

THE BLINDNESS OF DR. GRAY

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CHAPTER XIII

UNEXPECTED VISITS

When Kerins and his protectors were on St. Stephen's morning, they soon realized that they had been visited the previous night with sad results.

"What could have that dog been doing?" said one of the men. "He's a savage enough, sometimes. Come here, you brute! What came over you last night, that you allowed a midnight thief to come in and steal our dog everything before him?"

"Do you hear me?" said the fellow. "You are fed and loused to protect you. You're a dog, and we depend on you, you lazy brute. You can bark and bite at sheep and lambs. What were you doing with your nose in the air, and emitted a low, long, melancholy howl. It meant clearly:

"I'm an unfaithful dog. I saw the evil thing done; and the evil man who did it. I saw him sneak in, and search your pockets, and take your revolvers. And I was silent. He said 'Snap! Snap! Good old dog!' and I couldn't bite him. Besides, what am I, but a poor dog, and how can I, with my canine intelligence, understand the ways of you great and god-like beings? That man, that thief, was a friend of yours. He came in here; and eat your bread and salt. I saw him sneak in, and drink with you there by the fire. How can I distinguish a friend from an enemy? And how was I, a poor dog, to know whether it was a friend that was borrowing your money, or a thief who was, or a thief that was stealing them?"

"But this howl of argument, this canine apology, was not accepted by the superiors, who kicked the poor brute into a corner, and left him, sore and whimpering there."

"Let Snap alone," said Kerins, angrily. "He's not your dog. He's mine. And it was not his fault, was it? And how does your dog, and eat your bread and salt. I saw him sneak in, and drink with you there by the fire. How can I distinguish a friend from an enemy? And how was I, a poor dog, to know whether it was a friend that was borrowing your money, or a thief who was, or a thief that was stealing them?"

a strenuous and bigoted supporter of law, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and knew no cause for dispensation, and no excuse for revolt, meeting every objection with the iron and unyielding logic of Law! nevertheless it was also known that he was, in every sense, the father of his people, and their stern defender against oppression of any kind. It is a paradox which is scarcely understood by those who have landed interests in the country, or even by the people themselves. If a priest utters a word in defence of his people, he is at once reputed an agitator and incendiary; if he opposes the popular will from reasons of conscience, he is set down by the people as a friend of their oppressors and by the governing classes of the country as a conservative. The character of Dr. William Gray seems unintelligible—a protector of his people and keen ally to their interests, yet a strenuous supporter of law, while at the same time an opponent of lawlessness. And yet, this is what he was during life, and consistently to the end.

He treated his visitor with all the courtesy due to his rank, bade him be seated, and waited. The latter, with some embarrassment, made apologies for his intrusion, spoke on a few indifferent topics, and then came to the object of his unusual visit. He was somewhat awed by the appearance of this grave man, who, silent and motionless as a statue, gazed steadily through the window, a look of stern expectation in his great gray eyes.

"I do not know if you consider my visit inopportune or unexpected," he said at length, "but I came to you, for I had a matter of some importance to discuss with you. It is a matter which I have reason to believe you will stand by me in taking against 'disorder and lawlessness in your parish.' There was an awkward party, his listlessness and still motionless staring through the window. The gentleman continued:

"It seems to us, that if all the ministers of religion in the country had adopted the sane attitude, things would not have come to the present pass." "That is," said his host, "things would have remained as they were?" "Well, I mean," said the other, "that what has been done by the authorities might have been improved by slow and constitutional methods, we would not have been plunged into a violent revolution."

"I am quite sure," said Dr. Gray, now leaning back in his chair, and spreading out his handkerchief, and taking up his snuff box, "but would you inform me, what slow and constitutional methods were being taken by the authorities, and what you, by the government, to better the awful condition of our poor people?"

