

had thought bitter thoughts against Harold. He at least, his only brother, might have sent him some word of comfort. No, neither of them should ever be troubled with him again, he would begin life once more on some sheep farm in Westmoreland.

But now in the moment of his deepest depression, when visiting the Academy from the mere wish of drowning his feeling of solitude in the vortex of a crowd, he accidentally overhears words which, dropping like balm into his soul, removed the thick black cloud of bitterness and despair.

Now he understood why his father had never written a word of reconciliation. How could he write when he never knew to what quarter of the world he had betaken himself, since Davison, to whom the letter had been sent, had already left the village?

Presently the silence of the voices made poor Charles feel for a minute as if the conversation he had heard was all a dream. Then turning softly round, as if fearing to awake, and longing, if only in his sleep, to see once more the dear figure of his father, he stood up and looked eagerly about the crowd.

Yes, there in a corner of the room, looking at some picture, were the familiar figures he had known from childhood. The clergyman seemed to have on the same long-tailed coat and low felt hat, as when he used to surprise him as a boy in the act of climbing the mulberry trees. Tears came into Charles' honest blue eyes, as they fell upon the tall aristocratic form of his father; those shoulders were surely more bent than formerly, and the hand which held the well-remembered gold-headed stick seemed more nerveless than it used to be. There was no mistaking the old fashioned cut of his father's clothes, nor the look of the black silk neckerchief, over which he could just see the ends of the white whiskers, and Charles had now no doubt but what they surrounded the refined but weather-beaten face of his father.

Fearing to upset the old gentleman by showing himself before he had any idea of his return, the young man elbowed his way and stood quietly behind the vicar and the Squire.

"There," Mr. Newton was saying, "now I call that the best bit of painting in the Exhibition. That is what I call life-like. Wouldn't you think now that that dog in the picture was Harold's dog Pat?"

"Well it is like," returned the clergyman, "but if the girl is not taken from my daughter Patience, my name is not Harry Dacres! Now I'll just look the thing out in the catalogue, and see what important artist has dared to put my child in his picture."

A few minutes silence ensued, the Squire was still curiously scrutinizing the dog in the picture, when the vicar exclaimed so excitedly, that the people about him looked up in surprise:

"Bless my heart, Newton, and if the picture is not Patience, and what's more it is painted by your boy Harold!"

The old Squire seemed struck dumb with amazement. His son paint a picture which was hung on these London Academy walls. Ah! no, it is impossible! Well, if so, it was all up with the farming and he would be left alone.

Then Charles saw the look of surprised gratification on the face of his father give way to an expression of feebleness, as taking the vicar's arm, he said:

"Yes, yes, I feel that both my boys are lost to me. Harold will now stick to his painting, and I don't suppose I shall ever see Charles again. As for me and the farming, I fear we must both die out together."

Deeply moved, the young man followed the old gentleman to the hotel. There, managing to have a private interview with the clergyman, he soon introduced himself to his old friend, and the vicar revealed the good news to the Squire.

Nearly worn out with excitement and fatigue, Mr. Newton could hardly believe in the joy of his son's return.

Reconciliation was only too easy now, and with grateful hearts and in perfect peace, the father and son returned to Hersdon.

The Squire not forgetting to provide himself with a catalogue of the Academy, in which he lovingly turned down a particular page. Armed with this, and followed by Charles, the old gentleman made his way up the drive leading to his house.

The dining-room blind was not drawn down, so the Squire could see Harold sitting before the dying embers of the fire looking, in the cold grey spring twilight, the picture of depression and despair.

Waiting dinner for his father, he was trying to face out his disappointment at not having heard from the Academy. By an oversight the young man had received no "varnishing ticket," and he had therefore concluded that the picture had been rejected.

His father's entrance now caused him to turn round, and he looked curiously at the tall dark stranger whom the faint light prevented his recognizing.

Soon curiosity was changed into joy, for the Squire approaching him, laid his hand tenderly on his shoulder, and said in a voice tender with emotion:

"See Harold, he has come back, come back to me and the farming, and everything is all right and explained!"

A hearty hand shake and a cordial "well, old boy!" testified the pleasure of the brothers at meeting.

Then the Squire called eagerly to Bridget to bring lights. The old fashioned candlesticks were placed on the table, the father put on his gold eyeglasses, opened the catalogue at the turned down page, and read in a triumphant voice:—

"Patience, Harold Newton."

Harold stood transfixed with delight. The old gentleman looked at him, his keen blue eyes kindled with humorous kindness, and then said:

"Yes my boy, it is quite true. We shall have a great artist in the family yet, and Charles and I must see if you cannot win—PATIENCE!"

THE END.

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