

## AFTER MANY YEARS.

Once more I scan the dear remembered place,  
The city of my past;  
Again the outlines of each street I trace,  
Within dim memory's cast.

I strive to blot the vision of the years,  
Time's undeserving dole,  
A crouching, fading shadow that appears  
Unrest within my soul.

Upon old haunts with speechless love I gaze,  
Until they only seem  
Distorted phantoms of delicious days,  
When life was one sweet dream!

I grasp their semblance to my saddened heart,  
As one who clutches fast  
A picture of the dead, whose love was part  
Of some enraptured past!

My harrowed thoughts leap to my eager eyes,  
That seek a loving face;  
Fond words and welcomes, kisses, low replies  
Transform the time and place.

Evolve the gathered sweetness of the years  
To fill the present time,  
With rapture overflowing with our tears,  
That makes the hour sublime!

Devouring time, that sullies loveliness,  
That tramples on our youth,  
Can't change the glance that warms, the words that  
bless,  
The love whose power is truth!

Decay may blight and cares denude the hours—  
The fragrant hours of hope,  
But love sits throned—a giant tree that towers  
Above life's horoscope!

Montreal.

ISIDORE.

## A LASTING MEMORY

The night of my return I went to the Haymarket Theatre. After my long wanderings my arrival had disappointed me. It was a dull November Saturday. London was not full, and I found scarcely any of the greetings I had longed for and expected. My few relatives were absent; in the clubs I belonged to I only found strangers. Time hung heavy on my hands after the strange scenes of the past five years. So I went to the Haymarket.

The little theatre had always been my fancy. I remembered it from very early youth—Farren, Webster, Buckstone, Howe, Holl, Mrs. Nisbet, Mrs. Glover, Julia Bennett, and Miss P. Horton. I have never been a great theatre-goer or devotee of the drama, and my knowledge of theatrical history is pretty well confined to the Haymarket.

## I.

There was rather a long *entr'acte*, and my mind by instinct but mistily went over different occasions of play-going. Here I had been with A, and B, and C, in days when the end of the play was the beginning of the evening. Nearly opposite once existed a kind of hell upon earth called Bob Croft's, whither young men went merely because it was disreputable.

Once or twice in early youth I had been taken there, and I had not fancied it, for rough amusements had never been to my liking. At Mr. Croft's an ordinary evening generally ended in a fight, and a not very extraordinary one in a police invasion. Here I had been kept from harm's way by Jock Campbell—since dead. Once—the remembrance followed quick—I had come to the theatre in a box with Jock Campbell and others. Among them was Lydia Mainwaring. The play was the same as that now being acted—the “School for Scandal.” I glanced at the box we had occupied. It was empty. The curtain again drew up.

Another *entr'acte*. The box was still empty. I sighed. My longed-for return had been such a disappointment. I had almost expected to see some friend in the box. Curious—in a box near it two hands in black gloves are holding an opera-glass directed towards me. The wrists seem familiar, small, but with hard wiry sinews expressing power and strength. The next time I look up, the hands and the glass are there no longer, and their owner has retired to the back of the box.

The play was over, and a well-known farce was about to commence. The stalls were half-emptied, when a well-known face came and greeted me. It was Sir Esmé Egerton, once a school-fellow, then a clergyman—a vocation he had renounced on succeeding to a baronetcy and a property. He was a kindly, dull man.

“Westerham,” he said, “I had no idea you were in London.”

“I have only just returned after nearly five years' wandering in the two Americas.”

“I knew you were travelling somewhere, but no one ever heard from you.”

“I have so few people to write to,” I answered, “and no one wrote to me. I have often been beyond the range of all news, public or private.”

“Then, I daresay you never heard of my marriage? Come up and make the acquaintance of my wife.”

He took me to the box in which I had seen the black gloves.

“My dear, I don't think you ever knew my old friend Lord Westerham, though I believe you come from the same country and bear the same name. He has just returned from South America.”

Lady Egerton bowed for a moment without a word. Then, as though to make reparation, she said, “I am always glad, Esmé, to see your friends. Welcome home, I should say, Lord Westerham. I know you already from Esmé and others.”

It was the same voice and the same gesture as before—a mixture of defiance and submission, of resentment and fear. To Esmé her bearing was affectionate and caressing, almost compassionate and full of gratitude.

But to me Lydia Mainwaring showed no sign of recognition.