"Well, I thought," said the other, "that things were improving: large reductions in rent were being given; and the country appeared to be prospering, until the agitator and the professional politician came on the scene." "I want to make a small diversion from this pleasant subject," said Dr. Gray. "Would you mind telling me where you graduated, for I think you had a university training."

"In Cambridge," he replied. "I am an M. A. of Cambridge." "That clears matters a little," said Dr. Gray. "I was afraid you had never been outside of Ireland, like so many of the gentry of the country, and argument there is hopeless. Now, would you mind telling me, what country, and what age, was ever free from agitators and professional politicians?"

coming personally dishonest in their dealings." The face of the priest flushed with anger; but, for a moment, the terrible truth flashed in upon him. Could he contradict this man? The latter went on: "In fact, sir, what has brought me here to-day is, to take cognizance of an act of vulgar robbery committed here on Christmas Night."

"What?" said the priest. "I have not heard of it." "Probably not," said the other. "But it occurred." "Sit down," said the priest gloomily. "Yes, things are looking bad there." "On Christmas Night," repeated the landlord, "some fellows, or fellows, broke into Kerin's house, in his absence, stole his men's revolvers, and then—they roared; and then—they roared."

"It was bad news; but a thought occurred to the priest." "Could your men be making a case?" he asked. "For you know that is quite possible." "I cannot say that I like the insinuation," he said, feeling that to have a grievance is to stand on firm ground. "But, allowing it to be possible, do you think these men would like to go armed with revolvers, and then—well, you and I, we are not going to be supplied with new revolvers at their own expense?"

"No," said Dr. Gray. "I am sure they wouldn't like to be compelled to pay anything for all that they have brought down upon them." "Naturally, suspicion falls in one quarter," said the landlord. "We have obtained a search-warrant. We have searched the place, and I'm sure that they are the robbers."

"I think you are mistaken," replied the priest. "The Duggans are a rough, passionate lot; but I doubt whether they would descend so low as to steal." "Well, we shall see," said the other. "I must now bid you good day; and allow me to thank you for your courtesy in receiving me this interesting interview, and also for your firmness in dealing with disorder in your parish, though you may deprecate it."

And then he added, in an undertone, "I am quite sure that you will understand each other better." "Yes," said the priest. "This is a pity; and when men like you, cultivated and well educated, fail to understand us, where's the hope?" He had led his visitor to the door. He was thinking for a moment in a half-conscious manner, of how pleasant it would be, if he could repeat that visit, and see more of this man, whose courage and intelligence seemed to fascinate him. Every once in a while he pressed toward a renewal and continuance of such happy relations. But, education, prejudice, human respect, dread of criticism, rose up at once, and said: "This is quite impossible." He hastidly said, good-bye; and strode along the gravelled walk toward the gate.

"Something similar, too, was agitating the sensitive and emotional nature of the priest. "What a pity," he thought, "that we can never understand each other. Now, here's the man who thinks on a hundred subjects even as I. I could meet, and discuss the classics, science, human history, even theology; and it would be a mutual pleasure. Against this important work, I feel that I have been pleased, sir, to mix them for me?"

it was a handsome face—the real, artist face, inherited from his Irish mother; but from one cause or another, the pale cheeks looked a little puffed, and slightly bloated; and the thick, black hair, that fell artist-like on his neck, was streaked with premature gray. But what was impressive and attractive, and when, the first morning of his arrival, he made the house respondent to some choice pieces from La Traviata, and, as he sang, the lithe and servant, Katie, whom Henry Liston had brought hither from his native town, was prepared, like the Count in the song, "her heart and her fortune (that is, the better contents of her master's larder) to lay at his feet." There were some reasons, however, why he was able to resist the dull temptation. It appears, as he afterwards in confidence told the young priest, that he was a blighted being, that he had already had an ailment of the heart, which had brought the silver into his hair; and (but this was not a confidence, only an after-act of the young priest, who was a connoisseur for liquid over solid refreshments.

