

THE TRIUMPHS OF DUTY.

CHAPTER XXII.
SOME HAPPY DAYS.

"Let us all go back to one house," cried the Duke of Peterworth. "Let us all dine together, and talk it well over. Where shall it be?"

"Oh! at Lord Charleton's, decidedly," observed the Marquis of Seaham. "He must wish to see Lord Stanmore; and we deserve to be present at the meeting."

"Very true, my dear faithful friends," said Lord Charleton. "Let us have the enjoyment of an unconstrained dinner of us four only: giving God thanks, and then, as the duke says, talking it all well over."

As Lord Charleton turned from the heated room to his carriage, he perceived Sir Bentley Burder waiting for him, whom he took warmly by the hand.

"Your time, Sir Bentley, is more precious than mine: fix your own day to meet Lord Stanmore at dinner in Carlton Gardens."

"I think, my lord, I can name Sunday."

"Be it so, then. Shall it be seven or eight?"

"Either, my lord, will be equally convenient. I feel much gratified."

"It is I, Sir Bentley, who am the man deeply obliged."

So all the carriages rolled away; three of them, however, keeping in the same direction, and depositing their several lords in the entry of Lord Charleton's house, in Carlton Gardens.

"Is Lord Stanmore within?" was the first inquiry.

"Yes, my lord; came in about half an hour since; is in your lordship's own study below."

The three friends entered together, and Lord Stanmore, who had risen from his chair, stood silently awaiting the announcement that he was henceforth nobody, according to the laws of the country, and dependent solely on the faithful love of Lord Charleton.

"My dearest boy," said the earl, "what do you expect?"

"The constancy of your parental affection," returned he calmly, but very gravely, "and the friendship of the duke and marquis."

"And all you ever had or expected besides, Arthur," said Lord Charleton, placing a hand on each shoulder of our hero. "The arbitration is favorable—or rather has been anticipated, and rendered unnecessary, by the preponderating weight of evidence on our side, that you, and no other, are the true Arthur Philip Dieudonne Bryce Woolton, Viscount Stanmore, and future Earl of Charleton."

"Which last title may God long avert," said the duke, smiling, and shaking Lord Stanmore warmly by the hand.

The marquis could not speak: so great a rush of feeling—of tender feeling—overcame him, that, detaching Arthur's hand within his, he seated himself by the table, on which he leaned, while Lord Charleton and the duke related the most important parts of the day's proceedings. The next half hour found the little party dispersed in the various dressing-rooms, attended by valets with all the luxuries of a renewed toilet. The marquis had sealed with an envelope the precious ring that had lain in the obscurity of his waistcoat-pocket so many days, and directing it to the Lady Violet Chamberlayne, sent it by one of his own footmen, whom he had detained beneath the address he wrote "Laudate Dominum." Having thus tenderly cared for the feelings of his young daughter, the marquis stretched himself on a chaise longue, until the summons to dinner; but, instead of falling asleep, refreshed his mind by an investigation of that of his temporary valet, Monsieur Julien, who had re-

spectfully attended to his lordship's toilet.

Julien had confided Mademoiselle Lucille Brontel to the care of long-known and respected friends, en route from Somerset House to Carlton Gardens, and had reached home in time to attend on his lord's guests. Finding that Mr. Temple had already shown the duke his room, Julien devoted himself to the marquis.

"Well, Julien," said Lord Seaham, "let me a little into your secrets. Having made this wonderful conversion of Mademoiselle Lucille, are you going to marry her?"

"Oh! no, my lord marquis," replied Julien, very gravely. "I wish her to become the foundress of a new Order of the Church—an order of penitents—of those who have offended by the tongue."

"Ha!" exclaimed the marquis; "a large community, Julien. No fear of want of members, but difficult to keep the peace."

"Not only difficult, my lord marquis, but impossible without good rules, and obedience to those rules."

"A great deal of silence, Julien?"

"Yes, my lord, a great deal of silence, but not total. The tongue is not to become a dead member, but a well-regulated and useful one, making reparation for the past."