“I was surprised to hear of Sir Esmé's marriage just now. I have had no letters for months, and have seen no newspapers except in the last few weeks.”

“Won't you ask the wanderer to dine to-morrow?” suggested the husband.

“I hope you will come, Lord Westerham. Esmé will long to hear your adventures; and,” she added more slowly, and with an emphasis perceptible only to myself—“and they will interest me too.” She continued—“I feel a little chilly, Esmé, and should like to go home.”

He begged me to escort his wife down-stairs while he looked out for the carriage.

When alone she said no word of recognition or remembrance.

“You must have seen the play before, Lord Westerham.”

“Once,” I replied, “a long time ago, from the box next to this one.”

“Then you will remember to-morrow,” she said, as she entered the carriage. “I know your promises are sacred. Good-night.”

## II.

My youth was most unhappy. My mother had married a second time a Welsh clergyman, who had speculated on her family. She was the sister, and later the heir-general, of Lord Westerham, who, having two boys and an encumbered estate, could do little for her, even if so inclined.

The death of his two boys made but little change in his inclination, as it seemed to embitter his wife, a hard Scotch Puritan, towards those who were to succeed to the inheritance of her sons. Nor did it improve the disposition towards me of my step-father. Small as were my prospects, they stood in the way of his son, my step-brother—an impulsive, choleric, sickly boy, who died before his father. But my early life and home were unhappy. My small patrimony was seized on by my step-father, who grudged me the food and shelter he gave me from my own money. Things could not last thus. At an early age I therefore found myself living in London with a distant cousin, a conveyancer, who gave me a latch-key, and allowed me to have my own way, under the guidance of another distant relative, a sporting man and a scapegrace. It was under his patronage that I became acquainted with the establishment of Mr. Robert Croft. It is a wonder to me now that I was not ruined in purse and reputation before I reached the age of nineteen. Fortunately, I disliked the society into which I was initiated, and after the first flattering assurance that I was “seeing life,” I backed out of Mr. Croft's intimate circle. Indeed I never entered into his establishment above two or three times—once with my cousin, who, having secured me the *entrée*, allowed me alone to improve the occasion. It was on my third and last appearance that I made the acquaintance of Jock Campbell.

After dining alone with the conveyancer, I left him to his work, went to the theatre, and sat in the stalls next Jock. I looked much younger than my age, which was not more than seventeen. When I left the theatre I crossed the Haymarket and passed up the little court which led to Croft's. I had engaged to meet my scapegrace cousin there. He had dazzled me with the promise of taking me to a scene of even greater bliss. At the door of Bob Croft's, waiting for it to be opened at the necessary signal, stood the tall, heavy, but well-proportioned form that had sat next me at the theatre. Looking at me as we entered, he said, in a tone of compassion, “Hillo! young man, you are beginning early.” I half-resented his remarks, and with an air of superiority I asked the waiter if Mr. Alan M'Tavish had arrived?

“Alan M'Tavish!” Jock Campbell murmured to himself as, on learning that my cousin had not arrived, I walked into the first room. The rooms were small and crowded. The gas flamed, but the floors were sanded. The space was divided into boxes, of which only two sides were fenced off. The atmosphere was thick with smoke; and there was to be found the refuse of race-courses and singing-halls, with a large sprinkling of young men of the upper and middle classes, Guardsmen, and others who, like myself, imagined they were enjoying life.

Jock Campbell entered as a king, and was rapturously greeted by all the assembly.

He was a splendid fellow—tall, at least six feet four, muscular, with great breadth of shoulders, powerful arms, and a handsome, high-bred, fair-complexioned face, on which he wore a moustache—an ornament only known in those days to men who, like himself, were in the cavalry.

“Good night, Jock,” the mob cried out.

“Good night,” he responded, cheerily; and notwithstanding the vile surroundings, his presence and his voice showed the good there was in the man.

He was not more than four-and-twenty, and the days had not died out, now almost forgotten, when coarse debauchery was deemed the extreme of wit and good company. Spring-heeled Jacks wrenching off door-knockers, midnight surprises, fights in the street, attacks on the police,—these were the pleasures of many young men of the world, now staid grandfathers and lights in their generation. Jock

Campbell had fallen into these ways from high spirits rather than from depravity. He was full of energy, strong, handsome, and beloved—beaming with sympathy, which was enlisted by his companions for the moment, whether these were innocent or the reverse. Belonging to a regiment in which such pursuits were the vogue, he plunged readily into them. But he was equally popular in ball-rooms with maiden aunts, or even little children, for he was only pleased with giving pleasure.

