

PROFIT, \$1,200.

"To sum it up, six long years of bed-ridden sickness, costing \$200 per year, total \$1,200—all of this expense was supplied by three bottles of Hop Bitters, taken by me for a year since, without the loss of a day, and I want every body to know it for their benefit."—N.E. Farmer.

AMERICAN MILLIONAIRES.

LONDON, Oct. 31.—Many of the papers here have severely condemned Mr. Vanderbilt's expressions in the recent interview. In particular, the Spectator has a long article on American millionaires, in which it declares that it expects to see a syndicate in New York controlling all the railroads and the telegraphs, and which syndicate, "at the end of a few years, would smile at the Rothschilds as persons who, in the petty business of Europe, were accounted very rich. At least half a dozen American mines and railroads are being privately offered for sale in this market, but there is no earthly chance of selling them at present, as the continual disturbances on the New York Stock Exchange make people over here shy about touching anything new."

The Scarlet, Cardinal Red, Old Gold, Navy Blue, Seal Brown, Diamond Dyes give perfect results. Any fashionable color, 10 cents.

RADICAL REFORM MARRIAGES.

LONDON, Oct. 31.—Elisee Beolus, the eminent French geographical writer and Radical, has married his two daughters to two gentlemen of tendencies equally radical with his own, and, in so doing, has seen fit to dispense with any ceremony whatever, civil or religious. This extraordinary proceeding is attributed to a desire on his part to restore to the marriage contract the charm of its primeval simplicity. It has made a very painful impression upon his many friends in England, where he is known to almost everybody concerned with educational and scientific progress.

Dr. Thomas' Eucalyptic Oil cured a badly swollen neck and sore throat on my son in forty-eight hours; one application also removed the pain from a sore toe; my wife's tooth was also much inflamed—so much so that she could not walk about the house; she applied the Oil, and in twenty-four hours was entirely cured."

Sullivan, the puglist, has decided to fight Tom Allen, ex-champion, but not at New Orleans. The names of five States are to be placed in a hat, the first one drawn to be the place for the mill.

"Ladies of all ages who suffer from loss of appetite; from imperfect digestion, low spirits and nervous debility may have life and health renewed and indefinitely extended by the use Mrs. Lydia E. Pinkham's remedies for all complaints incident to the female constitution. We have not only a living faith in Mrs. Pinkham, but we are assured that her medicines are at once most agreeable and efficacious."

The charter of the First National Bank at New Berlin, N. Y., capital \$100,000 has been extended.

The Customs receipts at St. John, N. B., in October were \$106,980, a gain of \$1,015 over receipts in the same period last year. The inland Revenue receipts were \$31,193, an increase of \$2,233 over October, 1881.

One dose of BAXTER'S MANDRAKE BITTERS will relieve Sick Headache. One bottle effects a cure. Price 25c per bottle.

The exports to the United States from Guolph for October were valued at \$30,165 81. The Customs duties collected at this port for October were \$6,411.70; for the same month last year, \$4,447.46; increase, \$1,965 25.

"Mean people take advantage of their neighbor's difficulties to annoy them." Mean diseases, such as piles, rheumatism, constipation, dyspepsia, malaria, lame backs, etc., take advantage of people's exposures and attack them. It is then that Kidney-Wort appears on the field and its timely agency puts to rout this flock of evil ailments. It is a friend in need and, therefore, a friend indeed.

The Chicago planting mill and lumber firm of Hair & Odiome has assigned. Liabilities, \$100,000; assets, a like amount.

The inland Revenue collections at Belleville during October amounted to \$850,210; same month last year, \$928,364; decrease, \$78,154.

Jas. Shannon, Leaskdale, writes: For many years my wife was troubled with chills, and could get no relief until about two years ago; she was then not able to walk, and the pain was then so excruciating that she could not sleep at night. Your agent was then on his regular trip, and she asked him if he could cure her. He told her Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil was a sure cure. She tried it, and judge of her astonishment when in a few days, the pain was all allayed and the foot restored to its natural condition. It is also the best remedy for burns and bruises I ever used.

