

A LITTLE REBEL

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"Still—my age—as you suggest—so far exceeds Perpetua's—I am indeed so much older than she is, that I might be allowed to escort her wherever it might please her to go."

"The real age of a man nowadays, sir, is a thing impossible to know," says Miss Majendie. "You wear glasses—a capital disguise. I mean nothing offensive—so far—sir, but it behooves me to be careful, and behind those glasses, who can tell what demon lurks? Nay! No offence! An innocent man would feel no offence!"

"Really Miss Majendie!" begins the poor professor, who is as red as though he were the guiltiest soul alive.

"Let me proceed, sir. We were talking of the ages of men."

"We?"

"Certainly! It was you who suggested the idea, that being so much older than my niece, Miss Wynter, you could therefore escort her here and there—in fact everywhere—in fact—with awful meaning—'anywhere'—

"I assure you, madam," begins the professor, springing to his feet—Perpetua puts out a white hand.

"Ah! let her talk," says she. "Then you will understand."

"But men's ages, sir, are a snare and a delusion!" continued Miss Majendie, who has mounted her hobby, and will ride it to the death. "Who can tell the age of any man in this degenerate age? We look at their faces, and say he must be so-and-so, and he a few years younger, but looks are vain, they tell us nothing. Some look old, because they are old, some look old—through vice."

The professor makes an impatient gesture. But Miss Majendie is equal to most things.

"Who excuses himself accuses himself," quotes she with terrible readiness. "Why that gesture Mr. Curzon! I made no mention of your name. And, indeed, I trust your age would place you outside of any such suspicion, still, I am bound to be a little where my niece's interests are concerned. You, as her guardian, if a faithful guardian," with open doubt, as to this, expressed in eye and pointed finger, "should be the first to applaud my caution."

"You take an extreme view," begins the professor, a little feebly, perhaps. That eye and that pointed finger have cowed him.

"One's views have to be extreme in these days if one would continue in the paths of virtue," said Miss Majendie. "Your views," with a piercing and condemnatory glance, "are evidently not extreme. One word for all, Mr. Curzon, and this argument is at an end. I shall not permit my niece, with my permission, to walk with you or any other man whilst under my protection."

"I dare say you are right—no doubt—no doubt," mumbles the professor, incoherently now thoroughly frightened and demoralized. Good heavens! What an awful old woman! And to think that this poor child is under her care. He happens at this moment to look at the poor child, and the scorn for him that gleams in her large eyes perfects his rout. To say that she was right.

"If Perpetua wishes to go for a walk," says Miss Majendie, breaking through a mist of angry feeling that is only half on the surface, "I am here to accompany her."

"I don't want to go for a walk—with you," says Perpetua, rudely it must be confessed, though her tone is low and studiously reserved. "I don't want to go for a walk at all." She pauses and her voice chokes a little and then suddenly she breaks into a small passion of vehemence. "I want to go somewhere to see something," she cries, gazing imploringly at Curzon.

"To see something," says her aunt; "Why it was only last Sunday I took you to Westminster Abbey where you saw the grandest edifice in all the world."

"Most interesting place," says the professor, sotto voce, with a wild but mad hope of smoothing matters down for Perpetua's sake.

If it was for Perpetua's sake, she proves herself singularly ungrateful. She turns upon him a small vivid face, alight with indignation.

"You support her?" cries she. "You! Well, I shall tell you! I—defiantly—I don't want to go to churches at all. I want to go to theatres! There."

There is an awful silence. Miss Majendie's face is a picture. If the girl had said she wanted to go to the devil instead of to the theatre, she could hardly have looked more horrified. She takes a step forward, closer to Perpetua.

"Go to your room! And pray—pray for a purer mind!" says she. "This is hereditary, all this! Only prayer can cast it out. And remember, this is the last word upon this subject. As long as you are under my roof you shall never go to a sinful place of amusement. I forbid you ever to speak of theatres again."

"I shall not be forbidden!" says Perpetua. She confronts her aunt with flaming eyes and crimson cheeks. "I do want to go to the theatre, and to balls and dances, and everything. I—passionately, and with a most cruel, despairing longing in her young voice, "want to dance, to laugh, to sing, to amuse myself—to be the gayest thing in all the world!"

She stops, as if exhausted, surprised perhaps at her own daring, and there is silence for a moment, a little moment, and then Miss Majendie looks at her.

"The gayest thing in all the world,"

and your father only four months dead," says she, slowly, remorseless.

All in a moment, as it were, the little, crimson, angry face grows white as death itself. The professor, shocked beyond words, stands staring, and marking the sad changes in it. Perpetua is trembling from head to foot. A frightened look has come into her beautiful eyes—her breath comes quickly. She is a thing at bay—hopeless, horrified. Her lips part as if she would say something—but no words come. She casts one anguished glance at the professor, and rushes from the room.

