

## Choice Literature.

## Still and Deep.

BY T. M. F. SKENE, AUTHOR OF "TRIED,"  
"ONE LIFE ONLY," ETC.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Laura Wyndham's first proceeding after the departure of Bertrand Lisle from Chiverley had been to compel her father to agree to a plan she had formed, of spending the interval before her marriage in London. Chiverley had become more hateful to her than ever now that she no longer had even the society of John Pemberton to enliven her, and she declared it was quite impossible that she could procure even the scanty *trousseau* which was all they could afford, in any shops less fashionable than those of the West-end of London. There was but one way by which Mr. Wyndham could gratify Laura in her wish without incurring an expense greater than he could bear, and that was, by making an exchange of duty with some London clergyman for the time he wished to be absent from his own parish; he was much too inert to undertake the arrangement himself however, and it was Lurline who put advertisements in the papers, and managed the correspondence which ensued. It was not very difficult to find an incumbent glad to escape from the dust and the heat of London for the months of July and August, and one such was induced to enter into arrangements with the Wyndhams, which resulted in their having been established in his house in town two or three weeks before the declaration of war had broken over France like a thunder-clap, which reverberated, with its ominous peal, through every country in Europe.

To Laura Wyndham the news was a matter of the most perfect indifference. Although she had caught Bertrand's fancy sufficiently to make him wish to marry her, she had never in the slightest degree won his confidence, and she knew nothing of his deep hidden love for the native, land of his fathers; nor was it possible for her selfish worldly nature to comprehend the generous enthusiasm which could sacrifice personal interests to any cause whatever. She went on, therefore, making arrangements for her wedding, which she was resolved should take place in London, and at a time when every one was looking forward with dismay and dread to the wide-spread suffering which was certain to result from the war, the chief subject of the Lorelei's thoughts was the expected arrival of a set of jewels which Bertrand had promised to send her as his present before their marriage.

About ten days after war had been declared, however, she received a letter from Bertrand which threw her into a violent state of indignation and disquiet; he wrote evidently under the influence of great excitement, assuming that she would at once understand how for him, by birth a Frenchman, the fate of his native country in this tremendous war must needs supersede every other consideration, and absorb his whole soul with feverish anxiety till the probable results of the struggle were known. Bertrand seemed to have been so accustomed to Mary's ready sympathy all his life-long, that it never occurred to him to doubt that Lurline would feel for and with him in his present emergency, as entirely as would have been the case with his early friend, and he went on to pour out to her all the conflicting feelings that he plucked him in the most painful perplexity: the longing to fly at once to fight for France against her foes; the unwillingness to seem to act in the smallest degree unfairly by the country of his adoption; the check put upon his strong impulse to give up all at once for the defence of his native land, by the certainty that as his single arm could avail France but little, he should, by doing so, for a mere sentiment wreck his whole career, lose forever the position to which he had only attained by years of steady progress, and reduce himself to a state of comparative poverty; all these contending feelings warred in his mind, he said, night and day, depriving him completely of calmness and rest; but the question would soon be decided: if France were victorious, and surely her arms could not fail, it would probably be absolute madness to ruin his prospects for life in order to offer her that which she neither needed nor desired—but if she were unfortunate—ah, then!—(he did not finish his sentence, he seemed certain that Lurline would understand him). He ended by saying that his darling Lorelei would, he was assured, feel with him that in any case their wedding must be postponed for a time; it would make no difference to their mutual love; his heart should be with her wherever he was; and he trusted that it might be but a little time before he could come to claim her.