The receipts at the Custom House, Kingston, with the value of imports and exports, during October were—Imports, \$101,858; exports, \$272,293; receipts, \$374,151.72.

Six thousand two hundred and thirty-eight tons of coal were shipped from Pictou during the week ended October 20th, making the total shipments to date this season, 153,544 tons.

Mr. James J. Anslow, Newcastle, N. B., writes: "Mrs. Anslow was troubled with Lung Disease, and until she took Northrop & Lyman's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil and Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda had little or no appetite; but after taking a bottle or two she gained appetite and had a relish for her food, which was quite a help to her in keeping up against the disease. As we are out of years, and cannot procure any here, she is taking another Emulsion; but as we prefer your preparation to any in the market, will you kindly ship me some at once and oblige."

REST AND COMFORT TO THE

"BROWN'S HOUSEHOLD PANACEA has no equal for relieving pain, both internal and external. It cures Pain in the Side, Back or Bowels, Sore Throat, Rheumatism, toothache, Lumbago and any kind of a Pain or Ache. It will most surely quicken the Blood and Heal, as its acting power is wonderful." "Brown's Household Panacea" being acknowledged as the great Pain Bearer, and of double the strength of any other Elixir or Liniment in the world, should be in every family handy for use when wanted, as it really is the best remedy in the world for Cramps in the Stomach, and Pains and Aches of all kinds, and is for sale by all Druggists at 25 cents a bottle. [249]

THE COMET OF A SEASON!

By JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M. P.

CHAPTER XXVII.—CONTINUED.

Meantime, Captain Marion himself was not perhaps so entirely happy as one ought to be who is about to enjoy his youth in the sweetness of a romantic marriage. He did not like having to talk about his intended marriage to any one. He dreaded having to make such a communication to his daughters. He was in a bewilderment of joy and hope and doubt. "What will people say?" he could not help asking himself. Would they talk of May and December? Would they say much about his age? Would they say one remark that there was no fool like an old fool? A painful memory of some scenes in Mollere's "Marriage Force" came into his mind. He thought of the elderly lover in that masterpiece of grim, sardonic humor. He wondered whether in some people's eyes he might not look a little like the hero of the play; but he thought, "At all events, nobody can say that Geraldine is like the heroine." He dreaded the part commentary of his daughter Katherine, and her complacent declarations that it only proved that she had been right from the beginning. He dreaded Sydney's cold and complaining looks. He wondered what Aquitaine would say and what Montana would think. He had acted wholly upon impulse, exactly as Geraldine had done for her part. But somehow, the surrender to impulse which seems touching, engaging, and even noble, on the part of a woman, looks only feeble and foolish in a man. Captain Marion was not a strong man in any sense. There was a good deal of the feminine in his sweet and sunny temperament. When his talk with Geraldine began, he had not had the faintest idea of where it was to lead; and in all probability, but for Katherine's and Trescoe's previous suggestion, it never would have led whither it did. He was drawn on step by step. He saw that Geraldine was perplexed and unhappy with, perhaps, a dreary life spreading out before her.