"Why, Julien, you are a wonderful man. I am considering whether I ought to look for wings to your shoulders or a cloven foot."

"Neither, my lord marquis; there has never been anything wonderful in me. But a great many things have passed under my observation. I have been, from a boy, observing and thoughtful. God has led me particularly to remark and regret the sins committed by the tongue—sins confined to no class of society, pervading all ranks."

"But, Julien, is it not a pity to confine this reformation to a cloister. Can you not extend the reform over all classes by means of associations, confraternities, third orders?"

"Yes, my lord marquis; that is my wish, that is my hope. If your lordship were not so harassed with foreign business, I might be encouraged to submit the rules to you for your enlightened observations."

"Are they drawn up?"

"They are, my lord. Those for the convent, and those for the world. I can take the latter to St. James' square, when the London parliamentary season is over, and your lordship is starting for the country."

"Why, what a patient man you are, Monsieur Julien: like your good earl, with his thirty years at Marseilles. The parliament may not be released till August, and we are now only at the end of May."

"That is but a little interval, my lord, for me who have been wishing to have a reparation made to God since I was quite a lad. It seems to me, that when God wills a new service to be performed for Him, He throws in the path of him or her, who is to be the humble instrument, so many striking circumstances in that particular line of service, that, at length, the mind becomes quite ardent to have something effected; and, at length, in God's own good time, the moment comes for every detail to appear clear—the moment for action."

The dinner was then announced; the marquis wrote in his pocket-book—"Julien, valet to Lord C.—new Order—penitents—evil tongues—rules—confraternities—speak to the duchess of P.—August." In the leaf preceding had been written—"Murat—Naples—Warn the A. at B.—write the A. at V."

The marquis was passing through the door-way, when Julien, who had opened it for him, said:

"One moment, my lord; I must detain you to mention that I am not the originator, even on earth, of this

Order of the Holy Tongue. There is one who has felt called by God to institute it, but desires to remain hidden. This person drew up all the rules, and requested me to become the agent in London and Paris, just when I was travelling to bring proof of the evil tongues against Madame de Courtrai. I had, as I told you, my lord marquis, been inspired since my youth to desire such an association, and that was just the moment to fire my zeal. The coincidence was very remarkable; but you see I was not really the first institutor. The truth above all things, my lord, when it injures no one."

With still greater regard for Julien, Lord Seaham descended to the cheerful little dinner party; the conversation being, at first, kept up chiefly by himself and the duke; for Lord Charleton and his grandson seemed more disposed to listen to the tranquil sense of peace after the storm. A couple of hours had passed thus pleasantly, when the duties of the State were again thrust on Lord Seaham, by the arrival of his carriage, containing his most confidential secretary, Mr. Pemble. Lord Charleton offered his private study, which was accepted; but the conference did not end, as the marquis had hoped, in being left at liberty to accompany the duke to Stanhope street, and carry the good news to the dowager duchess. The two carriages rolled off, the one to Mayfair, the other to Downing street, while the two owners of the mansion entered their domestic chapel.

Nearly the whole of the following day was spent by Arthur with the family of the marquis in St. James' square, and principally with his faithful Violet. Oalm happy hours these, enhanced the details which Lord Claud had enabled the marquis to give of her immovable constancy. Lord Stanmore also saw Lady Clara, and gratefully acknowledged the precious letter that, as a relic, he still wore. Both aunt and niece found traces of the adversity that would fain have claimed him. Violet observed, with tearful emotion, that his spirit seemed subdued; but Clara, remembering the almost prophetic adjuration of Sir Henry Moreland, at Marsden Park, silently prayed that the good effects of the past trial might endure to the end.

