

# UNCLE DICK;

Or, The Result of Diplomacy and Tact.

## CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont'd).

Looking up, she realized that his eager eyes were fixed earnestly on her. Saw in them the smouldering fire waiting for the smallest draught to lick it into flame.

"Are you reading it now? Don't you know?"—with a nervous little laugh—"that it is very rude to stare so?"

He felt reminded of the action of an engine's piston; his heart was pumping so.

"Don't," he urged. "Please don't say so. It would wipe out half the happiness of your presence if—"

That eagerness of his must be checked! There was no knowing how far it would lead! She stepped behind the lattice of conventionality.

"It is growing late." She was on her feet; used the interview terminator again. "We must be returning."

He drew in his breath; was so afraid. Struggled in vain to control his rebellious pulse; fancied he had gone too far. Tried to retrace his steps and found—as most of us do—walking backwards gracefully to be a matter difficult of performance.

"I have not offended you by speaking as I have done, the truth?"

"Offended?" She spoke shortly. Just repeated his word, not being in a mood for the making of long speeches; added—

"Oh, no! . . . Now let us be going."

They went. Homeward bound the conversation perched on stilts; seemed artificially out of reach; a reserve had sprung up between them. Both were making obvious efforts to be natural. Masters was appreciative of the fact that his own were a sickly failure.

At her gate she assumed merri- ment; a transparent, fraudulent kind of mirth. Said laughingly, one hand on the latch the other ready to place in his—

"And now, Mr. Pronhet, what of the morrow? Will it hail, rain, wind or snow?"

It was not infectious, that merriment of hers. She had fallen on the first subject in Valapuk—the weather. Staple of English intercourse, how many can deny it a debt of gratitude? Common ground—a national heritage whereon we can disport ourselves at ease.

"Rain, I am afraid." He looked round. "Those banks of clouds augur badly."

"You are not a comforting sort a prophet! Assumption of your correctness means confinement to the house all day."

"Yes."

He looked at her as he answered. The glance made it hardly a laconic reply. . . . She stretched out her hand. With the light in her forget-me-not eyes full on, said—

"Good-bye."

Taking her hand—his retention of it was for a period considered longer than is considered quite good form in Mayfair—he asked—

"If a wet day—to-morrow, you know—I shall not see you at all, shall I?"

Those eloquent lashes of hers helped her speech as she replied— "It may clear in the evening, as it did to-day. I may not take Gracie out in the damp. But, unless it rains, I shall take my own walk in the evening."

Even a smaller mercy would have made him thankful. He enquired eagerly— "At eight o'clock?"

The fringes lifted, giving him what he extravagantly labelled a glimpse of Heaven. In the moonlight he saw all the glory of her eyes, as she answered— "Yes."

He had never thought it possible that room could be found for so delightful a tone in a woman's voice, as was in Miss Mivvins' utterance of that one-syllable word.

"If you should find me walking or the parade at that time," he suggested, "you—you would not be displeased?"

She looked at him again. What she read prompted her to think him deserving some little reward. Casting her eyes down to her hand, which he was still holding, and lowering her voice too, till it was

almost a half-whisper, she said—

"What—what would you think if I said that—?"

She hesitated—stopped. Quite eagerly he endeavored to help her on; interjected—

"Yes?"

"That I might be disappointed if I did not see you?"

The sigh he drew was of a plumbless nature. He answered— "You will not be disappointed."

The sweetest of tones, speaking in the low, tremulous voice which may say so little but mean so much—

"Good-night!"

A grip of her hand that almost hurt her; a light in his eyes which had never found place there before and he echoed her final words— "Good-night!"

Softness in both their voices, in their whole manner. A reciprocated hand pressure.

So they parted.

## CHAPTER IX.

Miss Mivvins was very full of thought of the man who had left her; he was full to the point of overbrimming of thought of her. They were soulful thoughts, which lasted them both till sleep closed the windows of their souls.

In the case of the man the eyelids remained wide open till the grey dawn flashed rosily before the rising sun. Even then he dreamt: of her.

