

THE VICAR'S GOVERNESS.

"It is warm—very," she says, calmly, but indifferently.

"O I call it—werry 'ot," returns he, making his quotation as genially as though she understood it, and plucking a little rose-bud from a tree near him, proceeds to adorn his coat with it.

"It seems a long time since I have seen you," he goes on, presently; and she speaks, his eyes seek hers. Something in her face touches some chord in his careless kindly nature.

"How pale you are!" he says abruptly.

"Am I? The heat, no doubt,"—with a faint smile.

"But thin, too, are you not? And—and—" he pauses. "Anything wrong with you, Ruth?"

"Wrong? No! How should there be?" retorted she, in a curious tone, in which fear and annoyance fight for mastery. Then the storm dies away, and the startled look fades from her pretty face.

"Why should you think me unhappy because I am a little pale?" she asks sullenly.

Branscombe looks surprised.

"You altogether mistake me," he says, gently. "I never associated you in my mind with unhappiness. I merely meant, had you a headache, or any of those small ills that female flesh is heir to? I beg your pardon, I'm sure, if I have offended you."

He has jumped off the wall, and is now standing before her, with only the little gate between them. Her face is still colorless, and she is gazing up at him with parted lips, as though she would fain say something difficult to form into satisfactory speech. At this moment, Lord Sartoris, coming suddenly round the angle of the road, sees them.

Ruth lowers her eyes and some slight transient color creeps into her cheeks. Sartoris, comes quickly up to them, makes some conventional speech to her, and then turns to his nephew.

"Where are you going?" he asks coldly.

"I was going to Hythe," returned the young man, easily. "Just as well I didn't, eh? Should have found you out."

"Found me out,—yes," repeats his uncle, looking at him strangely. How long—how long it takes to find out some people, whom our very hearts are set. "I am going to the village."

"Then so am I," says Branscombe. "Though I should think it would run the original 'deserted' one close on such a day as this. Good-by, Ruth."

He holds out his hand; and the girl, silently returning his warm pressure, makes a faint courtesy to Lord Sartoris. There is no servility, but some nervousness, in the slight salutation.

"How is your father, Ruth?" asks he, detaining her by a quick movement of the hand.

"Quite well, thank you, my lord." Some timidity is discernible in her tone, caused by the unmistakable reproof and sternness in his.

"I am glad to hear it. There is no worthier man in all the parish than John Annersley. I hope nothing will ever occur to grieve or sadden that good old man."

"I hope not, my lord," returns she, steadily, although his voice has meaning in it. In another moment she was gone.

"How does your farming go on, Dorian?" asks Lord Sartoris, presently, rousing himself from a puzzling reverie.

"Quite in the model line," says Dorian, cheerfully. "That Sawyer is an invaluable fellow. Does all the work, you know,—which is most satisfactory. Looks after the men, pays their wages, and takes all my business on his shoulders. Never could understand what a perfect treasure is till I got him. Every one says I am most fortunate in my choice of a steward."

"I dare say. It is amazing the amount of information people possess about other people's servants. But you look after things yourself, of course? However faithful and trustworthy one's hirelings may be, one's own eyes should also be in the matter."

"Oh, of course," acquiesces Dorian, cheerfully. "Nothing like personal supervision, and so on. Every now and then, you know, I look over the accounts, and ask a few questions, and show myself very learned in drainage, and so forth. But I don't see that I gain much by it. Horrid stupid work, too,—with a yawn. Luckily, Sawyer is one of the most knowing fellows in the world, or I should go to smash. He is up to everything, and talks like a book. Quite a pleasure, I give you my word,—almost a privilege,—to hear him converse on short-horns and some eccentric root they call mangels."

"It is possible to be knowing," says his uncle, depreciatingly.

"Eh? oh, no; Sawyer is not that sort of person. He is quite straight all through. And he never worries me more than he can help. He looks after everything, and whatever he touches (metaphorically speaking) turns to gold. I'm sure anything like those pheasants—"

"Yes, yes, I dare say. But pheasants are not everything."