He felt that he could not lose her so easily without a great sense of sacrifice, and he thought on the whole it would be better for him and for her that they should not part, and thus he was led to his offer, which, perhaps to his surprise, she so readily accepted. He knew very well she did not love him, and he had even yet good-sense enough left to know that at his age he was not likely to be the object of a girl's love. Sometimes he told himself, as Othello does, that his decline into the vale of years was not much. He was still, in a certain limited sense, a comparatively young man—for a middle-aged man. Victor Hugo prefers fifty years to forty, on the ground that fifty is the youth of old age, whereas forty is the old age of youth. Captain Marion was still fairly in the youth of old age, and it was not yet out of the nature of things that a woman might be found who, taking him all round, would think him worth falling in love with. But it was not likely that a girl of Geraldine Rowan's youth and brilliancy and vivid temperament should fall in love with a gentleman of his years, with whom she had been living almost like a daughter for most of her life. At all events, it was certain that she was not in love with him—did not profess or pretend to be. She liked him enough to be willing to marry him, and that was all. He was in doubtful and troubled mood, for all his happiness, and had to tell himself that he had done the right thing, and that he was perfectly happy, in order to be quite assured on both subjects. To one person he made up his mind the news must be told at once. He would let Montana know of what had happened without delay, for Geraldine's sake and for Montana's own sake. It must be made known that Geraldine was open to no farther love-making on the part of any one. Captain Marion would put that to Montana in clear, firm, and kindly words, and Geraldine would be relieved from any further unwelcome pressure. On that point Marion felt no hesitation or fear. He did not mind facing Montana or any man on that or any other subject. He was afraid of Katherine and afraid of Sydney, but the lords of creation had no terrors for him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JUPITER AND SEMELUS.

The season was drawing to a close. The path of the comet was nearly traced. Montana now had set his mind on nothing better than an honorable retreat, a brilliant going-out, a departure in something like effluence, leaving a noble afterglow behind it. He could see plainly enough that the interest and the excitement about him were not to be kept up much longer. By the time the next season came, even if he were in England, and he had determined not to be in England—some new hero of the world would have been found, some new question of science, or theology, or economics or spiritualism, would engage the attention of the world. He felt satisfied that he had done the best he could, and all he could. He was not displeased, on the whole, with the part he had played; only, he wanted to leave the stage with the applause of the spectators, and to remain a distinct and gracious memory in their minds. Even this he began to see would require some tact and some courage to accomplish.

Many things were against him. He had done nothing whatever to advance the great enterprise, in the name of which he had come from the New World to the Old. He had hardly bestowed a thought upon it during the London season. It had never had shape enough to make it necessary for him to think much about it. It was a cloud floating in cloudland, and seemed to be growing smaller and vaguer, not larger and more compact, as the time went on. Now that he was compelled to make up his mind and to turn his thoughts to it, and that the hour had come when he must decide whether he would give up or abandon the project, it seemed clear to him that it was unmanageable, for the present at least, and some means must be found for releasing him from the discredit of having tried and failed. Half-fanatic and half-plotter as he had been from the first, his mind was as much set on keeping up the illusion about himself and leaving fame and credit behind him among those he knew in London, as if that fame and credit were a substance in themselves, or could, under such conditions, be anything better than firework and jugglery.

He was anxious now that the plot, whatever it were, against him should explode at once. He wanted to have the thing out and be done with it. He did not feel much fear of the result. There was no evidence he could think of which could possibly convict him of any deception. He had only to stand fast and keep composed, as he was pretty sure to do, maintaining that he was what he said he was, and nothing else, and it seemed absolutely impossible that any one could op-

portunities of poor Matthew Starr. Starr came to him or wrote to him almost every day, entreating to know how the great scheme was going on, where in America they were to pitch their tents, and when they were to start for the new home. Starr was made miserable and impatient by the misery and impatience of his daughter, who was eating her heart out with querulousness, and was making him eat his heart out too. He watched over the girl with a sickening terror day and night. He was afraid that at last she would cease to believe in Montana and his great new world, and in her despair would fling herself back to her old life, and leave her father.

Sometimes the old man's impatience took the form of vehement doubt, and he came and challenged and questioned Montana as though he were some wild inquirer endeavoring to extort confession from a prejudiced culprit. It took all Montana's composure and patience and temper to be able to bear times when he wanted so far as to threaten Montana that some terrible judgment would come on him if he had decided poor men and women, and if the great scheme was not to go forward after all.

"Look here, Mr. Montana," he said once, fiercely striking his fist on Montana's table—"I have set my heart on this, and I have staked my daughter's soul on it, and if we are to be deceived in this, by God, I'll go mad, and I'll do something dreadful—I know I shall! But you can't be deceiving me; you are not deceiving me. Oh, do tell us when this is to come off!"