Laura Wyndham read this letter to the end, then flung it to the ground and stamped upon it in a fit of ungovernable passion. One of her best natural qualities was an even temper, which was not easily ruffled, but the contents of this most unwelcome epistle were too much for her equanimity; her own self interest was her first and last thought always, and it was clear that her plan of becoming the wife of Bertrand Lisle, which she had brought to a triumphant success by so much wily subtleties, was not only thrown back to an indefinite period, but absolutely endangered altogether. It was not love for Bertrand himself, as we know, which made her wish to marry him, but only for the sake of his position, his large income, and the gay world to which he would introduce her; and she knew that if he once joined the French army, all this, which she alone desired, would be put out of her reach for ever; he must, of course, instantly quit the office held under the English Government, with its generous emoluments and many advantages; and as she had taken care to inform herself as to his means, she knew very well that if he did so he would be reduced to the mere pittance he derived from his mother, and she as his wife to an even more impoverished condition than that under which she so long suffered at Chiverley. The bare idea of such a disap-

pointment just when she had attained the summit of her hopes was not to be endured for a moment, and she paced up and down the room in angry agitation, while she thought out the best mode of holding him back from the fatal act of resigning his post; not the faintest response did her cold heart give to all the feelings for which Bertrand claimed her sympathy—patriotism and self-devotion were incomprehensible names to her, into the meaning of which she could not enter, and she simply scorned him for what she had held to be the miserable folly of thus ruining his own career.

Finally a letter was sent off, which contained a wild passionate appeal to him for her sake not to leave his home of safety and peace to enter on so dangerous a campaign. She told him it would kill her if she were to know him to be in the peril of war—that he had won her love, and therefore she had a claim on his life, and that if he did not wish her to die of terror, and distress, he must give up the idea of volunteering for the defence of France; then she added that the very idea of such a calamity had given her so great a shock, that her nerves were completely shaken, and that she would have neither rest nor peace now, so long as he was out of her sight, and therefore she was driven to beg that he would shorten the interval which was to have elapsed before their marriage, and come at once to take her back with him as his wife to his Italian home, where they might dwell safely together while this terrible war raged at a distance, unseen and unheard by them in their happiness. The Lorelei had a triumphant smile on her lips when she closed her letter, for she had never yet failed to master Bertrand's true nature, and she believed that she would do so now, but she had somewhat overreached herself, for although the letter was calculated to convince Bertrand more than ever of the truth of her love for him, yet her entire want of sympathy with his most sacred feelings could not fail to jar on him; and, unconscious as he was of the deceit and cunning which had dictated it, he could only gain from it an impression of her shallowness and weakness, while in spite of her efforts her selfishness pierced through every line of it.

It was a stifling afternoon in August, a few days after one of the worst defeats of the French army, when a cab drove up to the door of the house inhabited by the Wyndhams, and a gentleman alighted from it, and, going up the steps, rang the bell for admittance. It was not Bertrand, however, but a man in every way unlike him. He seemed about forty years of age, with a somewhat portly figure, and attired with the most scrupulous correctness. He had strongly-marked hard features, a sallow complexion, and small keen eyes; his hair also, was black and very smooth, and his face close shaven. He had a look of great decision and self-possession, and his manner, when he spoke to the servant who opened the door, was full of quiet authority. Was Miss Wyndham at home? he inquired. The maid thought he said Mrs. Wyndham, and answered that she was lying down, but Miss Wyndham was in the drawing-room. It was Miss Wyndham he wished to see, he answered, and straightway walked into the house. Being asked his name, he replied, "Mr. Brant."