This soon became apparent, although the young priest was anxious to close his eyes against the fact. The reason, as he afterwards learned, was that he had the little parlour, which he intended to make his library and study, he became suddenly aware that the singing in the room at the other side of the hall had ceased. Yielding to a slight feeling of curiosity, he crossed the hall. The artist had vanished. A pile of paint-boxes was on the floor, and a few brushes, a painter's apron and a pair of trousers, and a ladder leaned against the wall. Henry Liston pulled the bell, and Katie appeared.

"Where's the painter gone?" he said. "I don't know, sir," she replied. "I thought he was here." Henry went back to read his Office. About noon, the artist strolled leisurely into the room, and found that he had left off at ten o'clock; and when the young curate entered the room, he was leisurely sipping paint and brushes. "I can be half way through your work by this time," said Henry, "without some trepidation, as the artist calmly went on doing nothing. "And do you know, Delaney," he continued, "I fear you have been drinking. The artist looked calmly down on the young priest, and said: "No, sir, not drinking, oh, no! Trying to get up an artificial stimulation of the brain, for this important work, is it not, sir?"

"Do you mean that you cannot work without stimulants?" said Henry. "No, sir," said the artist. "I don't mean to say that I have been drinking in an ordinary manner. But, where there is a severe mental strain, I need the help of stimulants—in a moderate manner, in a moderate manner. "I fear you have been drinking. The artist looked calmly down on the young priest, and said: "No, sir, not drinking, oh, no! Trying to get up an artificial stimulation of the brain, for this important work, is it not, sir?"

"The artist again laughed loud and long. Henry was slightly disconcerted. He began to feel his inferiority. "Did you ever hear of an artist named 'Tintoretto'?" said the great man, pouring into a little dust on his palette, and moistening it. "No, sir," said Henry. "Often?" "Do you know why he was called 'Tintoretto'?" queried the artist. "No," said Henry. "I suppose from the place in which he was born."

"The artist grew suddenly silent and even solemn. He wasn't exactly offended. He only felt as if a youngster had blundered badly; and he was called upon, as a matter of conscience, and against his will, to whip him. "I don't think much of Raffaello," he said sadly. "What?" said Henry Liston. "Raffaello of the Cartoons—Raffaello of the—the—why, next to Michael Angelo, he is reputed the master-artist of the world." "Ah," said the artist sadly, "there's the amachure again!"

And a deep silence followed—the curate extinguished; the artist sadly mixed colors on his palette. Suddenly, an idea seemed to strike him, as he felt that he was using in carrying on a conversation in Art with the "amachure." "The walls have not been prepared," he said, pointing to the walls of the room. "Prepared?" said Henry. "How?" "By whom?" "These walls should have been prepared by some laboring person," said the artist. "The paper torn down, the walls smoothed, etc." "Why, that's your work!" said Henry dubiously. "My work?" said the artist. "My God, no, sir," he continued, "this is too bad. I never work except where the place is prepared by one of these laboring persons. Have you a laboring

person around the premises? It's an awful waste of time." And he looked at his watch. In despair, Henry ran out to fetch in his man-of-all-work, Jen. The artist vanished. "I am in a bad way," said Henry, "I have been smoking leisurely in the stable, and contemplating space. "This painter," said the curate, "expects this place to be prepared for him. He must have done all that paper and clean up the place. Where is he? Where's Delaney?"

"Where is he?" said Jen, sulkily. "Where is he, but where he always is, his head stuck half-way into a pint down at the 'Cross'?" "Oh, no, no!" said Henry Liston. "Don't say that! I found him a most intelligent man. He has read a good deal." "He's the biggest blaggard in Munster," said Jen. "He'd drink the say dry!"

"Well," said the curate, taking off his coat and hat, "I have no one else will do it, I must do it myself." And Jen got ashamed of himself, when he saw his master in his shirt-sleeves; and both set to, and had the whole place overhauled. The artist retired. "Ha!" said the latter, carefully scrutinizing the work, and passing his hand over the wall to find any roughness or stubbiness under the wall-paper. "Very good, very good, indeed! Very good for a laboring person!"