Waiting for my cousin, I called ostentatiously for a glass of “pale white,” the synonym for brandy-and-water in an unlicensed institution. An inner feeling seemed to tell me that Jock Campbell had his eye on me; and half-resentful, yet half-fascinated, I followed him up-stairs with my brandy-and-water in my hand. The room was rather large, as supper could be obtained there, and a table stood very nearly the whole length of the room, covered with a cloth spotted with gravy, beer, and strong drink. I sat down at an unoccupied corner of this, sipping my brandy-and-water and smoking a cigar, a newly-acquired accomplishment. A man with a broken nose named Shepherd, a betting man, sat at the other end. The rest of the room was crowded; for it was known Jock Campbell, who had a beautiful voice, would be asked to sing a song.

“Come, Jock—a song!” they all cried; and he trolled forth, in a rich, strong tenor, an Irish song with a rollicking chorus, in which the whole room joined.

“Encore! encore!” shouted the crowd.

“I 'ope the song won't be so noisy, captain,” said Mr. Bob Croft, “acos of the peelers.”

“All right,” said Jock Campbell, as he took a puff of his cigar, looking me straight in the face; and leaning his chin on his hand, he sang in a minor key, and in a low tone, a pathetic Scotch song. The effect was extraordinary. The crowd was hushed while he sang; and when he ended, the lost, hardened men present were crying and sobbing like children.

On myself the effect was electrical. I had often heard the song in my home, and had always been told that it was unpublished, and related to an event in our family history. It set me musing.

“Come, young man, said the broken-nosed ruffian at the end of the table; “don't you know it's your duty to stand the company with champagne round?”

I was quite dazed with the speech.

“If you go wool-gathering, young man,” continued Shepherd, “I'll bring you to, soon enough.”

“Don't be too hard on the youngster, Tim Shepherd,” said Jock Campbell.

“If he don't stand champagne, I'll knock his head off,” replied the bully.

“No, you won't, Tim,” rejoined Jock. “A big fellow like you can't hit a child like that.”

“No, you can't, Tim,” said the company.

“We don't want no champagne.”

“You shall have some, however,” declared Jock Campbell; and he ordered half a dozen of Mr. Croft, who brought it up himself.

By this time Jock Campbell had come near me.

“You must take a glass, youngster,” he said, “if only for the sake of my song. Do you know it?”

“Yes,” I answered. “In my family it is known as the song of Lydia Mainwaring, the Welsh girl who loved the Scotchman.”

“Where do you live, my boy? You had better go home.”

“I am waiting for some one.”

“Alan M'Tavish won't come here to-night. He has been taken to a sponging-house. You had better leave this, as there is sure to be a row soon. Can I give you a lift?”

“I live in Baker street.”

“What! with old Calvert M'Tavish? It is not far out of my way to the barracks.”

His brougham was standing at the door, and he took me home.

“Don't go any more to Bob Croft's,” he said at parting. “Trust my word, it is not good for you, and my name is Jock Campbell. We shall meet soon.”

## III.

Alan M'Tavish was soon set free from the sponging-house. Calvert was rich, and his mission seemed to be the release of Alan from arrest. He was a quaint, kind-hearted yet selfish old man, who had discovered the secret that immediate compliance saved a great deal of trouble. His only hobby was his profession, which had produced, and was producing, a good deal of money. To a great part of this his few relatives seemed welcome. Alan helped himself freely, and was only arrested when Calvert was out of town. I was far more humble and contented myself with my small means—ample enough, as Calvert would not hear of my paying for bed or board.

“Who is Jock Campbell?” I asked of Alan.

“As good a fellow as ever lived. A captain in the —, and a kind of cousin of yours and mine. Did you ever hear the song of Lydia Mainwaring?”

“Yes, I have—often.” Somehow or other I did not like to tell the manner in which I had last heard it.

“Well, since the loves of Lydia, and of Jock her lover, the names of Mainwaring and Campbell have been intertwined in almost every generation. You,—at least your mother is a Mainwaring. Lord Westerham has married a Campbell. But Lady Westerham has nearer

Mainwaring relations than her husband. Jock Campbell is her nephew, and she has a girl living with her, half cousin, half dependent, whose name is Lydia Mainwaring, and whose relationship to Lord Westerham is scarcely appreciable.”