## CHAPTER XXX.

Mr. Brant is an individual of whose previous career it is necessary we should give some account, in order that his share in the events yet to be recorded in this history may be better understood. The son of an English father and an Italian mother, he possessed some of the characteristics of both nations. He had the courage, coolness, and self-possession of an Englishman, with all that disregard of truth and reckless unscrupulousness which often are to be found among the inhabitants of the soft and sunny south. At the present moment Mr. Brant was established as one of the prince merchants of the town where Bertrand Lisle held his diplomatic post, and he had in that part of the world the reputation of enormous wealth; certainly his mode of living supported such a view; he inhabited there a vast mansion that was almost a palace, enriched with marble and gilding externally, and with the most costly fittings of velvet and silk and splendid furniture within its walls; carriages, horses, servants, everything that money can procure, was there in rich profusion; and, when Mrs. Brant was alive, no lady went to Court with such magnificent diamonds, or gave such grand entertainments at her own house. She had been an Italian lady, whom he had married when very young, and her manners and character had not been altogether satisfactory to the more fastidious portion of the society with whom precisely Mr. Brant was anxious to stand well. He made up his mind that his second wife should be an Englishwoman, and although it was not more than a year since Mrs. Brant's death, he was, just at this time, exceedingly anxious to replace her. There were uncomfortable rumours as to Mr. Brant's financial position; he was known to be always engaged in gigantic speculations, and some of those had certainly proved failures of late, so that it had even been said he must be on the verge of ruin; but he himself carried matters with a high hand, and declared his successes so far exceeded his losses that they were a matter of perfect indifference to him. Nevertheless, persons watched him and his house very narrowly, with a view to discover how his affairs really stood, as the reputation of his colossal fortune had gained him unlimited credit, and if it should ever happen that Richard Brant became really bankrupt it would involve the ruin of thousands. It was, therefore, for many reasons a matter of the deepest importance to him that the public mind should be reassured on the subject of his solvency, and he could not better do so, as he imagined, than by keeping open house, and launching out into a still more profuse style of expenditure; but he was childless, and the immense business transactions in which he was always engaged rendered it impossible for him to enter so much into society as would be necessary for the attainment of his object. It was necessary, therefore, that he should have a wife to represent him at the *fetes* he intended to give, and at the houses of

others, and it was mainly with the view of finding a suitable lady for this position that he was making the journey to England, though he had not the least idea that he was taking quite the most favourable step for the accomplishment of his purpose when he agreed to perform a commission for Bertrand Lisle in London.

It was, how ever, in the performance of his promise to a him whom he had known as the English *chargé d'affaires*, that he now took his way to the house of the Wyndhams. Sally, who had accompanied him to London, and whose rustic manners did not quite meet the requirements of civilized life, went on before him to the drawing-room door, which she opened, and then, standing back, she made him a sign to go in, and closed it upon him when he had obeyed her, without having dreamt of announcing him. In consequence of this proceeding Mr. Brant stood for two or three minutes within the room, before the only person who occupied it was aware of his presence. He was by no means sorry to have an opportunity of contemplating at his leisure the most beautiful vision he had ever beheld.

Lurline, with all her shining hair floating loose on her shoulders, was standing before a little toilet mirror, which was placed on the table in front of her, and she was engaged in trying on, one after another, various wreaths of artificial flowers, which she intended should form part of her *trousseau*. At the moment when Brant entered the room she was twisting a long spray of ivy among her bright curls, with crystals gleaming on its leaves in guise of dewdrops. It suited well with her fantastic beauty—the dark glossy leaves enhancing the effect of her dazzling fairness and brilliant eyes. She was in a graceful attitude, with her white hands raised above her head, holding the green glittering wreath, and her bewitching face lit up with smiles at the sight of her own successful loveliness, while the position showed her lithe slender figure to the best advantage. She wore a charming summer dress of light muslin, set off with ribbons and white lace, and all around her were scattered gay coloured silks and other materials, from which she had apparently been making a selection. Richard Brant had a keen eye for beauty in any shape, and he took in at a glance the peculiar charms of Laura's appearance in all its effective brilliancy. "What a sensation she would have made in our *salons* if Lisle had brought her out to us!" he said to himself; "but there is an end to any chance of that of course." Probably he made some movement which attracted Lurline's attention, for suddenly she turned round and brought the light of her flashing eyes full on his face. She started when she saw a stranger, and stood for a moment looking at him, still with her hands upraised, and the long locks of her burnished hair straying over them in picturesque confusion. He came forward instantly, and, with perfect ease of manner, apologised for what seemed to be an intrusion, as the servant had left him to introduce himself, which he did by giving her his name.

"But I have my credentials here, Miss Wyndham," he continued, taking out a letter and a small parcel from the breast of his coat; "Mr. Lisle charged me to deliver these to you, and to give you all such further explanations of his present position as you may wish to have."