Montana could only reassure him in the old words, which were evidently beginning to lose their influence, and this sort of thing had to be gone through many times in the course of a week. Montana wrote to Mr. Aquitaine a friendly, half-apologetic letter, in which, without coming directly to the question of poor Melissa's escapade, he expressed his earnest wish that Aquitaine should believe him free of any responsibility for what had happened; and Aquitaine wrote to him again a cold, sad letter, in which he said he could attach no blame to Montana, but only wished they had never met.

One thing Montana was determined on—it should not be his fault if he did not carry Geraldine with him when he returned to America. He had set his heart on this, and he believed he could accomplish it. If he should succeed in that, his time in London would not have been lost. There would be a sensation of success about the visit, let it end as it otherwise might. In most other ways he was beginning to feel that failure threatened him. He really had to let go and to be passionate in his love for the girl and his desire to conquer her affection. He had resolved that he would appeal to her confidence, tell her everything she cared to know about him, persuade her that he had a high, deliberative motive for everything he did, and endeavor thus to win her respect for his steady purpose and his strength of will. This resolve of his was made partly in obedience to impulse—the sudden, strange impulse of a lonely man to take some one into his confidence; and partly, too, it was founded on that calculation of which we have spoken already—the calculation that a girl like Geraldine Rowan was to be subdued only by some one who should show a strength of will before which any purpose of hers must bend. He would prove to the girl that he was made to be the master of her will, that she could not escape from him. Besides, when he had told her he need care nothing about Trescoe's investigations, Geraldine, in his confidence, would be with him, and not against him. What woman is ungrateful to the man who trusts her with all his secrets?

The first moment when Montana saw Geraldine on the deck of the steamer in New York Bay, he was drawn to her in a manner strange to him—indeed, unknown to him before. She had from that moment a profound interest for him, which grew and grew every day. He spoke but the truth when he said that from the moment when he first saw her he was determined, if he could, to have her for his wife. In all his varied career he had not felt like this to any woman before. Geraldine was a strange, disturbing element in his calculations, distracting the arrangements of his life. He had not counted on anything like this. He thought he could move about among men and women as if they were some inanimate instruments of his purposes. He had never thought of the possibility of some influence coming in to him to curtail his plans and projects. He had been loved by so many women without loving them in return that the possibility of his falling in love had not lately entered his mind. Now that the possibility had become a reality, it filled him with a strange blending of delight and vexation. He was angry with himself sometimes at the thought that the attraction of a woman could thus disturb and distract him; and yet, at the same time, the novelty of the sensation brought a curious joy that penetrated his soul, and made him feel as if he were renewing his youth. So he resolved that he would go and see Geraldine, and bring her to a decision, and he scarcely doubted that the decision would be as he wished it. He was filled beforehand with the assurance of success. That success would repay him for failure of any kind; it would open a new life to him. Why, he asked himself, should he not give up all his plans and schemes, his futile ambition to govern the minds and careers of men, his idle wish to stand alone and apart upon a pinnacle above the crowd? Why should he care any longer to be the comet of a season?

The memory came back upon him of the time when he had heard those words quoted long ago in the Northern city. He remembered the loving, tender admiration which strove to turn his ambition away from the world, desire to bias the comet of a season. Would it not have been better if he had taken the lesson then? Life, after all, had since that time been but an empty, lonely kind of work for him. But in the depths of his heart he was glad he was now free, and could ask Geraldine Rowan to marry him. Why should he not live happily, quietly, with her, and begin for the first time to find enjoyment and peace in peace in life? He began to grow almost sentimental. His mood was idyllic. The future looked flowery and bright and serene. Strange that at the very same moment Geraldine Rowan, herself full of dejection and perplexity, was filling the minds of two men with the happy conviction that she was made by Providence for them! Led by this thought, Montana was setting forth on his mission, when a letter from Captain Marion was put into his hands. He read it with thrill through him. He read it again and again, till he had satisfied himself that he fully understood its meaning. "But there it was clear as written language could make it—Geraldine Rowan was engaged to marry

