

first to occupy the estate, after the departure of the hereditary owners; but I am informed that two different families preceded you here. That of the Berkeley Westons, being the immediate purchasers from the last Earl of Charlton, who remained here sixteen years; and the family of Sir Errol Leigh, who were here thirty years, and laid out much money on the place."

"So should I, sir; I should have done just as much for the place as did Sir Errol Leigh; perhaps more—yes, certainly more, if I had not been going, over since I came."

"That was a pity," said Arthur, involuntarily.

"Pity!" echoed Mr. Sanderson; "as if a man were not the master of his own actions. Why, sir, the Leigh family all died off of consumption. That was the recompense for living here those thirty years. All, all but the two youngest girls, now elderly women, who are living in the South of France; a rather different climate, where you can combine health and beauty. Now, here in our country, unless you can find a place to suit you in Devonshire—and Devonshire is relaxing—you have to pay too high a tax for beauty. This Woolton is unhealthy. It is a decided fact. It is too shady. You cannot see the sun till the very time you would rather be without him; that is, at mid day, darting down his vertical rays on your brains. No sun rise—no sun-set. The mist from the lake rising to your throat like the grasp of an assassin. No; nothing will do at this Woolton Court but closed doors and windows, a roaring fire in every room, plenty of port wine, Peruvian bark, and the house full of company. I have read in the Times this morning, of a house that may suit me in Hampshire. There is one, also, that I have long thought of, near Windsor. But I shall prefer the one in Hampshire. Fine sea view—distant glimpse of the Isle of Wight. Good neighborhood, without any nonsense of pedigree. Yet how can one possibly judge of a place until one lives in it."

"Very true," sighed the wearied Arthur.

"Therefore I have thought," continued Mr. Sanderson, "of seeing the two places myself, and we could travel up together to London; see Mr. Oldham, and then take a run down first to one place, then to the other. Of course I frank your expenses, and pay for your time. And your time here, Mr. Bryce—"

"Oh, sir," cried Arthur, nearly laughing aloud. "I feel extremely obliged to you, but I must totally decline any remuneration. I have, on the contrary, to express my thanks for the hospitality I have received in this house; a visit which I shall ever consider with grateful pleasure, as one of the happiest of my life."

"Indeed, sir—very strange—I am sure it has been easy to make you happy; very strange. Well, as to this journey to London? I think of going the day after to-morrow."

"You are very kind, Mr. Sanderson, but my instructions from Mr. Oldham are to visit on business, quite in an opposite direction."

"Well, then, I will take my sisters, Bell and Susan. They will enjoy it; and Lady Clara, as she came self-invited, must not take it ill. The fact is, I am not a marrying man. Why, what is the matter, Mr. Bryce? Ha! the cramp. But you must not stamp so violently; do you know you may break one of the smaller fibres. This is the case sometimes. But it is a painful thing, the cramp. Walking up and down, which you are now doing, is very good—very."

"I wish you good morning, sir," cried the infuriated Arthur, who rushed from the house into the grounds, exclaiming, "the cool, conceited cock-comb!"

The afternoon proved splendidly fine; the early dinner was politely agreed to by the Sanderson family, during which the highly spasmodic, neuralgic, rheumatic character of the place, as exemplified by cramp, in a highly developed form, was expatiated on by the master of the house, and fully assented to by Miss Susan. The two sisters could not join the boating skotching party, for visitors arrived to see the flower gardens; therefore, at the appointed hour, Lady Clara and her elderly attendant, bearing shawls and sketch-book, descended to the landing steps of the lake, and were conveyed by the practised and willing arms of our hero to the point selected, whence the old mansion was seen to the best advantage; The preliminaries of the drawing were soon arranged, and Lady Clara said with much gravity:

"Your proposal, Mr. Bryce, that I should become acquainted with that certain point in law I accept most willingly, but as I am aware that you can explain it better in French, I beg you will do so without scruple, as I have brought a book to beguile the time to my attendant." She then added with the same formality in French, "my maid does not understand the language in which you will recount your history, but she is very intelligent in the interpretation of looks and gestures."

Arthur bowed, and commenced the history in the calmest manner possible; the self-control of the listener was equally admirable. The sketch was the victim. It would have been highly dangerous for the Sanderson family to have inhabited a mansion so far from the perpendicular.