It was but a momentary glimpse into a heart, but it was terrible. The professor turns upon Miss Majendie, in great wrath.

"That was cruel—uncalled for," says he, a strange feeling in his heart that he has not time to stop and analyze then. "How could you hurt her so? Poor child! Poor girl! She loved him!"

"Then let her show respect to his memory," says Miss Majendie, vindictively. She is unmoved—undaunted. "She was not wanting in respect."

His tone is hurried. This woman with the remorseless eyes is too much for the gentle professor. "All she does want is change, amusement. She is young. You're must enjoy."

"In moderation—and in proper ways," said Miss Majendie, stonily. "In moderation," she repeats mechanically, almost unconsciously. And then suddenly her wrath gets the better of her, and she breaks out into a violent rage. That one should dare to question her actions! "Who are you?" demands she, fiercely, "that you should presume to dictate right and wrong to me?"

"I am Miss Wynter's guardian," says the professor, who begins to see visions—and all the lower regions let loose at once. Could an original Fury look more horrible than this old woman, and her gray, nodding head, and blind, vindictive passion. He hears his voice faltering, and knows that he is edging toward the door. After all, what can the bravest man do with an angry old woman, except to get away from her as quickly as possible. And the professor, though brave enough in the usual ways, is not brave where women are concerned.

"Guardian or no guardian, I will thank you to remember you are in my house," cries Miss Majendie, in a shrill tone that runs through the professor's head.

"Certainly. Certainly," says he, confusedly, and then he slips out of the room, and having felt the door close behind him, runs tumultuously down the staircase. For years he has not gone down any staircase so swiftly. A vague, if unacknowledged, feeling that he is literally making his escape from a vital danger, is leading wings to his feet. Before him lies the hall-door, and that way safety lies, safety from that gaunt, irate figure up stairs. He is not allowed to reach it, however—just yet.

A door on the right side of the hall is opened cautiously; a shapely little head is as cautiously pushed through it, and two anxious red lips whisper: "Mr. Curzon," first, and then, as he turns in answer to the whisper, "Sh—sh!"

CHAPTER V.

"My love is like the sea, As changeful and as free; Sometimes she's angry, sometimes rough, Yet oft she's smooth and calm enough— Ay, much too calm for me."

Perpetua. A sad-eyed, tearful-eyed Perpetua, but a lovely Perpetua for all that.

"Well!" says she, shaking her head ominously, and putting her forefinger against her lip. "Come in, here," says she softly, under her breath.

"Here," when he does come in, is a most untidy place, made up of all things heterogeneous. Now that he is nearer to her, he can see that she has been crying, vehemently, and that the tears still stand thick within her eyes.

"I felt I must see you," says she, "to tell you—to ask you. To—Oh! you heard what she said! Do—do you think—"

"Not at all, not at all," declares the professor hurriedly. "Don't—don't cry Perpetua! Look here," laying his hand nervously upon her shoulder and giving her a little angry shake. "Don't cry! Good Heavens! Why should you mind that awful old woman?"

Nevertheless he had minded that awful old woman himself very considerably.

"But—it is soon isn't it?" says she, "I know that myself and yet—" wistfully—"I can't help it. I do want to see things and to amuse myself."

"Naturally," says the professor.

"And it isn't that I forget him," says she in an eager, intense tone. "I never forgot him—never—never. Only I do want to laugh sometimes and to be happy, and to see Mr. Irving as Charles I."

The climax is irresistible. The professor is unable to suppress a smile.

"I'm afraid, from what I have heard, that won't make you laugh," says he.

"It will make me cry, then. It is all the same," declares she impartially. "I shall be enjoying myself, I shall be seeing things. You,"—doubtfully and mindfully of his last speech—"Even't you seem him?"

"Not for a long time, I regret to say. I—I'm always busy," says the professor, apologetically.

"Always studying?" questions she.

"For the most part," returns the professor, an odd sensation growing

that he is feeling ashamed.

All work, and no play," begins Perpetua, and stops, and shakes her charming head at him. "You will be a dull boy, if you don't take care," says she.

A ghost of a little smile warms her sad lips as she says this, and lights up her shining eyes like a ray of sunlight. Then it fades, and she grows sorrowful again.

"Well, I can't study," says she.

"Why not?" demands the professor quickly. Here he is on his own ground, and here he has a pupil to his hand—a strange, an enigmatical, but a lovely one. "Believe me knowledge is the one good thing that life contains worth having. Pleasure, riches, rank, all sink into insignificance beside it."

"How do you know?" says she. "You haven't tried the others."