"Well, no; there are a few other things," says Dorian, amicably,—"notably grouse. Why this undying hatred to Sawyer, my dear Arthur? In what has he been found wanting?"

"I think him a low, underhand sneaking fellow," says Sartoris, unhesitatingly. "I should not keep him in my employ half an hour. However," he relents, and somewhat sadly, "one cannot always judge by appearances." They have reached the village by this time, and are walking leisurely through it. Almost as they reach the hotel they meet Mr. Redmond, the rector, looking as hearty and kindly as usual. Lord Sartoris, who had come down on purpose to meet him, having asked his question and received his answer, turns again and walks slowly homeward, Dorian still beside him.

As they again catch sight of the old mill, Sartoris says, quietly, with a laudable attempt at unconcern that would not have deceived the veriest infant, but is quite successful with Dorian, whose thoughts are far away.—"What a nice girl that little Ruth has grown!"

"Awfully pretty girl," returns Dorian, carelessly.

"Yes,—gravely,—very pretty; and I think—I hope—upright, as she is beautiful. Poor child, her looks seem to be a veritable desolate lot. Far too well educated to associate with those of her own class, she is still cut off by the laws of caste from mixing with those above her. She has no friends, no mother, no sister, to love and sympathize with her."

"My dear Arthur, how you do agonize yourself!" says Dorian. "She has her father, and about as comfortable a time altogether as I know of."

"She reminds me of some lowly wayside flower, goes on the old man, with a headless of the brilliant interlude, raising its little head sadly among gay garden plants that care not for her, whilst beyond the hedge that bounds her garden she can watch her own species grow and flourish in wild luxuriance. Her life can scarcely be called happy. There is always a want, a craving for what can never be obtained. Surely the one that could bring sorrow to that pure heart, or tears to those gentle eyes, should be—"

"Asphyxiated," put in Dorian, idly. He yawns languidly and pulls the head off a tall dandelion, and drives me out of my mind. Don't look so disgusted! I feel I'm a miserable sinner; but I really can't help it. I expect there is something radically wrong with me."

"Do you mean to tell me,—with some natural indignation—"that up to this you have never, during all your wanderings, both at home and abroad, seen any woman you could sincerely admire?"

"Numbers, my dear Arthur,—any amount,—but not one I should care to marry. You see, that makes such a difference. I remember once before—last season—you spoke to me in this strain, and simply to oblige you, I thought I would make up my mind to try matrimony. So I went in heavily, heart and soul, for Lady Fanny Hazlett. You have seen Lady Fanny?"

"Yes, a good deal of her."

"Then you know how really pretty she is. Well, I spent three weeks at it; regular hard work the entire time, you know, no breathing-space allowed, thinks nothing of three balls in one night, and insisted on my dancing attendance on her everywhere. I never suffered so much in my life; and when at last I gave in from sheer exhaustion, I found my clothes no longer fitted me. I was worn to a skeleton from loss of sleep, the heavy strain on my mental powers, and the meek endurance of her ladyship's ill tempers."

"Lady Fanny is one woman, Clarissa Peyton is quite another. How could you fail to be happy with Clarissa? Her sweetness, her grace of mind and body, her beauty, would keep you captive even against your will."

Dorian pauses for a moment or two, and then says, very gently, as though he tried to spoil the old man's cherished plan.—"It is altogether impossible. Clarissa has no heart to give me."

Sartoris is silent. A vague suspicion of what now appears a certainty has for some time oppressed and haunted him. At this moment he is suddenly realizing the emptiness of all his dreaming. Presently, he says slowly.—"Are you quite sure of this?"

"As certain as I can be without exactly hearing it from her own lips."

"Is it Horace?"

"Yes; it is Horace," says Branscombe, quietly.

CHAPTER VI.

"Tread softly; bow the head,—
In reverent silence bow,
No passing bell doth toll,
Yet an immortal soul
Is passing now."
—Caroline Southey.