Captain Marion, and Captain Marion said, in friendly but firm words, that any further visit from Montana would be welcome to him, but that the moment came to do something. Montana was not a man to hesitate. He went to Marion's home at once and asked to see Mrs. Rowan. He had the maid told to tell Mrs. Rowan that it was that was wanted, but merely to say that she was wanted. His quiet, subdued manner was irresistible, and the woman obeyed him without a word or a doubt. Geraldine was simply told that some one wanted to speak to her in the drawing-room, and she came down, not thinking of anything in particular. She was, for a moment, almost alarmed when she saw Montana, and her eyes met his. She knew that he had heard of what had happened. She had to compel her courage to stand by her.

"Is this true that I hear of you?" Montana asked, abruptly. "Most other women would probably have avoided the question by asking, 'What do you hear about me?'" but Geraldine did not care to affect not to understand him. "It is true," she said, coldly. "Why have you done so?" he asked. "What have you done? You have possessed your own impulse, could have possessed your life unhappily, I don't think I should much mind if I were, so long as I had the sense of trying to make somebody else happy. But I shall not be unhappy. I shall be well content."

"You, with your youth and your beauty and your high principles, are you really going to sacrifice yourself in that way? Somebody ought to interfere with me with authority over you. It is shocking. It is shameful of Marion. I did not think he could have done it."

"Because he is so much older than I?" Geraldine asked, bitterly. "Yes; that for one reason," he said. "He is too much older than you. You look at me; but I am a good deal younger than Marion, and I had something to offer which he never could have. Life would have been worth having with me."

"Life will be worth having with him. He will be kind and loving to me, and I shall be loving and devoted to him." "But you cannot feel love for him, for a man of his years, with grown-up daughters as old as you—older than you, for anything I know. It is impossible. There is nothing in him to deserve a young woman's love. It is monstrous. You trample on every true principle by such an arrangement. It is only an arrangement. What on earth has driven you to such a step?"

"You have driven me to it," she said, "if you want to know the truth—you, and not body else. You persecuted me. You told me that you would not cease to persecute me; and more than that, you made me afraid that my own will was not true. You told me always, 'I will never let me go. Well, I was glad to find any way of breaking through such servitude as that. I would rather be dead than to be married to you, Mr. Montana; you can easily think how much rather I would live and be married to Captain Marion, for whom I have affection—yes, true affection. If you are really sorry for me, blame yourself. You are the cause.'"

"This can be undone; it is not too late." "No," Geraldine firmly said, "it shall not be undone by me, nor by any one for me. It should not be undone, if there were no other reason, so long as you were on this side of the Atlantic. You have destroyed my life, Mr. Montana, if that is any good to you." This might have seemed a little inconsistent if Montana had been in a mood for noticing inconsistency. Just a moment before the girl had said that she would be perfectly happy, and that she looked forward with full contentment to her life in the future. Now she spoke of her life as destroyed, and by him. There could be little doubt from the tone of her voice which sentiment more truly expressed what she felt.

Montana was touched by her pathetic, half-unconscious expression. "Is that true?" he asked, gravely. "Have I really been the cause of destroying your life in this way? Have I been so fatal to you?" "You have," Geraldine answered, sadly; "you have been fatal to me, and I think to every one else you came near—here, at all events. You have wrecked the happiness of all our group. We were very happy and fond and bound together till you came, and now there is nothing but division and distrust and bitterness. Don't think about me; think about others who are far greater sufferers. I am content, on the whole; I shall be happy enough."

"You said this moment that your life was destroyed; and I think you spoke the truth—I think your life is destroyed. I hate to think of the prospect before you. Poor girl! so young and so charming, and so utterly thrown away! Who would not feel sorry for you? I did not think the fate of any woman could trouble me so much; and, indeed, if I am the cause of it in any way whatever, I am sorry for it." "Why did you persecute me?" she asked, vehemently. "Because I thought so much of you," he said. "Because I saw in you what I saw in no other woman; and because I loved you as truly and as deeply as I could love anybody, or ever could; and because I thought you would be a prize to have."