On the 1st of June, the grandsire and his heir, remembered, as a duty to early friendship, a long-announced matinee-champetre in the grounds of a certain Mrs. Colville, whom Lord Charleton had known and esteemed during his long residence abroad. She had returned rich to England, a few years before the re-purchase of Woolton Court, and had bought a lovely place on the banks of the Thames, at Chelsea. Shy, proud, and diffident of her own power to inspire or retain the friendship of others, she had shunned making any claim to that of "Mr. Bryce, of Marseilles," suddenly made known to her by a mutual acquaintance as the Earl of Charleton. They met; however, accidentally in London; and so much real regard was evinced by his lordship in the mutual pleasure of meeting, that Mrs. Colville ventured to request the honor of his company at the "fete champetre, with pretty little Arthur, if the Easter holy-days were not over."

Lord Charleton promised for himself, and conditionally for "pretty Arthur," now six feet high. He now remained our hero of the day, and requested him as a favor to himself, not to accept any other engagement.

Dear England was kind enough to smile her best on that summer day, amid the walks and grottes, and rock-work, and waterfalls, and views of the river, and sudden turns and surprises, with aviaries and water-fowl, and garland arches, and a Welch harper, around whom amateur villagers danced most merrily. It was consistent with Mrs. Colville's timidity that she preferred to the regular breakfast tables

in the banquet style, refreshments awaiting her guests at every turn temptingly arranged, and offered by Damons and Delias of most approved Arcadian descent. After paying their respects in true cordiality to their hostess, Lord Charleton wandered here and there with the being he most loved on earth, in perfect enjoyment of his society and appreciation of the scene around them: Arthur appeared to be in a sympathetic mood.

"How delightful it is to know no one here!" exclaimed he. "I think I enjoy this festive scene more than anything presented to me as pleasure, since our arrival in London."

At length they stopped at a vista commanding the river, not far from which appeared a little empty bower.

"Let us enter there," said Lord Charleton; "the view must be the same as from this spot."

They turned to enter, but another and unperceived shady little walk led to the same unoccupied arbor, to which advanced, at the same moment, a middle-aged gentleman and a young lady, apparently his daughter. Both parties drew back, bowing politely; then each protested they were not fatigued, and begged not to prevent the others from entering, till at length the stranger addressed Lord Charleton by his title, who, looking more directly at the former, recognized Mr. Gerard Woolton, while Lord Stanmore, who had been watching the averted head of the young lady, now ventured to claim a fair cousin in his partner at Lady Whyne's ball. Lord Charleton, surprised and gratified at being thus sought by relations he had feared would continue estranged, if not antagonistic, gave both father and daughter an affectionate and joyful greeting.

"There is really not sufficient room for four persons," at length observed Hortense to Arthur; "we are too young to be tired. Let us walk to the cascade, and hear the band. They have finished their monotonous repetitions for the dances, and are now commencing strains worth hearing."

With a graceful farewell to Lord Charleton, the beautiful girl led the way, and our hero followed, leaving the plaintiff and defendant of an anxious cause in the bonds, apparently of a fast cementing friendship.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERY EQUIVOCAL PROOFS OF FRIENDSHIP.

The youthful people proceeded, arm in arm, to the spot where the instruments of harmony invited them; our hero feeling and professing that the charge of so newly-found and lovely a cousin, would make any cascade, and any music, seem perfect to his senses. The agreeable lassitude he had felt after the mental tension of the preceding days, was now succeeded by an animation and enthusiasm that was not lost to his companion. From an embarrassed and even pained expression, near the bower, her countenance became the sunny dial of their first meeting; yet she was, for her, very silent. Was she quite engrossed by the music, or had she on her mind something difficult to be confided? Arthur at length became aware that such must be the case; he first rallied, then entreated, and finally drew forth the words:

"The chief arbitrator still says the same thing."

"The chief arbitrator," echoed our hero, greatly amazed. "Is it possible that your father has left you uninformed of the result of the examination?"

"There was no result," said Hortense. "The arbitration has not been given. All yet remains suspended; and it is for that reason I mention to you, for your own sake, that there is a way to effect a private compromise. Why do you force me to say this? Why cannot you understand me?"

"I do—I do understand you; and oh! Hortense, when this suggestion was first made, had you then replied less proudly, the proposed union be