"Is he not coming? is he not here?" she exclaimed, with breathless impatience.

"No, indeed; I fear he is in a much less safe and satisfactory place."

"You do not mean that he has gone to this odious war, after all?" she exclaimed. "I grieve to have to tell it to you, Miss Wyndham, but it is only too true," said Brant, gently, expecting to see her overcome with distress; and instead of that a scarlet flush of indignation flamed into her cheek, and she stamped her dainty little foot on the ground as she said, with unmistakable irritation, "What utter folly! what moonstruck madness! he ought to be put in a lunatic asylum! it is too bad. I declare I won't read his silly letter, full of sentimental rubbish about France, no doubt!" and she flung it out of her hand on to the table with a scornful gesture. Lurline never gave herself the trouble to conceal her sentiments where no end was to be gained by doing so, and it was evident to Mr. Brant, who knew the world well, that she was speaking with entire frankness now.

"It does indeed seem madness to leave so fair a bride for any cause whatever," he said, aloud; "Mr. Lisle shows more self-denying patriotism than I could have done in his place."

"Patriotism! bah! what does patriotism mean? it is a mere name; and he never considers me, who was to have been married to him next week, and off to gay Italy; and now I suppose it will never be. It is odious conduct, and I feel inclined to hate him for it. Of course he has resigned his post?"

"Naturally; it was not in his power to retain it under the circumstances. That was done a fortnight since, and he started for the seat of war even before his successor was appointed, for which he will undoubtedly be censured; he can never take office under the English Government again."

"No, I should think not; it is the most irretrievable senselessness I ever heard of. I suppose he has not left himself a loophole of escape?" and she took up the letter and tore it open. It was long, and she sat down to read it, making a sign to Mr. Brant to take a seat also. Poor Bertrand had written a noble, manly, touching letter, which must have melted any heart less case in selfishness than Laura Wyndham's. He told her all that he had felt as day by day brought in the reverses of the French army, and how, dearly as he loved her, he felt that he must not sacrifice, even to her, his duty and his honour. He was a Frenchman, and he could not remain at a luxurious post in the service of another country while France was bleeding at the heart, and requiring the help of every arm to which she had a right. He must go, and his Lurline need not doubt what it cost him to postpone his marriage, and how it wrung his heart to give both her and himself the pain of even temporary separation; but in presence of such gigan-

tic disasters and miseries as those which had fallen on his native land, it would indeed be cowardly and selfish to give any weight to private sorrows, and after all he trusted their happiness was only delayed a little time. It was said on all sides that the war could not last long, and unless he lost his life he would return to claim his darling Lorelei the very first moment it was possible to do so. It was true he should no longer be able to offer her the position she would have graced by her beauty, but they would have a pittance which would enable them to live, though in a very humble manner, and love such as theirs could brave poverty and privation. Perhaps they might live at Chiverley with her father; anyhow, if he survived the war he should very speedily come to claim the promise she made to him in happier days.

Lurline's lip curled scornfully as she flung down the letter, and she turned to Mr. Brant, detecting at once that he was watching her with undisguised admiration.

"Mr. Bertrand Lisle makes a little too sure of his prize," she said; "he asks me to marry him when he can offer me a suitable position and a prospect of a happy life, and then when he has impoverished himself and ruined all his prospects, he coolly tells me that if he comes alive out of the butchery into which he has plunged for no reason whatever, he shall come and claim my promise to marry him, and thereby enter on an existence of pauperism and degradation; he will find himself mistaken."

"He has indeed made a great mistake," said Mr. Brant, softly. "Although I have only the honour of so short an acquaintance with you, I can see that you are one fitted to shine in society, and to be at once its ornament and its delight; our brilliant city would have been the very place for you; life is indeed made joyous there."

"Yes, I know; and, oh, how I longed to go! it is enough to drive one wild to be disappointed at the last! You live there always, do you not?"

"Yes, it is my home, and I think I may say, without vanity, that I possess one of the finest of the old palaces as my abode, fitted up of course in modern style."

