

"Yes," Esther said gently. Something in her tone made her old friend turn and glance anxiously at her.

"My lassie," he said, for so he loved to call her, "I should like to see you take a little more pleasure than you get. He spoke almost wistfully, but Esther answered hastily "Not yet; oh! not yet, Mr. Hilyard."

"Call me—don't call me that child," Mark said, as if she had hurt him. "Call me that other name I never thought to hear."

"My Daddy!" Esther said, slipping her hand through his arm in her child-like way and with her own sweet smile.

"But, my child, it is not natural or right that you should mourn so long. Your grandmother would not have wished it." Esther did not answer, the words made her heart ache again, and then, too, she felt that there was something else that threw this sadness over her young life, something she could not speak of. So she sat silent and in silence they reached the cottage that was their home.

"Is your mistress up?" Mark inquired of the servant as they entered the library.

"Miss Hilyard went up stairs with a bad headache, sir," was the answer.

Esther went to the table and handed her guardian, as he liked to call himself, the evening papers, then stood by to watch him search his pockets for the eyeglasses that had probably been left at the Hartley's. A letter fell from one and she stooped to pick it up. Mark looked up in dismay for, with a cry, she caught it to her bosom.

"Jack! Jack! oh! where did it come from? Whose is it? No, let me keep it. Oh! my dear, my dear!" She covered it with kisses, all her delicate face aglow with tenderness. "I may read it?" her face was beaming with happiness.

It was a message from her beloved. She thought of nothing else. For a moment it seemed like a sight of him—her fair, boyish lover who had gone away, whom she had driven from her.

"Oh say I may read it."

"My dear!" old Mark said in silent distress, "it will only pain you. It gives no clue."

"It must. It was written by him by his own hand." Again she kissed the letter with a feeling that thus she might begin to make amends for that cruel parting. Then she began to come back to earth again, yet with a hand trembling with nervous eagerness she opened it. It was brief and business-like, and every word cut her like a knife. It seemed addressed to her and the formal sentences hurt as if her name had been at the beginning.

To Henry Hartley, Esq., Althorpe.

Sir,—Herewith I return you an article of some value that I have reason to believe belongs to you. It was in the possession of a man James Caton, once a coachman in your service. Before his death he requested me to return it to you. The man died of small-pox and when I was called in recognized me and made this request which I have fulfilled. It is probable you may not believe this story. Few I suppose would. I, at least, have little reason to think it will be accepted as the truth. In that case, however, I shall be no worse off than before,

Yours truly,

J. V. DUFF.

P. S.—The watch has been well disinfected.

Mark Hilyard watched the blood slowly leave Essie's face as she read and re-read this curt epistle. It was dated Winnipeg, Manitoba, and was some three weeks old. Only three weeks ago and his dear hand had held this paper and written these words. Then it dropped from her hand and on her knees with her face hidden against that kind, rough coat Essie burst into an agony of tears. She knew, none better, the meaning of those bitter words. He had little reason, ay! little enough, to think that any one would believe in him now.

"My dear!" old Mark said, as half-calmed she stood ready to go up to her room. "We have tried everything and failed. We'll try again, and if Mark Hilyard can do it, it shall be done. The boy shan't go round with that weight of suspicion a moment longer than we can help. You know it was for his sake I first looked you up. But you need not be jealous, lassie." He pinched her cheek, white enough now, then took one of her hands in his and gently caressed it, but Essie pulled it away and put her two arms round his neck.

"My father!" that was all she said, but nothing could have pleased Mark Hilyard like it.

At the Hartley's they were looking with something very like dislike and suspicion at the Lieutenant's watch. "It has done a good deal of harm in its time," Hartley said.

"Harry, I don't like it," Mrs. Hartley said timidly; "I wish we could get rid of it."

"Why it is just when we do get rid of it that it gives so much trouble. But certainly I do think it ought to help to repair the trouble it has wrought."

"I can never get over the feeling that we have perhaps ruined that boy's life and Esther's happiness."

"The boy ought to be able to weather a breath of suspicion," Hartley said testily. "As for the girl, she seems happy."

"She is not Harry," his wife said quietly. "I fancy she had a hand in his departure, though she has never said so. But she gets quieter and more enduring every day. I don't wonder Mr. Hilyard is as fond of her as he is." "But it was very odd his turning up at the old lady's last moment and promising to look after the girl."

"Yes, but he had known them for a long time and he always felt a liking for Jack Duff and a feeling that he must make amends as far as in him lay for that unluckiest of accidents."

"It was indeed, unlucky," Mr. Hartley said, with a tone of something more than regret in his bluff voice.

ELLEN M. BOULTON.

Shellmouth, Manitoba.

(To be continued.)

Whistling in the streets of Berlin is an offence punishable by a fine.

The truths a man carries about with him are his tools.—O. W. Holmes.

Great regret is felt in Sweden at the death of Marie Sophie Schwarz, one of the most popular writers in a country in which popularity is not easily gained. She was 75 years old. Mme. Schwarz was an enemy of all class distinctions, and one of her most successful novels bears the title, "The Man of Birth and the Woman of the People."

CANADA FROM AN ARTIST'S POINT OF VIEW—IV.

Our last paper finished with a short description of some of the suburbs of Toronto and an attempt to draw attention to the great charm of their picturesqueness and the odd contrast of their rurality so close to the busy life of the city and the thickly populated streets where the workers of the busy hive are crowded together.

Thanks, however, to the much-abused trolley cars, the workers are availing themselves of the cheap transit system to make their abodes in the outskirts, and now that the absurd artificial land boom has burst and values have descended into the realm of the possible, as soon as business re-establishes itself on as secure a footing as our erratic system of civilization permits, no doubt many little cottages will be erected in these pleasant places and the longer evenings now at the disposal of mechanics and factory hands will lend themselves to the planting of cabbages and the hoeing up of potato hills in an atmosphere unpolluted by smoke and noisome effluvia.

It seems strange, by the way, that the artist of our day has not appreciated the good subject matter provided by these same cottages and gardens. Very picturesque are some of these little homes with the latticed porch covered by wild clematis, flanked by lilac bushes, and brightly painted pots of flowers, while the favorite petunia bed makes a constant show of blossom, and here and there a drooping elm or a dark shady pine crowns the whole composition. Nor is the human figure wanting to give life to the scene when, as sometimes happens, the whole family are engaged in planting, watering, weeding and tidying up under the supervision of a hard working man in shirt sleeves and straw hat.

But before we leave Toronto and its picturesque surroundings it seems to come within the scope of these papers to take some notice of the possibilities of the Canadian artist's career in respect not only to subject matter for pictures, but also regarding the status and prospects of art in this metropolis of progressive Ontario, where, in spite of occasional set backs and dull seasons caused by over eagerness to get rich by land speculation, there is substantial evidence of progress in the fine residences and handsome grounds, which in one part or another are perpetually being erected and which provide, or should provide, if the inner life is to be in keeping with the outer show, resting places for very many works of art.

On the whole, perhaps, it may be said, that as much substantial encouragement on the part of those who make their homes and fortunes here is to be found as could well be expected.

True, the prices given for works of art as compared with those paid by wealthier communities are low, but taking all things into account and considering the amount of the products of the numerous artists, art students and amateurs, thrown annually upon the market, chiefly too by means of that worst of all methods of picture selling, the public auction, in view, moreover, of the quality of much of this art product, it cannot be fairly said that the public are unappreciative or backward in purchasing art of one kind and another, although it is, of course, true that very many of the finer houses depend for interior decoration, if any, upon other means than that of original oil and water-color paintings.