"I know it for all that. I feel it. Get knowledge—such knowledge as the short span of life allotted to us will allow you to get. I can lend you some books, easy ones at first, and—"

"I couldn't read your books," says she; "and—you haven't any novels, I suppose?"

"No," says he. "But—"

"I don't care for any books but novels," says she, sighing. "Have you read 'Alas! I never have anything to read here, because Aunt Jane says novels are of the devil, and that if I read them I shall go to hell.'"

"Nonsense!" said the professor gruffly.

"You mustn't think I'm afraid about that," says Perpetua, demurely. "I am not. I know the same place could never contain Aunt Jane and me for long, so I'm all right."

The professor struggles with himself for a moment and then gives way to mirth.

"Ah! now you are on my side," cries his ward exultantly. She tucks her arm into his. "And as for all that talk about 'knowledge,' don't bother me about that any more. It's a little rude of you, do you know? Oh, you would think I was a dunce—that I know nothing, whereas, I assure you," throwing out her other hand, "I know quite as much as most girls, and a great deal more than many. I daresay," putting her head to one side, and examining him thoughtfully, "I know more than you do if it comes to that. I don't believe you know this moment who wrote 'The Master of Ballantrae.' Come now, who was it?"

She leans back from him, gazing at him mischievously, as if anticipating his defeat. As for the professor, he grows red—he draws his brows together. Truly this is a most impertinent pupil! The Master of Ballantrae? It sounds like Sir Walter, and yet—The professor hesitates, and is lost.

"Scott," says he, with as good an air as he can command.

"Wrong," cries she, clasping her hands softly, noiselessly. "Oh, you ignorant man! Go buy that book at once. It will do you more good and teach you a great deal more than any of your dusty tomes."

She laughs gaily. It occurs to the professor, in a misty sort of way, that her laugh, at all events, would do any one good.

She has been pulling a ring on and off her finger unconsciously, as if thinking, but now she looks up at him.

"If you spoke to her again, when she was in a better temper, don't you think she would let you take me to the theatre some night?" She has come nearer, and has laid a light appealing little hand upon his arm.

"I am sure it would be useless," says he, taking off his glasses and putting them on again in an anxious fashion. They are both speaking in whispers and the professor is conscious of feeling a strange sort of pleasure in the thought that he is sharing a secret with her. "Besides," says he, "I couldn't very well come here again."

"Not come again? Why?"

"I'd be afraid," returns he simply.

Whereupon Miss Wynter, after a second's pause, gives way and laughs "consumedly," as they would have said long, long years before her pretty features saw the light.

"Ah! yes," murmurs she. "How she did frighten you. She brought you to your knees—you actually—this with keen reproach— took her part against me."

"I took her part to help you," says the professor, feeling absurdly miserable.

"Yes," sighing. "I daresay. But though I know I should have suffered for it afterward, it would have done me a world of good to hear somebody tell her his real opinion of her for once. I should like," calmly, "to see her writhe; she makes me writhe very often."

"This is a bad school for you," says the professor, hurriedly.

"Yes? Then why don't you take me away from it?"

"If I could—but— Well, I shall see," says he vaguely.

"You will have to be very quick about it," says she. Her tone is quite ordinary; it never suggests itself to the professor that there is meaning beneath it.

"You have some friends surely?" says he.

"There is a Mrs. Constans who comes here sometimes to see Aunt Jane. She is a young woman and her mother was a friend of Aunt Jane's, which accounts for it, I suppose. She seems kind. She said she would take me to a concert soon, but she has not been here for many days. I daresay she has forgotten all about it by this time."

She sighs. The charming face so near the professor's is looking sad again. The white brow is puckered, the soft lips droop. No. She cannot stay here, that is certain—and yet it was her father's wish, and who is he, the professor, that he should pretend to know how girls should be treated? What if he should make a mistake? And yet again, should a little brilliant face like that know sadness? It is a problem difficult to solve. All the professor's learning fails him now.

To be Continued.

There Are Tills.

It requires no effort for a newly created man to hunt for weeks or discover them all. He comes down exhaustedly in covered tomes. Acts many of which, though have become utterly use.

It is curious to note that every time Perpetua every one of the five ty peers, if his way to him through any of deer parks, is entitled ter, to kill one or two away with them as his quise. He may do the way home again, but in he must give due notice tion against the deer's life his horn, and thus letting ter know that sport is foot. to clear him from the charge of ing, which would otherwise be preferred against him.

It need not be said that this privilege is one distinctly more honored in the breach than by observance. The Queen's Rangers would stare open eyed at the vision of the Lord Chancellor blowing his horn and scouring Windsor Park, blazing right and left at the timid herd of meek eyed fawns grazing contentedly on the royal demesne. But he is entitled to do it, all the same.