A little room, scantily but neatly furnished. A low bed. A dying man. A kneeling girl,—half child, half woman,—with a lovely, miserable face, and pretty yellow hair.

It is almost dusk, and the sound of the rain patters against the window-panes. The wind—that all day long has been sullen and subdued—is breaking forth into a fury, long suppressed, and rushing through the little town, on its way to the angry sea, makes the casements rattle noisily and the tall trees sway and bend beneath its touch. Above, in the darkening heavens, gray clouds are scurrying madly to and fro.

"Georgie," whispers a faint voice from out the gathering gloom, "are you still there?"

"Yes, dear, I am here, quite near to you. What is it?"

"Sit where I can see you, child,—where I can catch your face. I have something to say to you. I cannot die with this weight upon my heart."

"What weight, papa?"

"The uncertainty about your future," says the dying man, with some excitement. "How can I leave you, my little one, to fight this cruel world alone?"

"Do not think of me," says the girl, in a voice so unnaturally calm as to betray the fact that she is making a supreme effort to steel herself against the betrayal of emotion of any kind. By and by, will there not be long years in which to make her moan, and weep, and lament, and give herself wholly up to that grim giant Despair? "Put me out of your thoughts altogether. I shall do very, very well. I shall manage to live as others have lived before me."

"You and Aunt Elizabeth will take you in for a little while, and then—then—"

"I shall go out as a governess. I shall get into some kind, pleasant family, and every one will be very good to me," says the girl, still in a resolutely cheerful tone. "It will just suit me. I shall like it. Do you understand me, papa? I shall like it better than anything, because children are always fond of me."

The father's face grows sadder, even grayer, as she speaks. He sighs in a troubled fashion and strokes feebly the little fragile hand that clings so desolately thick upon his brow.

"A governess," he murmurs with some

difficulty. "While you are only a child yourself. What a hard, hard fate! Is there no friend to help and comfort you?"

"I have a friend," replies she, steadily. "You have often heard me mention her. You remember the name, now—Clarissa Peyton? She was my best friend at school, and I know she will do what she can for me. She will be able to find me some nice children, and—"

"Friendship,"—interrupts he, bitterly.—"it is a breath, a name. It will fail you when you most need it."

"Clarissa will not fail me," replies she, slowly, though with a feeling of deadly sickness at her heart. "And besides, you must not think of me as a governess always, papa. I shall, perhaps, marry somebody, some day."

The dying man's eyes grow a shade brighter; it is a mere flicker, but it lasts for a moment, long enough to convince her she has indeed given some poor hope to cheer his last hours.

"Yes; to marry somebody," he repeats, wistfully, "that will be best,—to get some good man, some kindly, loving heart to protect you and make a safe shelter for you. There is comfort in the thought. But I hope it will be soon; my darling, before your spirit is broken and your youth dulled."

"I shall marry as soon as ever I can," says Georgie, making a last terrible effort to appear hopeful and resigned. "I shall meet someone very soon, no doubt,—very soon; so do not fret about my more. Why should I not, indeed? I am very pretty, am I not, papa?" In spite of the lightness of her words, a heavy choking sob escapes her as she finishes her little set speech. She buries her face in the bed-clothes, to stifle her rising grief, but her father is almost too far gone to notice it.

"Yes,—so like your mother," he mutters, not at all thickly, clutching aimlessly at the quilt. "Poor Alice!—poor girl! It was that day on the beach, when the waves were dancing, and the sun—or was it?—Did the old man ever forgive—"

He is wandering, dreaming his death-days of happier days, going back, even as he sinks into everlasting sleep, to the gilded hours of youth.

The girl presses his hand to rouse him. "Think of me now," she entreats, despairingly; "it will only be for a little while,—such a little while,—and then you will be with her forever. Oh, papa, my dear, my dear; smile at me once again. Think of me happily; let me feel when you are gone, that your last hours with me were peaceful."

His eyes meet hers, and he smiles tenderly. Gently she slips her arms round him, and, laying her golden head upon the pillow, close to him, presses her lips to his,—the soft warm lips, that contrast so painfully with those pale cold other ones she touches. So she remains for a long time, kissing him softly every now and again, and thinking hopelessly of the end.