"It must be charming," said Lurline; "those grand old Italian houses seem made for *fetes* and receptions."

"Yes, mine is especially adapted for them, as it has splendid gardens attached to it. We gave many successful entertainments there when my late wife was alive, but since I have had no lady to act as mistress of the revels, I have been unable to do so." He looked at Lurline as he spoke, and met the full gaze of her keen bright eyes. He put up his hand to conceal a smile, and in order to change the conversation, he said, "All this time you have not looked at your jewels, Miss Wyndham."

"Jewels! has Bertrand sent them? I am glad of that, anyhow!" and snatching up the parcel, which she had forgotten, she opened it hastily, and found a case containing a set of very fine emeralds and pearls. "Oh, these are pretty!" she exclaimed; "I remember Bertrand always said that emeralds would suit my complexion."

"Diamonds would suit you better," said Mr. Brant; "these are poor stones," he added contemptuously.

"I will do myself the honour of waiting upon you very shortly," he said, rising; "and I will not intrude upon you longer at present."

"Tell me, is it possible to communicate with Mr. Lisle?" she asked.

"I can hardly tell," he answered; "it will at least be very difficult; but I could try to get a letter conveyed to him if it is a matter of importance."

"I do not know that it is," said Lurline; "for I shall act quite independently of him now, whether he hears from me or not; but I should like just to write and tell him I have done with him for ever. I will never be a poor man's wife."

"It would indeed be a thousand pities if you were," said Mr. Brant. "I will let you know when I see you again if a letter can be sent."

And so they parted.

(To be continued.)

## Leap Year.

In three years out of every four man has the privilege of "popping the question," and the annoyance of sometimes having a plain-spoken No! for the reply. On the fourth year woman may propose, if it so pleases her. In the event of refusing, the penalty, we believe, is that the ungallant gentleman shall present the tender damsel with a new silk dress. There is a reservation, however, that the right to claim this penalty depends on the circumstance that, when she proposed, the damsel was the wearer of a scarlet petticoat, which (or a little of the lower portion of which) she must exhibit to the gentleman, the understood idea being that the silken dress shall cover the petticoat, and thus assuage dire feminine indignation at the rejection of her offered hand.

It is stated that in a work entitled "Courtship, Love, and Matrimony," published in 1660, ten years before the death of Shakespeare, is this explanation regarding ladies' privileges in leap year: "Albeit, it is now become a part of the common law, in regard to social relations of life, that as often as every bissextile year doth return, the ladies have the sole privilege, during the time it continueth, of making love to the men, which they do, either by words or looks, as to them it seemeth prefer; and, moreover, no man will be entitled to the benefit of clergy who doth in any wise treat her proposal with slight or contumely."

AFTER we have done our best there is plenty more to do. The work for our souls is not complete even after our most prolonged and careful efforts, and the work for the church and world seems to become more exacting as it receives attention and labor. The soul, therefore, that sits down to be at rest and ease is not true to its obligations and responsibilities, and must die without having been faithful to the end.

## Scientific and Useful.

## CHESTER MUFFINS.

Four quarts flour, teacup sugar, teacup butter, cup yeast, four eggs, little salt, two quarts sweet milk. Let rise all night.

## BOSTON CREAM PIE.

Cream part—one pint of new milk, two eggs, three tablespoonfuls of sifted flour, five tablespoonfuls of sugar. Put two thirds of the milk on to boil, and stir the sugar and flour in what is left. When the rest boils put in the whole and stir until it cooks thoroughly. When cool flavor with vanilla or lemon. Crust part—three eggs, beaten separately, one cup of granulated sugar, and a half cup of sifted flour, one teaspoonful of baking powder. Divide in half; put in two pie tins, and bake in a quick oven to a straw color. When taken out split in halves and spread the cream between.

## SCOTCH BROTH.

Take four pounds of mutton—part of the leg is best; and add one gallon of water, one teacupful of pearl barley, two carrots sliced, two turnips sliced, two onions cut small, three carrots grated, the white part of a large cabbage chopped very small, and a small quantity of parsley. Season with pepper and salt. Let this boil very gently for three hours and a half, and at the dinner table it will most likely, by all who are fond of soups, be pronounced excellent.

