly sand-herbage, the wave- mounds, the sparse wet shells and pebbles, the gleaming flatness of the water, and the vast horizon-boundary of pale flat land level with shore, looking like a dead sister of the sea. By a careful examination of my watch and the sun's altitude, I was able to calculate what would, in all likelihood, have been his height above yonder waves when her chair was turned toward the city, at a point I reached in the track. But of the matter then simultaneously occupying my mind, to recover which was the second supreme task I proposed to myself-of what. I also was thinking upon the stroke of five o'clock, I could recollect nothing. I could not even recollect whether I happened to be looking on sun and waves when she must have had them full and glorious in her face.

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