“I wish I knew my relations,” I said, with a sigh. “I have so few respectable acquaintances.”

“Am I not sufficient?” asked Alan. “Well, perhaps I am not respectable,” he replied in his turn. “You know,” he went on to say, “the difficulty. Lady Westerham has a crotchet, and your stepfather is a brute. But you certainly should know more people. It won't do for your acquaintance to be confined to Calvert and myself. I'll think it over. Just lend me a couple of pounds.”

## IV.

Lord and Lady Westerham came to town, and Jock Campbell insisted on their asking me to dinner. Lord Westerham was a heavy, high-bred man, interested in agriculture; and deep in reviews and newspapers. Lady Westerham was the real figure round which was grouped the family history. Aged, with grey hair under a cap, dressed in a great deal of rich silk and old laces, she was in every respect the *grande dame*. Her manners at first were somewhat assuring; but there was a hardness in her well-cut features, and a look almost ferocious in her eyes, overhung by bushy eyebrows, which impressed you very soon with the feeling almost of cruelty. She seldom smiled, and never laughed; and her eye, with an expression of command and triumph, was constantly searching the looks and watching the movements of Lydia Mainwaring.

It was impossible to see this girl without pitying her. She was very beautiful, but never appeared happy. Her eyes wore a startled look, like that of a deer on the alert—sometimes almost a look of terror. It was easy to learn the secret. Lady Westerham never left her alone, never omitted some phrase that must cut her to the heart. If she spoke to Jock Campbell or myself, she was bidden to leave the room. If absent, she was recalled and cross-questioned as to her doings. For Jock Campbell alone had Lady Westerham any affection. He was her nearest relation and her heir. It was principally on her income that Lord Westerham managed to keep up Castle Creasy, his house over the Scotch border.

Even Lady Westerham's hard nature yielded to Jock's sunny presence. He seemed to have some dominating influence over her, which at times reduced her to silence in the middle of a cutting remark to Lydia. To him Lydia owed her few pleasures. When she went rarely to the theatre, it was with Jock and myself, under the chaperonage of Calvert M'Tavish.

To myself Lady Westerham was very gracious.

“I am glad to know you, Mr. Masters,” she said, with a slight Scotch accent, “for we are doubly cousins; and in Scotland more than elsewhere we hold the doctrine that blood is thicker than water. I am Campbell and Mainwaring, and nothing else. This girl is a Mainwaring, and her mother was a Campbell, and that's why she lives here, Mr. Masters.”

“I suppose she is a cousin, also?” I said, shaking hands with the poor girl, and rather glad to claim relationship with her.

“Yes, in a kind of way. Lydia, you had better go through the accounts.”

Without a word Lydia left the room.

A year or two after my acquaintance with the Westerhams my mother died, and I became the heir to the title and such estate as went with it. At the bidding of Lord Westerham, I assumed the name of Mainwaring, and in the winter of the same year went with Jock Campbell to Castle Creasy.

“Theo,” he said to me in the train, after smoking in silence, “I want to take you into confidence. The tone in which he spoke impressed me. It seemed as though some turning-point of my life was presenting itself.

“We'll talk business,” he said. “I have been thinking over matters, and I find that, barring my little sister in the country and Lady Westerham, I have no nearer relation than you. Now, I am not going to live long. My heart is shaky, and I know it; and I have no one to whom, as much as to yourself, I can bequeath my confidences. My little sister is well provided for. She had exactly the same fortune as myself, and the accumulations will be considerable when she comes of age. I therefore intend dividing my own fortune into two parts—one I leave to her and one to you.”

I made some gesture of deprecation.

“Don't interrupt me, and don't think I shall leave you your share absolutely. I hope not to die just yet; but when I do, you will receive a letter making a charge on the money I leave you. This is what lawyers call a secret trust. It is not legally binding; but you, I know, will respect it. I do not even ask you to give me your word. You will know the letter to be genuine both from my handwriting and from two seals—this one I wear on my finger, and another with the initials ‘L. M.’”

The communication was so saddening that I could not find a word of reply. Probably my silence pleased him more than phrases. I hope so.

## V.

Castle Creasy is a very lonely place. The house is built in granite, with a moat round it, now dry and grown in grass. The ghost of