Later, when he awoke, it was evident that a halo of success would surround his weather prophecy. His prediction of wet turned out correct; it rained nearly all day. But Cupid must have bribed Pluvius; the rain ceased to fall as the grey of evening closed down on the day.

Then they met again. It was a walk only; a walk up and down the front. She did not feel equal to trusting herself on that seat again. Did not trust him—or herself.

A moonlight night, a murmuring sea and a man with eyes of greater cloquence than his tongue possessed—decidedly she thought it was best to avoid sitting down.

Miss Mivvins did not altogether seem herself; was nothing like so bright as she had been before. The sweet mouth never parted in laughter once during all the walk. It was a new mood to him; one in which he could find no pleasantness.

He taxed her with it; something was worrying her. He would have liked to plainly ask what, that he might lighten or at least share the trouble. She, not admitting it, endeavored to shake off the depression.

As their good-byes were uttered, he exhibited a surprising fertility in the invention of hints of meetings again. She, for reasons known to herself, did not take them.

The weather afforded her a shield; she switched the conversation on to that. Clouds were shaping ominously; there was a prospect of more foul weather on the breaking of the morrow. So was avoided any open reference to another evening walk when they parted.

Clouds, of another kind, seemed to envelop him. He had counted so on the meeting; had watched the ticking away of the hours till the fall of eventide; till eight o'clock came.

All the warmth of the previous evening, all his delicious anticipation, was eclipsed by the frigidity of to-night. He felt like one for whom the sun has set while it is yet day.

He worried himself to the point of haggardness—being a man possessed of strong emotions. Walked home mind-laden with fear that he had done or said something to offend her. Racking his brain, yet failed to find a record; could not imagine what had been his sin.

His slumber was not of the peaceful kind. Although his dreams were of her—the woman his waking thoughts were so full of—they were not of the pleasant kind of yesterday. Again, too, he saw the red fringe in the east grow into dawn before he slept.

A warm, drizzling rainy day; so he found the weather on awaking. So warm that at breakfast he had his window open; his landlady re-

ferred to the condition of things as being "muggy." That was not the only speech of hers he heard that morning.

The proverb about listeners and the good things they hear occurred to him. By reason of the open window he was unable to avoid overhearing a conversation. It was carried on between the next door landlady and his own.

Masters would have scorned a suggestion of eavesdropping. He was aroused from the depths of the morning paper, in the columns of which he was immersed, by hearing his own name spoken. That is usually a call to attention to most of us. The voice of the neighbor reached him—

"Yes. My Liza sa' em walking together, so to speak. Lord, 'e don't look a gent like that, do 'e! But you never know, do you? As I was only sayin' to Mrs. Robinson this very mornin', quiet ones is always the wust. She's a 'ot lot, and no mistake!"

"Are you sure it was my lodger?" The inquiry was from his own landlady. He recognized her voice, low pitched as it was; there were top notes in it she could never eliminate. The answer came over the garden wall—

"My Liza ain't a fool, I give you my word! There, as I says, you never know, do you? It don't always do to judge by 'pearances. Your ground floor looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, as the sayin' is. But she—there! You can tell with arf-an-igh what she is."

"Yes. I s'pose there ain't no mistake about that. Fine feathers don't always make fine birds."

"She's going about, in a manner of speaking, plainly dressed too, just now. Ev you noticed it? I see her with my own eyes in Juggins' shop without a single ring on her finger! She as used to ev a 'alf-dozen sparkling di-monds on each 'and."

"Pawnd 'em, perhaps."

"No fear! She knows your lodger's well-to-do, and she's working 'im fo' rill 'es wuth, as the sayin' is. Lor! She's up to snuff, I can tell you. As I was sayin' to Mrs. Smith, them kind of women is up to every thing."

A voice, presumably the tones of the aforementioned Liza, broke in. The next door neighbor was being called; some one had called about lodgings. The conversation ended with the suddenness of an eye's twinkling.