She neither sighs, nor weeps, nor makes any outward sign of anguish. Unfulfilled the awfulness of this thing that is about to befall her. And the knowledge has paralyzed her senses, rendering her dull with misery, and tearless.

Presently the white lids, weary with nights of watching, drop. Her head sinks more heavily against the pillow, and, like a child, she is worn out with grief and pain, she sleeps.

When next she wakes, gray dawn is everywhere. The wind still moans unceasingly. Still the rain-drops patter against the panes. She raises her head, and, springing to her feet, bends with bated breath above the quiet form lying on the bed.

Alas! alas! what change is here? He has not moved; no faintest alteration can be traced in the calm pose of the figure that lies just as she last saw it, when sleep o'ercame her. The eyes are closed; the tender smile—the last fond smile—still lingers on his lips; yet, he is dead.

The poor child stands gazing down upon him with parted lips and clasped hands, and a face, almost as ashen as that marble one to which her eyes grow with horror unspeakable. He looks so peaceful—so much as though he merely slept—that for one mad moment she tries not to believe the truth. Yet she knows it is death, unmistakable and relentless, upon which for the first time she looks.

He is gone, forever! Without another kiss, or smile, or farewell word beyond those last uttered. He had set out upon his journey alone, had passed into the other happier land, in the cold silence of the night, even while she slept,—had been torn from her, whilst yet her fond arms encircled him.

Impelled by some indefinite desire, she lays her fingers softly on the hand that lies outside the coverlet. The awful chill that meets her touch seems to reach even to her heart. Throwing her arms above her head, with a wild passionate cry, she falls forward, and lies senseless across the lifeless body.

Misery hurts, but it rarely kills; and broken hearts are out of fashion. All this unhappiness came to Georgie Broughton about a year ago, and though brain-fever followed upon it, attacking her with vicious force, and almost handing her over as a victim to the greedy grave, yet she had survived, and overcome death, and returned from the land of shadows, weakened, indeed, but with life before her.

Months passed before she could summon up sufficient energy to plan or think about a possible future. All this time her aunt Elizabeth had clothed and fed and sheltered her, but unwillingly. Indeed, so grudgingly had she dealt out her measure of "brotherly love" that the girl writhed beneath it, and pined with a passionate longing, for the day that should see her freed from a dependence that had become unspeakably bitter to her.

To-day, sitting in her little room,—an apartment high up in Aunt Elizabeth's house,—she tells herself she will hesitate no longer, that she is strong now, quite strong, and able to face the world. She holds up her delicate little hand between her eyes and the window, as a test of her returning strength, only to find that she can almost see the light through it,—so thin, so fragile, has it grown. But she will not be disheartened; and, drawing pen and paper toward her, she tries to write.

But it is a difficult task, and her head is strangely heavy, and her words will not come to her. A vague feeling, too, that her letter will be unsuccessful, that her friend will fail her, distresses and damps her power to explain her position clearly.

Who can say if Clarissa Peyton will be the same at heart as when last they parted, with many words of good will

and affection, and eyes dark with tears? Grief and misery, and too much of Aunt Elizabeth, have already embittered and generated distrust in her young bosom. She is tired, too. All day she has toiled, has worked religiously, and gone through wearying household labor, trying to repay in some faint way the reluctant hospitality extended to her. At this moment a sense of utter desolation overpowers her, and with a brain on fire, and a heart half-broken, she pushes from her the partly-written letter, and, burying her face in her arms, breaks into low, but heavy weeping.

"Papa! papa!" she sobs, miserably. It is the common refrain of all her sorrowful dirges,—the sadder that no response ever comes to the lonely cry. Of our dead, if we would believe them happy we must also believe that they have forgotten us; else how (when we think of our bleeding hearts) could they keep their bliss so perfect?