The following morning, after breakfast, our hero, instead of a summons to the private study of Mr. Sanderson, was invited by the elder sister to the flower-garden, and thence to an alcove, where she sweetly, yet gravely, bespoke his attention and advice. Arthur could promise with zeal and truth to do all that lay in his power for a lady who deserved his respectful feeling; partly from a strong likeness to one in France who had been maternally kind to him when a child, a Mrs. Colville, partly from her own good qualities and strong practical sense. Something of this he expressed, to which Miss Sanderson replied.

"I am about to put this good opinion of me to a severe test, especially the encomium of 'good sense;' but I must risk it, for I require your assistance. During the first years of our residence here, my brother was much on the continent, and had given us the commission to let the place and join him. We were not able to succeed according to the terms he thought right, and at length he came here to reside with us. Then commenced the persecution, if such it be, that has with some few intervals, tormented us ever since. This persecution is in the mode of nocturnal sounds, proceeding from that part of the house where formerly the religious services of the family were celebrated; the family chapel, beneath which are the family vaults, and behind which is what is called a mortuary chamber, where the mortal remains of any member of the family lay until brought into the chapel for the funeral services, and thence to the vaults. But soon after my brother's return, he ordered the chapel to be locked up. These sounds do not come from below, they are rather above the bed-room floor. One striking fact I must mention, for it may assist your investigations. Whenever we are really preparing to leave the place these nocturnal sounds cease; and, on the contrary, whenever we seem to have made up our minds to remain they recommence. They are not terrific—they are wailing, pathetic, and most mournful sounds, producing exactly the effect that these sly enemies propose, that of the grief and lamentation that strangers should occupy these halls. Now to convince

you of all this I will speak to my brother and sister, and we will conduct the conversation at dinner so as to make it appear that we have renounced all idea of removing. I will also, on the plea of your feeling cold on the north side of the house, order the bed to be prepared in a room where the sounds are heard most plainly; a room, in fact, where no one of the household will now sleep, and where we never place strangers. I will order a good fire, as the room has been so long unoccupied. I shall then have done all that my sagacity can achieve, and must leave to the superior penetration of the lawyer to dive deeper into the mystery."

"Have you ever made an investigation at the very moment of these sounds?" inquired Arthur.

"We have not; we felt so much convinced of the ill will of those who contrived them, that we feared to expose ourselves at midnight alone to their power. We have confided in no one, for fear of ridicule."

"That was prudent, but to night you will not be alone. I shall remain up, reading in the room you have selected for me, expecting you to fetch me directly the sounds are distinguishable."

"The room you will occupy," said Miss Sanderson, "is the very nearest to the sounds. It will not be necessary to meet in the night; you will merely listen to them, and in the morning we will again confer together."

All was arranged in the order proposed by the lady of the house. The counter-mine was sprung at dinner. Mr. Sanderson, in high spirits, contradicted himself and every one else, till the whole scheme would have failed but for the watchful presence of mind of his sister. Lady Clara, who was not in the secret, looked polite astonishment at the sudden abandonment of the trip southward, and then resigned herself to her own thoughts. When the party broke up for the night, the servant who conducted Arthur to his room, civilly regretted that his former apartment had proved too cold, raised the fire to a cheerful blaze, lit a second taper, and with a sacred glance round the room, departed. Arthur admired the form and furniture of his new and spacious apartment, and at length, after more careful observation, found a fresh interest which, for a while, superseded that for which he was its occupant. He recognized, from a description repeated by letter since his arrival at Woolton, that he was in the room of the last Earl of Charlton, his own loved grandfather.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A WONDERFUL CURE.—Mr. David Smith, Coe Hill, Ont., writes: "For the benefit of others I wish to say a few words about Northrop & Lyman's VEGETABLE DISCOVERY. About a year ago I took a very severe cough, had a virulent sore on my lips, was bad with dyspepsia, constipation and general debility. I tried almost every conceivable remedy, outwardly and inwardly, to cure the sore but all to no purpose. I had often thought of trying Northrop & Lyman's VEGETABLE DISCOVERY, so I got a bottle and when I had used about one half the sore showed evident signs of healing. By the time that bottle was done it had about disappeared and my general health was improving fast. I was always of a very bilious habit and had used quinine and lemon juice with very little effect. But since using 3 bottles of the VEGETABLE DISCOVERY the biliousness is entirely gone and my general health is excellent. I am 60 years old. Parties using it should continue it for some time after they think they are cured. It is by far the best health restorer I know."

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