Little as Masters had heard, he was the whole day trying to digest it. Material for thought was there; a pregnancy of horrible suggestions. As to his work, he did not write a line; could not read a paragraph. After the manner of a caged beast walked up and down the room. When at last he sat, sheer exhaustion was the compelling force.

His mid-day meal was turned over on his plate; an idea of eating it was out of the question; it was taken away practically untouched. He had no room for physical food; he was so very full just then of mental provender. One dominating thought reigned over all others. What should—could he do?

His habit was to drink a cup of tea in the early afternoon. His landlady entered bearing a little tray. Whilst she was spreading its contents, the thoughts consuming him found vent. He said— "Don't go away—for a moment. I want to ask you something."

"Yes, sir?"

"You know Ivy Cottage—on the front? Do you know who lives there?"

She looked at him for a moment before answering. An autumn bird needs careful handling; if it takes flight the nest remains empty till the following summer. She passed her tongue over the thin lips which framed it; said wearily—

"No, sir. That is to say, not their present names."

Memory's finger pointed out the conversation of the morning over the garden wall; this woman's share in it. He knew she was lying. His anger against things in general was smouldering; something to let it loose on would be a relief. Why this deceit and mystery?

The wisdom of keeping his foot on the brake was known to him. He was wise enough, too, to grasp the fact that a man in a temper weakens his armor. There was battle to be done; he meant having it out before the woman left his room. "Is that altogether correct?" he inquired. "Surely you must, living in this place, have heard?"

"Oh!"

Exclamation with a vinegary shake of her head. She was standing now with her mittened hands crossed, prepared evidently for a long talk; continued— "We hear plenty about them, sir!"

"You know the master of the house?"

"Not the present one, sir—if there is one just now!"

In shaping the deep lines round her mouth his satanic majesty had surely held the graver! Masters thought the meaning smile with which she let loose the innuendo positively hideous in its suggestiveness. His inflammable emotions rendered it difficult for him to get proper control of his voice as he enquired—

"The mistress, then?"

Impatience in the tone of his voice. He had hoped to elicit replies without this direct inquiry. Felt ashamed of himself the while he probed. It was not a feeling the woman shared. She answered— "Oh, yes, sir."

The readiness of her answer was apparent. She was the kind of woman to whom slander was a dainty morsel to be tongue-rolled. Her own tongue became as the pen of a ready writer. It sickened the questioner, but he continued— "And the governess?"

Vigorous shaking of the woman's head again. In the same redolent-of-sourness style too, as she answered—

"There is no governess there, sir. The only servants is the cook and 'ousemaid and the odd boy."

(To be Continued.)

## The Farm

### DOES POULTRY FARMING PAY?

This question, very commonly asked, is not very easily answered. Like all other kinds of business, poultry keeping without proper supervision, will not pay; neither will any other business that I am acquainted with. Under an efficient system of management, however, poultry farming can be made to yield very satisfactory profits.

No one should attempt to keep poultry with a view of profits and the rearing of a large number, who is not prepared to bestow a considerable amount of care and attention upon the charge he is undertaking. By a system of thorough routine, the necessary trouble and pains necessary in properly caring for poultry become simplified. The tasks will soon be performed as a matter of daily work.

Everyone must be his own overseer in the poultry business and see that the first conditions for securing success are always complied with. If left to the care of hirelings, unless these happen to be especially trustworthy, loss and disappointment will inevitably ensue. Women and girls are much better suited than men for caring for poultry. Boys are notoriously unfitted to have the charge of the flock, being generally careless and forgetful.

There are five primary essential points for the successful management of poultry. A good house is essential. It should be made so that it can be cleaned and white-washed and thus kept free from vermin. Poultry will not do well with lice. Cleanliness is another point in poultry keeping of the very highest importance. Fowls will never do well in a dirty house. Warmth, at one time thought to be essential, can, if modern experiments are to be relied upon, largely be done away with, though I may say I prefer the warm house. Dryness is an absolute necessity.

The last essential is pure air. The poultry house must be built so that there will be no bad, close or confined atmosphere. In other words, the house must have good ventilation. Whether poultry keeping is carried on extensively or on a small scale, it will be found to be one of the best paying branches on the farm, provided it is carried on in a business-like manner.—Canadian Dairyman.