Mournfully as Mariana in her moated grange, the poor child laments, while sobs shake her slender frame. And the day dies, and the sun goes down, and happily some noise in the house—a step, a voice—arouses her, and, starting, though from some ugly dream, she takes up her pen again, and writes eagerly, and without premeditation, to the one friend in whom she still puts faith.

(To be Continued.)

DISGUISED FOR MANY YEARS.

A Woman Masquerades as a Man in Montreal.

One of the strangest, and most successful cases of masquerading ever heard of in Canada came to light the other afternoon in Montreal. While Constable Fafard was on duty on Ottawa street he saw a small-sized, dark-haired, pale-faced man, without a hat and dressed in an overcoat and a black pair of trousers staggering in an intoxicated condition across the street.

On accosting the inebriate the latter remarked that he was going home to his house on Tar Lane, a small thoroughfare off Nazareth street. Thinking the man's voice sounded feminine the officer arrested the individual and took him to No. 7 station. There he gave his name as James Mitchell, laborer. On being searched, the "man" was found to be a woman. At eleven o'clock at night a woman called at the station and said, "You have arrested my husband, I want to see him." Asked what her name was she said that she was Mrs. Mitchell and that she had a twelve-year-old son by Mitchell. That they had lived on Tar Lane for twelve years, and they had been married for five years. Her son's name, she said, was Sandy Mitchell.

In the morning, the alleged Jas. Mitchell, said that her right name was Annie Thompson.

She also said that she had lived as a man for the past five years on Tar Lane, working as such and associating entirely with men. How the woman managed to conceal the identity of her sex for so long successfully is a mystery, regarded as a man by the inhabitants of Tar Lane. She always smoked and would get drunk.

The Recorder remanded her until next Friday as the police wish to examine her premises which they say is full of goods. They also claim to have strong reasons for suspecting that the alleged son is a girl.

THE MAN AT THE LEVER.

How a Locomotive Engineer Acts When Running a Very Fast Train.

The locomotive engineer is a remarkably placid fellow, with a habit of deliberate precision in his look and motions. He occasionally turns a calm eye to his gauge and then resumes his quiet watch ahead. The three levers which he has to manipulate are under his hand for instant use, and when they are used it is quietly and in order, as an organist pulls out his stops. The noise in the cab makes conversation difficult, but not as bad as that heard in the car when passing another train, with or without the windows open, and in looking out of the engine cab the objects are approached gradually, not rushed past as when one looks laterally out of a parlor car window. The fact is that the engineer does not look at the side—he is looking ahead—and therefore the speed seems less, as the objects are approaching gradually.

Those who have ridden at ninety miles an hour on a locomotive know that on a good road (and there are many such) the engine is not shaken and swayed in a terrific manner, but that it is comfortable, and the speed is not so apparent as when one is riding in a parlor car, where only a lateral view is had. The engineer can be very comfortable if he is quite sure of the track ahead, and it is only in rounding curves or in approaching crossings that he is in any more than a slight doubt (if it is any more than a ride a bicycle through crowded thoroughfares. Judging by the countenance of the bicycle rider and the engineer, the engineer has rather the best of it.

Discovered the First Diamond.

The Cape of Good Hope Government is contemplating the bestowal of a pension upon Lennard Jacobs, who found the first diamond in the colony. Jacobs, a Korannah, settled in Peniel, now known as Barkly, in 1866. A German missionary, Kallenberg, told him to look sharp for diamonds, explaining to the ignorant Korannah the value and appearance of the stones. Jacobs' children soon after found several glittering stones. One proved to be a real diamond. The others were crystals. Jacobs' wife, not knowing that any particular value attached to the jewel, exchanged it for calico. Jacobs set out on the trail of the lucky trader, and, finding him, forced him to return the jewel. The Korannah's stone was forwarded to Port Elizabeth, where Sir Philip Wodehouse, the Governor, purchased it for £500. He named it the "Star of South Africa," and it still remains in his family. Jacobs, after a lapse of two years, received a horse, wagon, and some sheep as payment. The man is now an octogenarian and in hearty health.