"Yes," Geraldine interrupted him "because you thought that I would be a prize to have! I don't know why you thought that, or what prize I would be to anyone. But you thought so, and that was the reason why you persecuted me. It was not love for me. I don't believe it; I never did. It was revenge. I showed that I had no trust in you, and because I kept away from you, and you were determined to conquer and to have your way. It was your own vanity, all the time, Mr. Montana, and not any love for me, could forgive it. I could excuse it, if I thought it was even selfish love for me. But it was not—it was love for yourself; it was vanity—vanity that is in every word you say and everything you do. You have made my life a sacrifice to your vanity, as you have made others, and you will have to sacrifice yourself to it in the end." Montana never before admitted her so much as now, when she was declaiming against him with unwonted energy and passion, and with all the eloquence which emotion lends to impulsive women. After all, there was a sort of complacent satisfaction in the thought that, if she was sacrificing herself to Captain Marion, it was not for Captain Marion's sake, but only because she dreaded Montana's too fatal influence. She was escaping from him like some classical nymph escaping from a pursued divinity, and rushing she knew not whither. Yes; there was a certain gradation to Montana's vanity in the thought; and out of satisfied vanity, perhaps, he became more kindly towards her, and more anxious to do something that might restore her to her old self. "Is there anything," he said, "I can do by way of atonement—supposing this wretched cruel bargain is to be carried out?" "Only one thing," she said; "you could possibly do for me."

"Go away from me, and leave me in peace—your face any more." "It is turned upon her. 'What talk of marriage, and yet you seem to have no feeling whatever for my suffering in all this? Do you think it is nothing for me to have striven for you and to have lost you? Do you think it is nothing for me to see you given over to one who is entirely below your level; who, good and kind creature though he is, is absurdly unworthy of you? Do you think the very failure is nothing to you? Do you think I don't feel, this Geraldine? If your life is destroyed, so is mine. I care nothing about that; I am too deeply disappointed. You are the only woman for whom I ever really cared in all my life, and now you have turned against me; and now you tell me that the only thing I can do for you is never to see you again!'"

"Think of others," she said, vehemently, "to whom you have done still more wrong." "What others?" Montana asked. "You don't mean poor Melissa Aquitaine? If she is unhappy, you know I had no part in that. You know, and nobody knows so well as you, that I was not to blame. Don't be unjust to me, Geraldine."

"If you had not come near us she would be happy." "For a moment Montana felt as if he were restored to the very best and purest days of his youth—to the days when, mingling in with all manner of personal aims and schemes and dreams for his own advancement and greatness, there was still some all-true thread of devotion to the higher principles of honor and purity and love. It seemed for a time as if this sense had come back to him, and as if, after all, success in the world and notoriety or fame, or whatever it might be, were things not so satisfying to the soul as the conviction that one has done a generous deed."

He was really touched by Geraldine's unhappiness, and by her resolve not to withdraw from the burden she had brought upon herself.

"I wish I had seen your earlier, Geraldine," he said, "if that could have been possible. I wish I had known you when I was a young man, and that you could have been young then, or that I were young now and beginning all over again. I think you are a woman with whom an ambitious man might have gone on honorably and well, and not have failed in his ambition either. I am sorry to see you throw yourself away, and I am sorry, deeply sorry, if it is my fault."

"You will soon forget me," Geraldine said. "This mood won't last long. You will return to your own schemes and your own ambitions, and you will think very little of me."

"I shall never forget you. Do not mistake me, Geraldine. I mean what I say now. I feel it. I am not really the kind of hypocrite you believe me to be. I have a destiny, and I must fulfil it." Geraldine smiled sadly, and shook her head. "I don't believe in destiny," she said. "Well, well," Montana answered, "we'll not argue about that, Geraldine. I have a way appointed me, and I mean to tread it. But one may stop on the way and grieve for some one whom he sees in distress. So I feel for you. I pray for your forgiveness; and I will do some thing that you will be pleased with. I am going to do it now, and to stand by it, just as you stand by what you have done."