### FARM NOTES.

Sixty-two degrees is the best temperature to which milk can be set, but the surroundings must be perfect.

Within a range equal to the height of trees, the growth of most crops will be lessened. Beyond this limit, and for a distance seven times as great as the height of the screen, there will be a decided benefit to most crops, and especially to those liable to be injured by severe winds.

The reason so many farmers fail to lift the mortgage from the farm is for want of a definite plan of action. All farmers who have removed such encumbrances are those who have raised some special crop or line of stock, with the express idea of thus reducing the indebtedness. The ordinary proceeds of the farm were devoted to the living of

the family and the payment of interest.

The largest profits are realized from dairy butter by the men who supply their butter to the families each week, and at a fixed price for the season. This method is certainly the most satisfactory to consumers as well as to the dairymen. The consumer can depend on a regular supply of good butter of uniform quality. If they run short and find it necessary to buy a little store butter the comparison only leads them to a better appreciation of fresh dairy butter. The dairyman has regular sale for a given amount of butter, and can determine when to add new customers or dismiss some. He pays no grocer for handling his product and can command a uniform price for a good article.

### LIVE STOCK NOTES.

Sheep should be housed and kept from all storms. Exposure causes the chief troubles with sheep—catarrhal and lung affections.

Where outdoor wintering with proper protection for hives is practiced, a colony of bees will require 25 to 30 pounds of stores to carry it through, while with indoor wintering a little more than half this amount will suffice.

To test the question of high feeding wearing out cows, four were kept till eighteen to twenty years old, at which time they were still milking profitably and fattened well. One cow that made a very poor record as a three-year-old, by high feeding was brought to ten pounds old and later to twelve pounds a week, and was fattened in her nineteenth year and gave milk enough to pay for her feed while being fattened.

It is only the poultry keeper who makes pets of his flock, and knows the individual points of each one, who can attain success. Such a one can do much to improve the capacity of his hens by setting only from those that prove the best layers. The professional breeders all understand this, and when they offer selected eggs at a higher price it is better if they deal honestly to take them than eggs equally pure bred from the common flock. Unless the breeder takes this care in selecting his own stock, it will deteriorate, even though the breed may not be mixed with others.

### TRAGEDY ON AN ISLAND.

#### An Evicted Tenant's Last Terrible Revenge.

An extraordinary affair is reported from Whiddy Island, off the coast of Kerry, Ireland. A young man named John Groggin, who, with his family, was evicted from his farm on the island a year ago, waylaid the present occupiers of the farm, who are paternal cousins of his, as they were returning from a neighbor's. He fired several shots from a revolver, but only one took effect, shattering the arm of Christopher Goggin.

He then went to the farm, and fired a number of shots through the doors and windows, killing a horse in a stable, after which he set fire to the house.

The flames were noticed on board the battleship Britannia, and an officer and twenty men landed, and succeeded in extinguishing them after great damage had been done. In the darkness one of the sailors missed his footing, and fell into a moat running round an adjacent battery, being killed instantly.

Meanwhile Christopher Goggin and his brother had notified the police on the mainland, whereupon a strong party, under Head Constable Looney, obtained a boat and went out to the island. They reached the old pier at midnight.

Almost immediately afterwards one of the officers heard a man approaching him. He went towards him, but as he did so the man, who proved to be John Goggin, put a revolver to his mouth and fired, falling dead into the constable's arms.

Goggin lost his wife and baby a week ago, and the fact that the cousin whom he wounded was to have been married, and to have lived on the farm, from which he had been evicted, is said to have preyed on his mind.

### COSTLY PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

Parliament House, Melbourne, which has been rushed by "the unemployed" of the Commonwealth capital, is the costliest legislative palace in Greater Britain. Five million dollars have been expended on it, and it is not yet completed. It belongs to the Parliament of Victoria, but since Federation it has been the meeting place of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, its owners moving to a wing of the exhibition building close by.

The average age at death of people who die through accidents is thirty-five and a half years.