That question of laboring persons, said the artist, when Henry returned, and both set to, and had the whole place overhauled. The artist retired. "Ha!" said the latter, carefully scrutinizing the work, and passing his hand over the wall to find any roughness or stubbiness under the wall-paper. "Very good, very good, indeed! Very good for a laboring person!"

Henry Liston had recovered from his fright, he ventured to look. The artist was moving at the rate of ten miles an hour toward the door. That evening Henry Liston was tormented by the doubt, whether this artist was a consummate blaggard as Jen declared; or a genius, but one of that unfortunate tribe, who could never come to any good in this world, nor probably had a strong predilection for bottled porter, and an equally strong desire to shirk his work; but that Henry Liston, with his sympathetic soul, and he had been lately reading a very pathetic book called "Men of Genius," in which all the tragedies of life seemed to hang on the footsteps of every poor toiling man, and he had been lately reading a very pathetic book called "Men of Genius," in which all the tragedies of life seemed to hang on the footsteps of every poor toiling man, and he had been lately reading a very pathetic book called "Men of Genius," in which all the tragedies of life seemed to hang on the footsteps of every poor toiling man.

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"I quite agree, Delaney," he said, "with what you stated yesterday as a condition, that you have the artist's opinion, when engaged in delicate and fancy work; but I noticed that you had to them, rest six times to-day, and as each interval occupied half an hour, there were three hours lost out of your day's work." "Lost?" said Henry Liston. "The energies newly granted on each occasion to the sagged and weary brain more than made up for lost time."

much to pursue the connexion, "I believe there was some consanguinity, but I prefer to stand on my own legs." "This is my card," he said, handing me his card. "Any time you call at my house, I shall be happy to see you. He went away, and looked at the card."

"Well?" said Henry, breathless with excitement. "Was the card of the first financier in Europe," said the artist. "I said to myself, 'Delaney, your fortune is made!' "And why wasn't it?" said Henry Liston. "Why? Oh, why?" echoed the artist in a passionate tone. "Why was Troy taken and burned to the ground, and old Father Anchises put to death? Why did Anthony—Mark Antony throw up his kingdom? Why was Ireland lost? He stopped dramatically, and Henry Liston thought that as these were rhetorical questions, they needed no answer. But, suddenly, the artist passed into a paroxysm of despair. He struck his forehead violently with his left hand, then covering his eyes with his right hand, he allowed pale and brushes to fall falling to the ground, while he exclaimed:

"Oh, Nina, Nina, thou peerless one, why didst thou come between me and my Art?" And flinging off his apron with a gesture of despair, he rushed violently from the room. When Henry Liston had recovered from his fright, he ventured to look. The artist was moving at the rate of ten miles an hour toward the door. That evening Henry Liston was tormented by the doubt, whether this artist was a consummate blaggard as Jen declared; or a genius, but one of that unfortunate tribe, who could never come to any good in this world, nor probably had a strong predilection for bottled porter, and an equally strong desire to shirk his work; but that Henry Liston, with his sympathetic soul, and he had been lately reading a very pathetic book called "Men of Genius," in which all the tragedies of life seemed to hang on the footsteps of every poor toiling man, and he had been lately reading a very pathetic book called "Men of Genius," in which all the tragedies of life seemed to hang on the footsteps of every poor toiling man.

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"And this is the sum total of to-day's work?" said Henry, pointing to the wall. "Quite so, sir," said the artist. "I consider that that approaches as near perfection as it is possible for the human mind to accomplish." "Perhaps so," said Henry Liston. "But I should like to see a little more done. At this rate, it will take to Easter to finish."