## HEATING THE OVEN.

Fruit pies require a hotter fire than bread, but steady from first to last, if too hot at first the crust will cook before the fruit does; if too slow towards the last, the crust will dry before the fruit is done; if too hot towards the last the fruit will stew out before the crust is done. Pumpkin pies require a fire as hot as can be without burning the crust.

## SAVE THE SOAPSUDS.

However deplorable washing day may be to the householder (and the careful house-mistress or tidy maid has it in her power to greatly modify its discomforts), to the garden it is a beautiful day, the hungry and thirsty grape-vines and flowers are glad of every drop of wash water, and will repay every bit of fatigue it may cost us to give them this fertilizer. If the sun is shining hot when we go out to dispose our favor, it is best for us to dig a trench not far from the root of the plant, and pour the water into it and cover up again with top soil. This makes the water go further and at the same time does not tempt the rootlets to the surface of the ground.

## ENGLISH PLUM PUDDING.

One pound of raisins, one pound of currants, one pound of suet, one pound of stale bread grated, eight eggs, one pint of milk, two nutmegs, tablespoonful of mace; after the eggs are well beaten, put in half of the milk, beat both together, stir in the bread gradually; next add suet and fruit alternately; fruit should be rubbed in flour as in cake, to prevent sinking to the bottom; stir very hard, add spice and milk and the remainder of the fruit, and one pound of sugar; stir the whole well together; if not thick enough, add more bread; too much will make the pudding hard and dry. Boil six hours. Before sending the pudding to the table, cut blanched almonds into strips, and stick over it, mixed with suet citron. Pour spirits of wine around the dish and set it on fire. Eat with warm or cold sauce.

## ACIDITY OF THE STOMACH.

On this subject Dr. Hall in the *Journal of Health* says: "Acidity of the stomach always arises from that organ not being able to digest, to work up the food eaten, to extract the nutriment which it contains—hence two results: First the food decays, that is rots, becomes sour and generates a sour gas which is belched up, causing a burning or raw sensation located apparently at the little hollow at the bottom of the neck or in that vicinity. Sometimes an acid fluid is belched up, and is so very sour occasionally as to take the skin off some part of the throat, mouth or lips. Second, the food not being properly worked up does not give out its nourishment; the system is not fed and consequently becomes weak; the circulation becomes feeble, the feet grow habitually cold; the person is easily chilled and dreads going out of doors; is happiest when hugging the fire, and takes cold so easily that the expression is frequently used, 'the least thing in the world gives me a cold.' When such a condition is reached the colds are so frequently repeated that before one is cured another comes, and there is a perpetual cough which the most unintelligent know is the certain harbinger—the forerunner of consumption of the lungs. When persons are troubled with indigestion, and one of its effects, acidity, the advice given in nearly all cases is to take something to correct the acidity, such as cream of tartar, soda, valerian, the lyo of wood ashes, and other alkalies. These things correct the acidity, but the stomach gets no power of a better digestion; the effects as far as sensation is concerned are removed, but the system continues to be improperly nourished; the man grows thinner and weaker, and with wasting of flesh and strength there is diminished power of circulation; the person becomes chilly, colds are taken from slight causes and at diminishing intervals, and before he knows it he has an annoying, hacking cough, which too often ends in a wasting, fatal disease. When acidity follows eating it is because there has been an error in the quantity or quality of food eaten; the stomach could not manage it—could not perform the work imposed upon it. The true remedy is to eat less at each meal until no acidity is perceptible, or to change the quality of the food; and in a short time the stomach not being overtasked, gets time to rest, to re-energize, to get strong; then it digests more food and digests it better, with the inevitable result of a more vigorous constitution, more power of endurance, more strength of body and greater elasticity of mind, more happiness and energy to grapple with life's duties, which make existence a pleasure."