

house, John Grey had left Violet Vernon, the young governess he had rescued from the clutches of Mrs. Bindels, the harpy of Rose Court.

The two good old Salvationists had come to look upon Violet almost as their own daughter, and she had made herself the right-hand of Martha Smilie in the domestic work of the little domicile. But times were hard, the old cabman was still out of regular employment, and the girl felt that she ought to be doing something to keep herself, and to help the kindly old couple who had taken her to their hearts.

Greatly to the joy of Martha, and "Smiling Jacob" Violet had, as we know, joined the Salvation Army and become an earnest worker. It was through the connection with the Army, some two months after she donned the uniform, that her chance came.

Mrs. Captain Kempton wanted a nursery governess for her three small children, and Violet gratefully accepted the post. She was thus still able to remain with the Smilies, and the knowledge of this relieved John Grey of any anxiety he might have felt when leaving town with Miss Pragg.

The heat in London during the months of July and August had been very oppressive, and following on the privations of winter had greatly tried Violet's strength. No doubt her three small charges tried her also, but she did not complain.

John Grey, coming back from the freshness of sea and country was struck with her pale and dejected appearance, and mentioned it to Martha with some uneasiness.

"She do look white and pinched," admitted Martha, "but what can ye expect? Cooped up with them three noisy youngsters in that little back sittin'-room at Mrs. Kempton's, a-trying to learn 'em their letters—an' no fresh air—'tain't to be wondered at. Poor girl she do look dead beat at times an' has 'orful 'eadaches." Martha was very sympathetic. John Grey looked grave.

"I WISH Violet could have had some of the beautiful sea air at Apple-tree, instead of breathing smoke and petrol all summer."

"Aye—that's so—but it don't do fer poor folk to be discontented," murmured Martha, "we has to make the best of life as it comes to us. But ye're lookin' fine yerself, John Grey," she added with pleasure.

"I feel perfectly fit and well," he laughed, and then his face clouded again, as he puzzled his brains to find a remedy for Violet's dejection, some means of bringing the colour to her cheeks and the brightness to her dull eyes. It hurt him to see the languid, lifeless look she wore.

Miss Pragg was a strict Sabbatarian, and never used her car on Sunday except in case of great emergency; it was therefore a clear day for John Grey, to employ as he chose. It was then he thought most of Violet, and the good it would do her to get out of London, even for a few hours, and so fill her lungs with fresher air than she got at the "Army Barracks" in the heart of the crowded district where she spent most of her time on Sunday.

He thought the change from her drab surroundings to something brighter would lift up her spirits. Still he doubted if Martha and Jacob would approve of the Sabbath day being made use of to build up the girl's physical body. He did not wish to offend against their strict religious views, and he approached the subject with diffidence and hesitation; only to be once again joyfully surprised at the breadth of their charity and the humanity of their religion.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," said old Jacob in answer to his proposal. "You can think of Him, mate, in the green fields, as well as in the city streets."

"Better, Jacob," chimed in Martha. "'Tain't a sin to git into the fresh air, it's what folks does when they gits there, that matters."

John Grey always admired the directness of this simple old couple in going to the root of things.

"You don't consider it breaking the Sabbath then, to get into the country?"

"Them that works shut up all week, don't have no other time to see God's beautiful earth," said Jacob, "an' that's why, I often thinks, the blessed Master Hissell walked through the fields on the Sabbath day an' said—'there was One there who was greater than the temple.'"

"I thought it would do Violet good—she does not look at all well."

"So 'twould, mate—so 'twould. To my way of thinking, if yer thoughts is set on worldly things, yer can break th' Sabbath day in church or chapel same as out of 'em—it's the heart wot matters—not the place."

Thus, with the approval of Martha and Jacob, Violet went to Richmond with John Grey, and standing on the Terrace, drank in the beauty of the noble river at her feet, with the sunshine and the balmy air. At other times they wandered under the big chestnut trees in Bushey Park, or stood on the high ground of Hampstead Heath, letting the breeze blow upon their uncovered heads, and one glorious never-to-be-forgotten day they got as far as Epping Forest. The colour crept back to her wan cheeks, her eyes grew brighter, her dejection fell from her like a garment.

These were the bright spots in her monotonous life to which she looked forward all the week, the red-letter days of a drab existence that lifted it to a higher level, and made of life something worth the living.

With the exception of Violet, John Grey had no companions. She did not jar upon him during his frequent fits of abstraction, she did not interrupt his musings, or annoy him with senseless chatter.

OCCASIONALLY, if he had a free evening, he took her into Hyde Park to hear the band play.

It was on one of these gala occasions that they sat, the grave man and the young girl, beyond the fringe of the crowd round the band-stand. The Park was full of promenaders, people who were glad to escape from the streets with their smell of petrol and din of traffic, and it was still too warm to crowd into theatres.

It was light enough to see the elegant costumes of the women amid the gay crowds ever shifting and moving. Violet responded to her surroundings spontaneously, her eyes sparkled and she was laughing and chatting merrily.

John Grey, in a light summer suit, a cigarette in his mouth, watched the crowds with that curiously detached air which he habitually wore; the neatly dressed girl beside him, casting frequent glances at the handsome abstracted face, saw a sudden light leap to his eyes, as a tall graceful figure swung into view, walking with the erect, easy carriage of one accustomed to much exercise in the open air.

The lady's fair hair was confined under a blue silk turban of the Moorish style, its only ornament a white aigrette fastened by a jewelled brooch. Margaret Assitas always favoured small head-gear, which suited the peculiar style in which she dressed her hair. Her cream coloured gown was of soft clinging material swathed round her perfect form in such a way as to show it off to the best advantage; by her side sauntered a tall man smoking a cigar.

John Grey was following her every movement with hungry eyes. As she drew nearer, the floating end of a lace scarf thrown round her shoulders, caught in a bush. Involuntarily he sprang to disentangle it, before her escort knew what had happened. With a slightly heightened colour, she murmured a word of thanks, then raising her eyes, an involuntary expression of surprise crept into them as she exclaimed almost inaudibly:

"You—Grey?"

He raised his hat and stood aside as she passed, her glance travelled to Violet, whose eyes were fixed on her.

"What rotten cheek!" muttered the man at her side, considerably annoyed at being forestalled, and favouring the interrupter with a savage scowl.

"Oh, no, Archie—it was quite all right," her voice came back clearly as the two passed on, and Grey resumed his seat beside Violet.

(To be continued.)

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