"Ha! there's the Celtic impetuosity again," said the artist. "The fact of the matter is, that the desire to get things done, no matter how. The total repugnance to the pains that spells perfection." Henry Liston was abashed in the sight of such genius. Nevertheless, he made his little proposal. "Well, now," he said, "I am making a proposal that I think you'll accept. To-morrow at noon, Katie will have dinner ready for you. I shall allow you a bottle of porter at your dinner; and then, when you close your work at 6 o'clock, you can have as much as you please!" "You mean, of course, sir," said the artist, with commensurate politeness, "at your expense?"

Reason would totter on its throne; and you would have an artist mania in your house!" "Well, make your own terms, then," said Henry impatiently. "You must keep at your work now. What do you require?"

"Must! Must! Must!" said the artist, musingly. "Do you know, sir, that it is the first time in my long and chequered career that opprobrious epithet has been levelled at me!" "Well, you know what I mean," said the curate. "I don't want to hurt your feelings."

"And you have hurt them, sir! You have racked and wrenched the sensitive chords of my soul!" "Here the artist, who had been so long in requisitioning again; and Henry Liston was in despair. "Look here, Delaney," he said at length, "I'll put six bottles of stout there on the sideboard to-morrow, if you give me your word of honor that you won't touch them until your work is done!"

"I accept the treaty," said the artist. "But you should be careful of your last word, for you may give me a blighted being to despair!" "TO BE CONTINUED"

KATE DUGAN'S SEARCH

Years ago, in the Queenstown harbor, a woman stood on the ganplank of a ship about to take its departure, with her hands clasped tight in those of a half-grown boy.

"Oh, Jimmie, lad," she moaned, "how can I bear to give you up? How can I lie easy in my bed at night, thinking that maybe you have nowhere to put your head?" "Al! mother, dear," he answered, cheerfully, "you must not always be thinking of that. I have strong arms and a will to work, and it will not be long till I can send for you."

"Yes, you live brave," she answered, "but it seems to me only yesterday that you were learning to walk, and many a tumble you had. The world is gone down and get their soles licked by the dogs; but the moment they were dead, this 'world' flung itself into a paroxysm of remorse, and insisted on raising marks and heavy matters, to his to their deified memory. It occurred to Henry that one kind word spoken during life might be worth more to these poor tramps from heaven than a column of adulation in their morning newspapers, when they lay stark and stiff in their shrouds; and that a morsel of bread or a stop of wine might have been better bestowed on these poor mortal waifs when alive, than a bust of bronze in the market-place when dead."

Then he had also read how humble people, like himself, were handed down to immortality amongst men, because they had linked arms with their comrades, and how after ages, with tears in their stony eyes, blessed the memory of those who had been kind to the immortals. Hence, he had made up his mind, that as Fate had thrown him across the pathway of genius, no future generations should blaspheme him for coldness or unkindness to a gifted child of the gods. But work had to be done. The pastor, who was quite impossible to such a child, might come in at any moment, and demand in a hurtful manner, why his work was not carried forward. So Henry Liston, who had been reading in the "Life of Sidney Smith," how that wit and philosopher had cheated his horse into working by tying a peck of oats around his neck, which he pursued all day long and never overtook, conceived a brilliant idea of deceiving the artist into something like a day's decent labor. He allowed time for the experiment, however; and the following day he did not interfere at all, but left the artist to himself. He found that, at the lowest calculation, the latter had visited "The Cross" at least six times during the day; and he found the sum-total of his day's work was one wall faintly tinted. When 6 o'clock struck, and the artist promptly obeyed its summons to rest, Henry accosted him.

as soon as he was settled, and then on another day, whole years went by with my aching to the mother. Often in the evenings she peered through the glass, half expecting to see the form coming home from work to me. Many a night, I pattered on the low roof, thinking of the old man with tears. Once she started sleep in great fright, dreaming of wandering a jenny in a great storm. "My boy needs me, and I'm to him," she said, in the dream was so vivid, awake, his voice still rang calling her to come.

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So-Cosy Boudoir Slippers advertisement with illustration of a woman in slippers and text describing the product.