He held his hand out. She gave him hers. Before she could withdraw it he had raised it to his lips respectfully, and with a not obtrusive suggestion of tenderness and melancholy. Then he left her, and she wondered what it was that he was going to do which was to please her.

Montana met Melissa's maid on the stairs. He knew the girl very well by sight. "Is Miss Aquitaine in?" he asked. "Yes, Miss Aquitaine is in; she was in the library."

"Can I see her?" Then she stopped, and said, "No; don't announce me. I will go and see her myself." He went to the library and opened the door without knocking, and he saw Melissa seated on the library steps. She had evidently had a book in her hand, but it had fallen to the floor, and lay there on its face with outspread covers.

Melissa looked up when she heard the sound of the opening door. She turned crimson at sight of Montana. He went straight to her without saying a word until he had come close beside her, and he took her by both hands as she rose.

"Melissa," he said, "I have come to ask you something. You told me before that you cared for me, and would be willing to join your fate with mine. I have now come to ask you, Will you marry me, and go out to America with me? If you say you will, I will not refuse his consent."

Melissa's heart beat with wild surprise, with joy and hope, and with fear as well. She looked wistfully into his face. It was not the face of a lover. It was the face of one who feels compassion, and who thinks he is performing a duty. But after all the poor little girl never expected to find a lover in him; that she had always known to be quite out of the question. She would as soon have expected that some mythological deity should come down from the clouds of sunset and offer himself as her lover. It would be happiness and heaven, she thought, to take Montana on any terms, to be tied a captive to the chariot-wheel of his fortunes. And yet there was in her nature, with all its passionate impulse and its weakness and its whim, something womanly enough to make her blush and shrink back from the thought of being thus taken on sufferance and out of pity.

Oh, Mr. Montana, she murmured, "this is too much. I did not expect this. I'm not prepared for it; and I am not worthy of you, or fit for you. I know it. You ought to marry"—then she stopped, and set her little teeth firmly, and got out the words with great difficulty—"you ought to marry Geraldine Rowan."

"Some tremor, however slight, must have passed over Montana's face, for Melissa said at once, 'And you would have married her, perhaps, but she would not? Yes, she is a strange, odd girl; proud, and not miserable and abject like me. She would not marry you, and so you have come to me? Is that true, Mr. Montana?'" "It is true," Montana said, "since you ask me. I will not conceal it. There is a great deal about Geraldine Rowan that I always thought would make her well suited for me and for my purposes. But I did not conceal this from you before, Melissa, and I don't know why you should mind it now. You told me that you cared about me at a time when you must have known this, and why should you care about me still? All I can say is, that if you will marry me I shall be glad of it; and I shall be proud of it; and I am not worthy of you, or fit for you. I know it. You ought to marry"—then she stopped, and set her little teeth firmly, and got out the words with great difficulty—"you ought to marry Geraldine Rowan."

Montana, conflicting thoughts were struggling within her. "Oh," she exclaimed, "I wish I had the courage and the spirit to refuse you, Mr. Montana! It is degrading to a girl to give herself on such terms. You 'only take me out of compassion.' But I haven't the courage and I haven't the spirit. I'm broken down. I have lost all spirit. Every one despises me. I feel like a miserable prisoner in this house. I hate life here, and I long to drown myself. I have often, ever so often, thought of killing myself. Why should not I take your offer, since you are good enough and generous enough to say you will save me from this misery and shame?"

He took both her hands in his again and drew her toward him; and, stooping down, kissing her, not on the lips—Melissa noticed that even then—but on the forehead.

"That is well," he said, in his composed, almost chivalric way. "You have shown me how to better my own life, Melissa, and I will try to make you happy. I will write to Mr. Aquitaine to-day. He will consent, I am sure."