If a young peer of pugilistic and combative tendency were to tackle you in the streets, and violently assault you, it would be within your province to summon him like an ordinary mortal at the police court; but you may not know that were he to breathe out the fiercest denunciations and threatenings against you for the future the magistrate would not have the slightest power to bind him over TO KEEP THE PEACE.

To gain such injunction against the noble earl would require an application in the High Court of Justice, and possibly might entail considerable outlay of pounds, shillings and pence.

To look at it from the other side, suppose you punch the peer. If his lordship cares to take a serious view of the assault it amounts to a very great crime. It is quite possible for it to be regarded as a contempt of the whole House of Parliament, and you may find yourself in for very severe penalties.

Stranger than this, perhaps, is the fact that you are liable to be similarly severely punished, if, instead of his lordship, you should chance to exercise your fistic abilities upon his coachman or footman. This seems ridiculous until we remember that, in olden days, to attend Westminster was fraught with danger to the person, and it was necessary to inflict heavy penalties in order that the State's representatives should have the necessary protection.

A peer of the realm cannot be arrested except for indictable offence, and in cases of treason felony can only be tried by their fellow peers, and convicted by a majority.

The conductors of modern scandal papers lay themselves open to be pounced upon and punished with the utmost rigor of the law for daring to utter the slightest suggestion of scandal against any of Her Majesty's lords. To speak ill of them is to commit the act of scandalum magnatum, a very heinous offence according to act of Parliament.

A peer is never really obliged to buy stamps, though, now the penny postage is in force, no peer of any standing would avail himself of his privilege of franking letters post free.

Then, again, if he should have the bad fortune to be involved in a Chantery suit his word of honor counts man's oath. If he is a very progressive peer and has hit upon an excellent project for some purpose of public benefit, he is fully entitled to wait upon the Queen in person, and mention his business. If he should happen to be bald headed, and is ashamed of the fact, he is not bound to remove his hat when he enters a court of justice.

Last of all—though there is little consolation in the fact—should he be condemned to be hanged, he can demand a noose of silk.

THE CLIMATE OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Little Rain There When the High Average of Temperature is Considered.

Observations of the weather have been systematically made for many years in South Africa, and in the Cape Colony the meteorological conditions have been as carefully and completely studied as in England. In other parts however, the observations are far less satisfactory, and in the Transvaal observations may be said scarcely to exist, our knowledge of the weather changes being extremely meagre.

Some few years ago the "Report of the Meteorological Commission" at the Cape of Good Hope embodied detailed rainfall maps for each month, showing the distribution of the rain in different parts of South Africa. The average results for the year show that, with the exception of a small area in the immediate vicinity of Cape Town, the total rainfall for the year is almost wholly below twenty inches; that is, considerably less than in London. In most places the average for the year is less than ten inches, and at some stations it falls as low as five inches for the whole twelve months.

In the Orange Free State the average rainfall for the year is about twenty inches. The winter rains are very small, the aggregate for a month being only a few tenths of an inch on the average. With the commencement of the southern summer the rains increase, although it is not until November and December that the average fall for the month exceeds an inch, and even in those months the rainfall in many places is only 0.3 inch or 0.4 inch. In January, February and March the average in the Orange Free State is four or five inches in each month.

The meagre returns for the Transvaal show that in 1890 the rainfall eight miles east of Johannesburg was practically nil in July, August and September, while in October the rainfall was 5.77 inches, which was the wettest month of the year, and rain fell on eleven days. In both November and December the rainfall in the vicinity of Johannesburg exceeded five inches, and the total number of days with rain during the year was sixty-one. In the Orange Free State the results for 1890 show that there was practically no rain in September, but in October the rains were fairly heavy, and the Basuto land September is also exceedingly dry.

The English language, said the man of enthusiasms, is a gold mine of poetry. I thought it must have been some sort of a gold mine, answered the person of prejudices, or else the English wouldn't have taken a fancy to it in the first place.

A LARGE ROCKING STONE.

Buenos Ayres seems to have the largest "rocking stone," yet discovered. It is situated on the slope of the mountain of Tandil, in the southern part of the province, and measures 90 feet long by 18 feet broad, and it is 24 feet high. Its bulk is 5,000 cubic feet, and it weighs at least 24 tons. Nevertheless, it is so beautifully poised that a single person can set it rocking. When the wind blows from the southeast, the stone, which is pyramidal in form, swings to and fro on its foundation like the branches of a tree.

ROMAN THEATER DISCOVERED.

At Benevento, a large Roman theater, as large as the theaters of Pompeii, and of Marcellus and better preserved, has been discovered. The entrances, the ambulatories, the lower rows of seats, the stage and the orchestra are all perfect.