"He will consent?" Melissa said, looking shamefacedly down. "After all that has passed, how could he refuse? If he does refuse, and this is not to be, I will get out of the scrape of living somehow."

"No need of that," Montana said, encouragingly. "I will write to Mr. Aquitaine at once. It will all come right."

"Sometimes I think things never will come right with me again in life, and that the hour would be best for me which brought it all to an end. But, as you are so good and kind to me, I must not think so any more."

"No," Montana said; "you must not have gloomy thoughts any more, Melissa. You will be happy."

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN OMINOUS VISITOR.

Montana went home that night in a mood of utter depression. That was strange to him. He had never had, even in his boyhood, the glowing, exuberant animal spirits which are like wings to carry some souls over the heaviest troubles, and which are the purest gift of nature, no more to be acquired by effort or culture than the poet's endowment. But he had a consistent strength of will, and a steady faith in himself, which had hitherto always upheld him against adverse conditions and moods of depression. Now, for the first time, his heart seemed to desert him. Even his faith in himself, in his star, was shaken. He was conscious, all too keenly conscious, that he had made some great mistakes; he was sadly beginning to think that he was not the man he had hitherto believed himself to be. Where was that steady, inexorable resolve on which he used to pride himself; which he had grown to regard as something godlike? He had allowed himself to fall in love, and he had failed in love. He had set his heart on marrying Geraldine Rowan, and she had rejected and belied him; and she was going to marry a good-humored, weak-headed, uninteresting, elderly man. It was bad enough, Montana felt, that he should have allowed himself to fall in love; to fall in love like a boy; to do what he had never really done when he was a boy. This was bad enough; but to publish his love and to fail in it; to put himself at a girl's feet and be spurned; to tell her in prophetic, commanding tones that she must marry him, and to be quietly put aside for some one else—this was indeed humiliation. Why should he ever succeed in anything again, seeing that he had failed in this? Was this only the beginning of a course of failure? Had the tide of his fortunes turned?

Was he growing old? Was this insane passion for a girl who did not care for him only an evidence that he was already sinking into years and into the weak fondness of senility? Yet he doubted if old men in their senile love felt such love as he did—a passion compounded of love and hate. He sometimes positively hated Geraldine for the moment, and could have cursed her; and yet the very resolve he had lately taken was taken only in the hope of pleasing her and making her regard him as a hero. He was going to tie himself for life to Melissa Aquitaine for no other purpose whatever than that he might stand well in Geraldine's eyes. For life? How much of life was left that would be worth having? Would life be endurable to him when he began to decay? To go steadily down into years, to lose his personal beauty and his figure, and his stately way of carrying himself, and his power to attract admiration? After all, perhaps, it was better, on the whole, that he should marry Melissa Aquitaine. It would lead most people not to believe that he had ever thought of marrying Geraldine Rowan, and that he had been thrown aside by her. He would not take Melissa with him to America. She could stay with her father for the present; and Montana could forget for a while that he was married, and to the wrong woman.

When he reached his own door, and was taking out his latch-key, he suddenly became aware of a dark figure seated at the threshold. It might have been one of the ordinary belated and homeless wayfarers who hang about every London street, and seek the shelter of any friendly door-way. But Montana drew back for a moment, almost as one who fears a lurking assassin. Recovering himself, however, he approached the door-way, and the figure rose. It was that of a man, and in another moment Montana knew that the man was the old Charlist, Matthew Starr. Starr had been haunting him a good deal lately, and Montana was vexed at seeing him now. He knew the old man was waiting for him, and feared that there would be a scene of some kind.

"So you have come home at last!" Starr said. He looked like a man in a mood to do something desperate. "We are bound to admit that what he actually said was, 'So you have come home at last!' and Montana was coming home for the moment of a somewhat infamous contract with his friend's, tragical manner and his unlikely, perverted, of pronouncement."

"(Continued on third page.)"